

# Last Stop To Dream

*by* JM Prescott

Brea has never been to Scranton, or ridden a train, but every night the same dream.

She sees herself, as if she is floating above her body. She remains at the zenith above her own head and she watches herself, walk down the old rail road tracks. The wind blows her back, but her hair doesn't move. The dress she wears hangs straight and stagnant. Her bare feet don't complain of cold or pain. The skeleton trees reach out to tear at her dress and the cold bites at her heels. But she doesn't break her stride.

This time is different. The dream doesn't continue with endless walking. No. The walking Brea stops. She pauses for a moment. Then she slowly tilts her head until the floating Brea can see her face.

But she doesn't have a face.

She wakes while it is still dark, freezing and drenched in sweat.

Brea tries to catch her breath. Her breath never steadies. She sits and listens to the wind against her window and her breath against her cheeks. Finally, she slides out of bed and turns on her computer and buys a one way train ticket to Scranton.

For twenty-four hours, Brea refuses to sleep. She drugs herself with coffee and caffeine pills. On the train, she sits in silence, watching the night flash by the window. Sleep digs at her eyes, but she fights it back.

Her body convulses and she pulls the emergency cord. The train grinds to a halt outside an out of use station.

The conductor tries to convince her to stay, but before he can open his mouth, something in the look on her face makes him back away. He closes the door quickly behind her and bolts it.

Brea steps off the train and the train pulls away, leaving her alone in the dark on the platform.

She climbs down onto the tracks and she walks.

The wind blows her back, but she doesn't feel it. Her shoes hurt her feet, so she steps out of them and continues bare foot, leaving them discarded behind. The trees cling to winter and shiver in the wind but she looks straight ahead, along the endless track in front of her.

Brea walks and doesn't wake and she doesn't look up. A shadow is cast on the tracks under her feet. It follows her with every step.

