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In the Eyes of the Company

There's a man on top of a building
trying to build the rest of the building.
He is a human resource. None of this
is symbolic. Symbols no longer move us.
Us no longer moves us.
There's a train coming through a tunnel.

There's a train coming through a tunnel
under a river that borders what was once
a great American city. No longer.
A thousand budding poets
from expensive universities write
"There's a train coming through a tunnel."

A thousand budding poets believe
in themselves, if nothing else.
They believe they are the train.
They believe they are the tunnel,
and river, and crumbling city,
something other than creatures.

How obvious! Bodies!
And nothing else but bodies!
Different colors and shapes and species
but all types of bodies, creatures created
sans creator. We represent no image,
no one, nothing. Bodies, bodies, bodies!

(Genevieve will say
at this point in the poem
I have forgotten the essentials.
She sends me a picture of bodega flowers
gathered together in disparate green
plastic bins. She believes she is in love.)

I cannot unsee the market economy
that pervades every gesture.
Sending photos is now love,
sending articles. Cater the data
for each other. Share the data
of each other with each other.

*(Here we have a drastic example of
what it means to pass on an apparatus
of production without transforming it.)*
Days are hard work of pretending to believe
in the beautiful market economy
to look good in the eyes of the company.

“The market economy has come into
full-flower,” my boss writes in comments.
Accept or reject the changes.
Subject: We are unveiling our new logo!
Poems are for desperados. My ex-friend
tries to seduce the universe through memes.

There’s a man on top of a building.
He’s earning. We’re all always striving
to earn earn earn. The market economy
still moves us. The expensive poets write
that their lives come into full-flower.
The wholesome democrats love the poets.

My boss edits the sentence to read,
“The city came into full flower
with the shift in the market economy.” Accept
or reject. Accept. Earn.
I write, “I want to ignite the building.”
And erase it. Reject and reject and reject.

There’s a man on top of a building
trying. None of this is symbolic.
But what’s the feeling? ask the expensive poets.
We no longer moves us, so the poets
write a staccato of *I*. The rest of us?
We light a flare and disappear.

Poem On My Birthday

It is almost the darkest day of the year.
We light lights in the dark.
It's a human thing, my mother would say.
It's a human thing

that giving something a name
seals it up and stocks it away.
Several times in my life
I've changed my name.

Today is my birthday.
For a month, so I'm told, I was
The Baby. I went by nothing,
my parents unable to agree.

Recently, I do not believe
in Freedom. I believe Nature will
demonstrate our unfreedom finally.
I am 35 today and thinking about the idea

of having a child.
We light lights in the dark.
I lost myself, my mother says sometimes,
about many various states of affairs:

a walk with a neighbor,
her marriage. I'm skeptical
of there being a self
that one can lose. Still,

sometimes I try
to point at my life
from the outside.
My husband and I

give each other dozens
of names. Is the question
how can a sound stand for a person?
an absurd question?

Can a word stand for a concept
in the same way a name can stand
for a person? Can a concept
have a life? Can we mourn the death

of a concept? The question isn't
what exists? The question is *what doesn't*
die with us? We light lights
in the dark. It's a human thing.