

THESE DAYS

A lone worker, age 56, dressed in overalls, the morning newspaper folded under his arm, his battered lunchbox in his right hand, enters the factory.

He punches in at the timeclock, walks to his locker and deposits his lunchbox. He zigzags between large machines until he arrives at his machine.

He flicks a switch to "ON."

He sits down, unfolds his paper, scans the headlines.

The engines of dawn come on strong.

MR. DAVIS, HIS PECCADILLOES, & HIS WIFE, MARTHA, INTERRUPT THE MEAT COURSE

"It's true enough," Mr. Davis addressed the formal dinner party after clinking his soup spoon against his half-filled water glass for the party's attention at table.

"It's true enough," Mr. Davis began again, now pausing meaningfully to be sure that he had captured everyone's undivided attention, "as my wife, Martha, seated to my left, will eagerly testify -- I have my habits!"

Following this admission, Mr. Davis fell back into his chair, exhausted. After a moment's silence, and not knowing quite what else to do, the dinner party broke into a round of enthusiastic applause.

Martha smiled rather timidly and nodded her head in simple acknowledgement. Mr. Davis struggled to his feet and, while patting his forehead with a white handkerchief, he cried out, "And now, by God, bring on the fowl!"

IN FOREIGN FILMS

The leading men lean against scarlet sportscars, careful not to wrinkle their trousers. Their shirts are unbuttoned at the collar, revealing thick forests of hair. Subtitles dance at their feet.

They casually glance into the future and see themselves sunning in cafes, tiny cups of espresso steaming before

them as they smoke and wait for uncommonly beautiful women to return from the hairdressers.

Their wallets bulge in excess. Their moustaches twitch with delight.

THE WALKING WOUNDED for Pose

If you weren't wounded you wouldn't be walking, crawling or even writing, not to mention interesting, so be thankful for your wounds and take a walk through the language's lifetime.

FORMICA DAZE

Scene: Suburban kitchen. American junk. Fast food on table top. Assorted open bags from Burger Bomb, etc. Half-eaten. Obvious husband & wife team. Flawless as the front lawn. 100% genuine polyester costumes. Woman, back to audience, stares doggedly at wall calendar: August 1. Man sits at table, chomps burger. Dog under table. Sunlight ...

Man: (Between bites; sings) Dog for a walk & a newspaper. Oh dog for a walk & a newspaper ...

Woman: What's that, hon?

Man: Just singing my song. Nevermind. Pay no mind.

Woman: Oh.

Man: What day is it anyhow? Since you're over there...

Woman: August first. Herman Melville's birthday.

Man: (Reaches for fries; burps) Whose?

(Doorbell rings offstage.)

Man: Awww, who's that?

(Dog at man's feet begins to drool Pavlovianly, like garden hose. Puddle ensues quickly.)

(Man, barefooted, feels the wet; looks down at Dog uncomprehending.)

Man: What the ...