

rather than on the weekend
so that I can now spend Wednesday
working on sheets of cardboard
my supervisor has laid down
on the wet paint,
cardboard sheets like the one
that last night slipped out from under the feet
of another machine's operator
causing him to fall backwards and break his collarbone,
cardboard sheets that
will stick to the wet paint and rip it back off
of the wooden platform
tomorrow or the next day
when we try to remove them.

Otherwise,
it's a great idea.

HONKERS

The workers
make the most of the echo chamber
acoustics of the tin
50-foot-high building
to showcase
their sneezes —
one does a kind of
screaming birdcall,
another a broncho-busting
rodeo star "YaaaHOOO!"
as he rears his head back
then throws it down
to jump back with the explosion.

But the forklift driver
has them all beat,
driving around
sounding his horn
with his right hand
just as he buries his nose
into the handkerchief
in his left.

BUBBLING OVER

He couldn't stop
slipping those big pistol-like parts through his belt
and walking around pulling them out
pretending to fire them at machinists,
or walking around with long aircraft spar parts
in his hands, opening and closing their opposed ends

like the jaws of an alligator
as he worked his own jaws up and down
making weird grunts.
He couldn't stop
going up to some machinist
with a long cylindrical part
and blowing through the part as if he were
doing a trumpet call,
then loudly announcing the machinist's name
as if he were announcing a King.
He just couldn't stop putting
a big C-clamp around his head
and closing its steel pads against his temples
and walking up to machinists telling them
how he had this pressing pain in his head
and asking them for aspirins.

Being a machinist at his machine
just wasn't good enough for him.

DESTINY

The managers are afraid
some auditor with a clipboard
will come walking through the building
and notice the 60-year-old
machines
and, thinking them useless broken-down antiques,
order them taken out and melted down
into scrap metal.
So the managers
never spend any money
buying new machine parts to replace the old ones
that inevitably
wear
and loosen
and lose accuracy,
rendering the machines closer and closer to being
useless broken-down antiques.

COMPANY MAN

He arrives back skidding
to a stop on the stripped-down little-kid-style
Goodstone Aircraft Company bicycle he uses
to ride all over the plant in and out of building after
building for hours,
stepping up to his machine and punching
the SPINDLE START button and standing there
turning handles and making chips fly out of a block of
metal as he spends the last 2 minutes