

before the mid-morning break
cutting metal feverishly,
just as
immediately after the 10-minute break he is up
jumping to his machine to grab a handle and push
the SPINDLE START button and cut
metal feverishly for another 2 minutes
before hopping back on his bike and riding out of the
building
again for another hour or two.

He really takes seriously
the supervisor's repeated stressing at meetings about the
importance of working during those 2 minutes right before
and after breaks.

That's when Goodstone's idle-time auditors
walk around checking for machinists wasting time.

THE MANTRA

At 7:00 a.m.
unlocking his toolbox and throwing open its lid he'll
begin yelling, "Fuck. Fuck. Fuck." and then
"Fuck it. Fuck it. Fuck it." and then
looking over at me with wild-eyed
despair say,
"Fuck it Fred! Fuck it Fred! Fuck it Fred!"
waiting for me to look and then
slamming his airgun down onto his sheet-metal workbench top
so that it SLAPS and yelling,
"Fuck this place! Fuck this place!"
waiting for me to nod and then taking out his hammer
and pounding out an ear and nerve shattering drum roll
against a particularly reverberative steel section of his
machine,
turning to stare at me with legs spread, shouting out as
loud as he can, "Fuck 'em! FUCK 'EM ALL, FRED! FUCK 'EM
ALL IN THE ASS!!"

It's just a little early morning
Goodstone Aircraft Company ritual he goes through
that makes him feel better.

VALUABLES

Goodstone Aircraft Company never buys
enough new parts or tooling
to go around
in the machine shop.
So on our 3 shifts,
we cram our toolboxes full

of machine handles and attachments,
fan electrical cords,
jigs and fixtures and clamps,
anything that works right
and can't be locked up or nailed down,
leaving each other without access
to much indispensable tooling and parts.

Goodstone Aircraft Company really knows how
to get their employees to treasure and preserve
its equipment.

A WORKING FOOL

Curly
at the machine next to mine likes to laugh
at all the hot jobs I get,
the jobs that have to be done NOW the parts
that must be finished that planes
out on airstrips are waiting for so that they can
take off, the jobs
that bring expeditors buzzing around my machine pestering
me with, "When will you have them done?"
Curly likes to laugh
when the expeditors come by and point them
toward my machine saying, "HE gets all the hot jobs!"
grinning at me as if I were the village idiot,
as he
works very SLOWLY as always on his latest gravy job
that isn't needed for months,
laughing especially
at my inability to slow down and totally fuck up
Goodstone Aircraft Company's production schedule
like he did a long time ago
when he decided to make sure
that he never got any of those hot jobs again.

THIN LINE

Every few days
the K-20 bomber production manager
grabs the Drill Press Lead Man from behind
and pulls him back in his swivel chair
choking his neck
and grinning/grimacing
with fun/murderous intent,
the Lead Man swiveling and the manager choking
until the Lead Man is pulled out of the chair
and he and the manager are wrestling across the machine
shop floor,
rolling in the paperwork that spills
out of the expeditors' bicycles