

me from here
fiercest wind
across the sky
st again.

urving sky
ceans, leaf and stone
noon glow
at I can call my own.

low

Factory Jungle



ight after the seven o'clock break
the ropes start shining down,
thin light through the factory windows,
the sun on its way to the time clock.
My veins fill with welding flux —
I get that itchy feeling that I don't belong here.

I stand behind the biggest press in the plant
waiting for the parts to drop down into the rack,
Thinking about what that mad elephant
could do to a hand.

I'd like to climb one of those ropes of light
swing around the plant
between presses, welders, assembly lines
past the man working the overhead crane
everyone looking up, swearing off booze, pills,
whatever they think made them see me.
I'd shed my boots, coveralls, safety glasses, ear plugs,
and fly out the plant gate
past the guard post
and into the last hour of twilight.

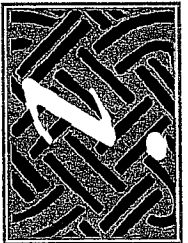
The parts are backing up
but I don't care
I rip open my coveralls and pound my chest
trying to raise my voice
above the roar of the machines
yelling louder than Tarzan ever had to.

Jim Daniels

er

saloon eating steak and
children and the cause of
life to be a rich and red-
d with a glory of joy
: storm.
of the nation and few
ir doors to him.
f his deep days and
: lover of children, a lover
er of red hearts and red

5000 Apply for 100 Jobs



stood in line, drunk with the cold
shuffling toward the factory door.
Hundreds danced slowly in front of me
hundreds behind. Some of us I knew were poor
with pink skin sticking out
of what we wore.
When the man said go home, that's it
some kicked the ground and swore.
Others moved on quickly
having been here before.
At least I have another job—minimum wage—
washing windows, sweeping floors,
so I felt a bit of joy inside that big sadness,
like Happy Hour at the Goodwill Store.

Jim Daniels

The Closing of the Rodeo



he lariat snaps; the cowboy rolls
His pack, and mounts and rides away.
Back to the land the cowboy goes.

Plumes of smoke from the factory sway
In the setting sun. The curtain falls,
A train in the darkness pulls away.

Good-by, says the rain on the iron roofs.
Good-by, say the barber poles.
Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves.

William Jay Smith

icate to me, and he
his week. I wouldn't
That man in the next aisle
of him, a little.

d Eastland

off:

test

inked fastest.

ry

ll the moves

it

f the way

the cold

until

es up to your knees,

you begin

ghost

ere.

THEME
Spide

ANTICIPATING: Make a list of all the tasks you perform on the job or in some other area of your life (on a team, around your home). Next to each task, write down how you feel about that aspect of the work.

Old Men Working Concrete

*on't be rushed; will take
their own sweet time.*

*Now and then, will stop
for snuff (reaching in
the pocket where the circle
of can has worn a circle
in the cloth); and then
get back to work, mix mud
and fill and walk that barrow
back and back and back.*

*Soon enough the slab end
takes shape. The one man
on his knees with a float
checks it with his eye*

*stopping time and again
to run his striker saw-wise
and level across the top.*

*Soon enough it gets long
smooth with broad swings
of trowel it gets long.*

Finer than even the minimum

*One trowels out the last space,
one works the edger.*

Done, they stand back.

They look one more time.

It's good. Yes sir, it's good.

They talk. They dip snuff.

They are happy.

Phil Hey

The Rope



*heir voices still wake me
as I woke for years to that rise and fall,
the rope pulled taut between them,*

both afraid to break or let go.

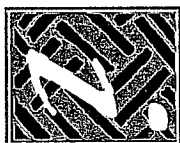
*Years spilled on the kitchen table,
picked over like beans or old bills.*

*What he owed to the mill, what she wanted
for him. Tears swallowed and hidden
under layers of paints, under linoleum rugs,*

*new piled on old, each year the pattern
brighter, costlier. The kids
he would say, if it weren't for*

*She'd hush him and promise
to smile, saying This is what
I want, this is all I ever wanted.*

Patricia Dobler



*wish to God I n
I wish you never
I wish we never
For you to get m
And told him w
Always and alw
Yes, I'm wishing
And I was a bun*

Their Bodies

to the students of anatomy at Indiana University



hat gaunt old man came first, his hair as white
 As your scoured tables. Maybe you'll recollect him
 By the scars of steel-mill burns on the backs of his hands,
 On the nape of his neck, on his arms and sinewy legs,
 And her by the enduring innocence
 Of her face, as open to all of you in death
 As it would have been in life: she would memorize
 Your names and ages and pastimes and hometowns
 If she could, but she can't now, so remember her.

They believed in doctors, listened to their advice,
 And followed it faithfully. You should treat them
 One last time as they would have treated you.
 They had been kind to others all their lives
 And believed in being useful. Remember somewhere
 Their son is trying hard to believe you'll learn
 As much as possible from them, as he did,
 And will do your best to learn politely and truly.

They gave away the gift of those useful bodies
 Against his wish. (They had their own ways
 Of doing everything, always.) If you're not certain
 Which ones are theirs, be gentle to everybody.

David Wagoner

Auth

JA,

*James Scully (1937-) is a unique
 collections, among them Modern Po
 Avenue of the Americas (Universi
 gushed translator and editor. He wa
 in 1962 and the Guggenheim Fellow*

EDCAI

*Edgar Lee Masters (1869-1950) is
 most successful work was the 1915 l
 lection of monologues from the citize
 a number of novels and biographies,
 successful.*

DAVI

*David Wagoner (1926-) has pu
 is a professor of English at the Unive
 Northwest. He is one of 12 chancel
 oner is also an accomplished novelist
 guage in both genres. Among his poe
 Sleeping in the Woods (1974), and*

Share-Croppers



usi a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field,
Plowing, planting, hoeing,
To make the cotton yield.

When the cotton's picked
And the work is done
Boss man takes the money
And we get none,

Leaves us hungry, ragged
As we were before.
Year by year goes by
And we are nothing more

Than a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field—
Plowing life away
To make the cotton yield.

Langston Hughes

Weaving at the



igging high
In the garden

A girl of poor

Her parents

Cold water,

Stitch in, stitch

Insects swarm

In two days

When each

Her mother

From her work

Their ten fingers

Wang Chieh
Translated
by William

Authors' Profiles

MAYA ANGELOU

see notes under poetry on Family.

JIM DANIELS

see notes under poetry on Survivors.

RUTH COLLINS

young woman who studied at the Vineyard Shore Worker's
c. 1920s.

DAVID BUDBILL

has made a career as a writer, but he has experienced the
tough points. He has been a street gang worker, groundskeeper,
and carpenter's apprentice. He attended Columbia Uni-
versity's degree in divinity from Union Theological Seminary
in four poetry collections: Pulp Cutter's Nativity, From
the Chain Saw Dance, and Why I Came to Judevine.

THE
THEME

Down-trodden

ANTICIPATING: Who do you believe are the down-trodden in our society today? Write
in your journal about these people and the problems you believe they face. What do
you believe should be done to help them?

An Old Charcoal Seller



An old charcoal seller
Cuts firewood, burns coal by the southern mountain.
His face, all covered with dust and ash, the color of smoke,
The hair at his temples is gray, his ten fingers black.
The money he makes selling coal, what is it for?
To put clothes on his back and food in his mouth.
The rags on his poor body are thin and threadbare;
Distressed at the low price of coal, he hopes for colder weather.
Night comes, an inch of snow has fallen on the city.
In the morning, he rides his cart along the icy ruts,
His ox weary, he hungry, and the sun already high.
In the mud by the south gate, outside the market, he stops to rest.
All of a sudden, two dashing riders appear:
An imperial envoy, garbed in yellow (his attendant in white),
Holding an official dispatch, he reads a proclamation.
Then turns the cart around, curses the ox, and leads it north.
One cartload of coal—a thousand or more catties!
No use appealing to the official spiriting the cart away:
Half a length of red lace, a slip of damask
Dropped on the ox—is payment in full!

Po Chü-Yi

Translated from the Chinese by Eugene Eoyang

The Song of the Factory Worker

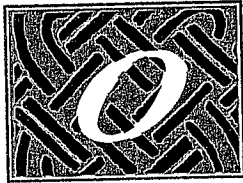


*ed brick building
 With many windows,
 You're like a vampire,
 For wherever I go
 You know I'm coming back to you.
 You have held many under your spell,
 Many who have sewed their life away
 Within your walls.
 You say to me,
 "Oh, you may leave
 But you'll come back.
 You'll miss
 The whir, whir of the machinery,
 The click of the tucker,
 The happy laughter of the girls,
 Telling jokes.
 You'll miss the songs
 They sing,
 And the tired-eyed ones,
 Watching the clock.
 The pieceworkers,
 Sewing fast,
 So fast till it makes you dizzy
 to watch.
 (They haven't time to look up.)
 And under the skylight,
 The red-haired girl
 When the sun sets her head aflame.
 You'll miss the noise and the bustle and the hurrys*

*And you'll come back,
 You'll see."
 All this and more
 You say to me,
 Red brick building
 With many windows.*

Ruth Collins

Old Man Pike



*Old man Pike was a sawyer at the mill
over in Craftsbury.
He lived just down the road from here.
Every morning he walked six miles through the woods
over Dunn Hill saddle while the sun rose.
He took dinner and supper in the village
then walked home across the mountain in the dark.
Sally Tatro who used to live on my place
would hear him coming through the night, singing.
Sometimes he'd stop to gossip
but mostly she only saw him stride by the window
and disappear.*

*The old man could have stayed at home,
milked cows, like everybody else,
but he needed an excuse to go and come
through the mountains, every day,
all his life, alone.*

*Old man Pike didn't believe in the local religion of work,
but out of deference, to his neighbors maybe,
he bowed to it,
placed its dullness at the center of his life,
but he was always sure, because of his excuse,
to wrap it at the edges of his days
in the dark and solitary amblings of his pleasure. ✍*

David Budbill