

## An Accountant's Hamlet

What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed?

*Hamlet, IV , iv*

What a work of pieces: man at day's end  
whose faculties less than infinite  
squat on floor twelve, while his descending form  
leans against the elevator's cold wall.  
Every day, I stand my watch counting  
a horizon of numbers promised me  
by my father as standards of comfort  
against the buffets of financial storm.  
Buried with his pension's last dollars,  
he does not see those standards tattering  
as my hope aims at not being laid off.

My heavy wing-tips climb the front stairs.  
Your schematics lie with your work boots,  
beside my dad's old La-Z-Boy chair.  
I never feel comfortable reclined.  
I stare at leisure's corduroy throne,  
left me when my father died, and wait  
for his ghost to sit and drink his scotch.  
He fails to show, and I let my coat  
slide from my arms onto the tipped back.

The chair rocks when you throw yourself  
into its worn pillows and tug  
my tie. I flinch and pull away  
but your arm comes round my locked neck  
pulling me down like a coatrack  
on top of you. My stomach groans,  
and your dry lips kiss my grimace.  
Sighing, you dump me on the floor.

I inhale to speak, but you  
just say "wait" and disappear  
behind our bedroom door. "Why?"  
I ask, as you engineer  
a better distribution  
of traffic along my nerves,  
bridging to be or not to be....

The door swings, revealing  
the bed, your down-gyved shirt,  
a bottle of cheap wine.  
My eyes roll, but you pop  
the cork, then my buttons,  
my clenched jaw, and my smile.

My Horatio,  
ever practical;  
you stay, by will alone,  
unconcerned by ghosts  
of what should have been.

Two answers stick  
inside my gut.  
The question? "Why  
tomorrow when

there may not  
be a next?"  
Animal

need leaves  
one choice:

be.

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