

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.

Jonah Scott Mendelsohn
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