

Factory Worker

by Chad Smith

Working the machines, keeping the computers running
Hum of the giant building, turns his head when he
Hears a creaking, quiet now, alone
Middle of the night, only one there on the night shift
Locked in
Sitting in darkness except for the light from his desk lamp and
computer screens
Hasn't said a word in eight hours
In his chair staring at the words and numbers in front of him
Hits start, enters numbers, runs the program
Does this again one hundred times
Then takes a break
Walking through the halls looking things over
Giant factory so open he feels like any second he will float up to the
rafters
Pours more coffee pauses to listen to a truck rumble down the street
outside
The factory sits downtown by the docks
At night the whole neighborhood empties out and heads home
To the more respectable parts of the city
He thinks for a second that he hears
Someone walking on the roof but
It is just the murmur of the massive air vents
Whispering out heat
A few weeks back while walking to work
He found an old record player next to a dumpster and
Brought it in with him to the factory
After some minor repairs and a new needle
It played like a champ
His eyes are tired now back at his desk
He thinks
Perhaps the word for tonight will be weary

He puts on the jazz record he bought at the thrift store
The trumpet bleats, snaps the silence, the music flows out
Over the factory floor like a trickle of water
And pools on the cement
A message pops up on his screen in text asking
"How are you?"
He pictures her now just getting home from a night out
Getting ready for bed
He speaks as he types back,
"I'm doing OK"

