

# 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"

