

# Sentiment, rust, and a beer at Dusty Tom's

*by* James Lloyd Davis

Every night before I come into work, I stop by Dusty Tom's Tavern & Grill, have a beer and listen to the juke box, listen to sad old men talk about the good days when the plant was still going strong. Sentiment is a lot like warm bread fresh out of the oven and a brick of soft butter. Sustenance. Every now and then, you hear a rumor about some Chinese entrepreneurs coming in to restart it, but who knows where the stories come from. Sometimes it's Chinese, sometimes the French. Last week it was Arabs.

You can dream. People need that. Beer and sentiment.

In the meantime, I got this job as the midnight watchman over at the plant, walking around in the silence and the rust, oiling the machines weekly, heating up the extruders from time to time. Really love the sunrise when I clock out. Feels like whole centuries are beginning, a new age every morning, where all things are possible, hope coming on all new and indestructible. 'Course, that's only sentiment, I know, but it feels hopeful. You need that. Regardless of the rumors, I know it's never coming back. Sometimes I can taste the rust on my lips when I stop for pancakes and coffee on the way home.

