

# First Job

*by* John Riley

I thought each day died inside the clock.  
Punching in at seven sharp to stand  
eight hours to listen to a turret lathe clack.  
Eating a roach coach sandwich and reading my stained  
—Paris spring, matadors, whiskey—  
and greasy copy of *A Moveable Feast*.

“Preacher Charlie” with his daily chant:  
“You won't be saved by a drunken sinner's book.”  
The office girl with her micro-mini skirts  
who stopped each day to flirt and spin a peek  
of blue or white or magical pink panties.  
The stamping press quaking the concrete blocks.  
A winter morning the pigeons floated out  
of the roof's shadow, above the welder's sparks.

