

Ms. Shin
English 11 Honours

POETRY BY MICHAEL B. TURNER

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7:59 A.M.

Company man stands on a tote
and thinks he's ten feet tall.
His watch extends long past the dock,
the parking lot, the hotels and motels
we wake up from.

He sees our kitchen tables.
And from our kitchen tables he sees us
flickering, grabbing for underwear,
wincing into clothes all wet with overtime.

As he drinks the coffee we don't have time for
he thinks a lot about our sleep, how we dream
of milts and roe, loose bones,
belly bum, pew holes...

Company man now tippy-toed, taller
as the time grows closer, plants a thought
beneath our heads: company clock's a moment slow.

In his eyes we know we're tardy
but stop to look and light a smoke.
He opens his mouth to bring us down.
The whistle blows, we punch in late.

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THE WASHERS'LL WASH IT

There's ten of 'em.
Real young.
All from the canning lines.
They're here 'cause their work's too slow.
They drive the older women crazy.

But I get 'em. working.
Out here's too close.
Ev'ryone knows so and so.
And no one's slow.
Out here we go one speed.

MY JOB

I'm paid to watch and work.
I'm the charge-hand.
I'm union and the foreman's my boss.
If you're having problems
I'll let you know.
So don't go running to the foreman.
I'm your boss and I'll do that.