

Antler

THE WAY I FIGURE IT

The way I figure it
No one should be a slave.
Everyone should be free.
When I think of my own life
 I think Wow,
Already I've worked over five years
 in a factory!
For working that long I deserve
 the rest of my life
 to be a paid vacation.
Then I start thinking of my mother
 and brother and sister
 and friends
Chained to jobs they have to put up with,
Yet my father being dead is free from all that,
But when I think how he only got
 a three week vacation every year,
Or how the 12 hour day 6 day workweek for pittance
 was once taken for granted,
When people got a one week vacation
 in their 20s or 30s
Or a two week vacation
 in their 40s or 50s...
I've got to make up for them by golly!
Why, every day a person works in a factory
I figure that gives them a year's vacation,
So boy oh boy, I gotta lotta vacations
 to live in a single life!
Maybe I'll give a few out to you
 my friends and readers.
Maybe if we all realize we should be
 all making up for the wasted lives
(So many now in the history of humans
 each of us would have to live a million lives
 to make up for all their lost vacations)

She goes by quadra-cane, alone, to buy vegetables and fruit on Cherry St.—a one-way street, easier to cross at ninety. She waits like the railroad ties. The cop directing traffic yells, "Come on, come on, do you think I can wait all day!" She smiles, replying, "Why, if I'd known you were waiting for me, I'd of run across." he'd wait all day if she were nineteen.

After a few hours talking, we settle into silence. I write, she knits, with pencil-thick needles now; with knuckles like crossed roots. Still the motion is smooth as a train over the prairie, tapping. Oak and rail gently rising, falling—breathing—breathing.



S. L. Berry

IN A RESTAURANT WITH WALT WHITMAN

Just coffee, I tell the waitress
and Walt says,
"I think I could turn and live
awhile with the animals. . ."

Darla's not comin' in, I overhear,
She's too upset he just up and
left,
and I blink pouring cream

into the steaming cup
"They do not lie awake
in the dark and weep for
their sins. . ."