



Night Shift: Poets on Work

Edited by [Miriam Goodman](#)

This collection was assembled for a poetry writing workshop that would make work the subject of a bunch of formal experiments and imitations. Poems in *Night Shift* focus on the landscape of work; the voices we hear at work; conflicts between worker and boss, individuals and groups; and civic, social and psychological issues. Some poems dramatize how we cope with the negative aspects of work, others how we enjoy positive work — work that connects us to, rather than separates us from nature, work that connects the individual and humanity.



"Truck with Silos" : A Photo of Boston's Big Dig © Miriam Goodman.

Work has come into its own as a subject of contemporary poetry — something I didn't know would happen when I first made my new corporate life the subject of my poems. I was a thirty-something single mother; I looked for work to support me, my children, and my writing. The software industry took me in as a writer and teacher — work I'm still doing thirty years later. Reading other poets' job experiences and attitudes toward working has been, through the years, a companionship I sought and increasingly find plenty of company in, although work has been a subject of English poetry for a long time. This anthology is brief, the subject, large. I hope it serves to whet your appetite for continued reading and — for those who want to tackle work as subject — for exploration in writing.

— Miriam Goodman

Foreword: ["The Office Microcosm," Michael Casey](#)

["At Forty Doing the Work," Keith Althaus](#)

["Poem of the Dump Sticker Salesman," Keith Althaus](#)

["Womanhood," Catherine Anderson](#)

["Dylan's Fault," Robin Becker](#)

["The Company Pool," Michael Casey](#)

["The Year of Minimum Wage," Guillermo Castro](#)

["Seven Day Diary," Alan Dugan](#)

["Beauty," B.H. Fairchild](#)

["The Women Who Clean Fish," Erica Funkhouser](#)

["The Man in the Open Doorway," Dana Gioia](#)

["In Defense of Desire," Miriam Goodman](#)

["For Alexis," Rodney Jones](#)

["Kalighat Hospice," Marilyn Krysl](#)

["On Digging Out Old Lilacs," Maxine Kumin](#)

["Fish Soup Man," Agnes Lam](#)

["Hooks," Peter Martin](#)

["From the Same Cloth," Helena Minton](#)

["Working the Rice," Aimee Nezhukumatathil](#)

["The Trade of Escape," Elaine Sexton](#)

["In the Bindery," Elaine Terranova](#)
["Broom," Cornelia Veenendaal](#)

Afterword: ["A Spy in the House of Commerce," Dana Gioia](#)

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