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Unemployment (poem)

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John Gery

UNEMPLOYMENT

This uselessness arrests you
like the highway police.
Who's speeding?
you wonder at first
but before you've put away
that part of you assignable,
stacked neatly in your
efficient brain, something
as mysterious as sleep
drags you from this wheel
you've clutched so long
and holds you in contempt.

You plead, your whole face
twisted in disbelief
at such an unbecoming turn
of events. Then you pluck
whatever has gotten you
this far--compliments,
good works, physical love.

But uselessness takes you on
to chaos, justice
of the peace, who will not
let you go. Nor
will your bootless cries
trouble a deaf heaven,
clever enough to have put
plenty of unknowns between
you and it, thick layers
of consciousness hazy
as chalk, its laws full
of directions you now can't
possibly need, as you wait,
delayed, for whatever creep
made all this happen.