

ONE SECOND TO THE NEXT

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It's dangerous, how little the world
convinces me, and then how much, falling
around my feet like this. I wonder if Inspector
308, who approved my pants, feels like I do,
jumping one second to the next
with the candor dropped things have,
coming unstuck. If 308 is a work station,
one worker per shift, my chances are tripled,
doubled. When it was my job to verify the number
of satellite and missile parts per package,
circuit boards, computer chips, shrink-wrapped
in blue plastic, I made it through the day pretending
I was curator for an archaeological dig
on Saturn. I might have been. The parts
were brought to my table by a blinking,
remote-control robot. It took the counted
parts away. Some of them could be in space.
Later, I painted houses, and told myself
I was leaving a record, that I wasn't just charted
in taxes, but in the houses, which were a proof
of how I'd moved my hands. The woman I loved
was moving west. She helped wash me
when I'd come home covered. There's a bottle
of beer and a matchbook in front of me
on the kitchen counter, and like I was saying
about the world, I don't believe this ember's this orange
at the end of my cigarette. I don't believe I've been

let out under the trees down there, looked
in the car lights for my house key, then watched
the brake lights go from here. If I loved a woman
who called from her house near the railroad tracks
when trains were sounding, I'm sure she'd do it
so I'd hear them closer on the phone. 308
must love someone. I love a woman who comes from
Studio City, California, and talks about movie backdrops
constantly, or I want her to. It's dangerous how I want
a landscape that still and collapsable,
a horizon we could dismantle and stack
anytime we wanted, right now if you asked.