

## Four Poems · *Jim Daniels*

### YOU BET

You bet I work safely  
never touch the damn machine  
except to push my two buttons  
and to fuck it up when I'm tired.

When my machine breaks, I sit and wait.  
Santino comes up and says *what's wrong?*  
I just point to the machine  
and thumbs down.

He'd better not touch it—  
it's not his job.  
*See if you can fix it*, he says.  
Not my job. *I ain't touching it—*  
*call my committeeman*, I says.  
He calls Old Green, who plays with it  
a bit then says  
*not my job*  
*need an electrician*  
so an electrician comes  
but he just wants to jive  
with Nita, the fox  
who works on the press  
so I sit and watch  
for half an hour  
then Santino  
gets on his case  
which *is* his job  
and the electrician  
fixes the machine  
which is *his* job  
and I go back to work.

I stand up and push  
my idiot buttons.  
Which is *my* job.  
You bet I work safely.

## ELEPHANTS

The john smells like the elephant house  
at the zoo.

So, I must be an elephant standing here  
emptying my trunk, pressing  
my face into tile.

Elephant jokes were popular once.  
Maybe trying to replace ethnic jokes.  
You couldn't get anyone in here  
to listen to an elephant joke.

I can't go much further with this  
I'm afraid. I must be an elephant.

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I make a headband from paper towels.  
I am an Indian. Splashing water on my face  
from the bathroom stream. I am on a journey.  
I am lost. The face in the mirror  
is my enemy. I splash the water  
and splash the water. I try to breathe.  
I am not an Indian.