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II.

IN FREE TIME

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I.

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I Was Working

My second job was waiting in a window
behind the window of the job I was on

the clock for. My third job was scheduled
for that evening, but not yet

confirmed. My fourth freelance job wasn't active
per se, but I was actively

pursuing clients. After much consideration or
to be more precise, after being forced to act

on what I'd been denying for many years
(and the feeling of finally

acting was like a breath
of air and the air very much

like the vacuum left
when a train rides next to then

past you on the subway
platform), I decided to quit

everything but work. I quit my friends and quit
living with the human I shared a life with, for I

was about to quit everything we shared. My meals
became quick, I stopped seeing

a therapist. That perfectly abstract
yet persistent weight on my body and psyche at last

let up. It rained. Information became
fluid. Smooth. I could now fully take on

the professionalized work that somehow generated
getting and doing more professionalized

work, which was the only way out
of the perfectly abstract yet persistent

weight. It wasn't the more jobs I had
the more money I made. It was

the more jobs I had, the more
I could work. I didn't have to answer

to a therapist about why no pleasure. I could
have no pleasure, and work. No one needed

me because I quit everyone, so
my attention could always be split in four

places at once—my first job, my second, my
third, my fourth. At any point a fifth

would come along, automatically multiplying
as they tended to. When I did arrive home, the human I once shared

a life with wasn't there to say, I'm so happy
to see you. No one was happy to see me, and so

at last I could work. No one said it's okay. It wasn't
okay, thus my work flourished. And though

they once loved me, no one
reached me. Meanwhile, new

platforms continued
to make themselves available

I'm depressed to only now have discovered

This great poet
Imagine if I'd discovered her earlier, I'd be rich
Oh! the poems I would not have written, inspired
By reading her
Had I read her earlier, I would've thought *this*
Is it—and the desire to write
Would drain from my body
In service of us all
And I would move on
To making money
To acting, maybe
Or farming
Or simply to being of use in some other
Less painful way