

Self-Employed

By David Ignatow

For Harvey Shapiro

I stand and listen, head bowed,
to my inner complaint.
Persons passing by think
I am searching for a lost coin.
You're fired, I yell inside
after an especially bad episode.
I'm letting you go without notice
or terminal pay. You just lost
another chance to make good.
But then I watch myself standing at the exit,
depressed and about to leave,
and wave myself back in wearily,
for who else could I get in my place
to do the job in dark, airless conditions?

David Ignatow, "Self-Employed" from *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994*.

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