

(a poem sampler from)

Looking at Tree Bark

by

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Campus Bowling Alley

It is an oddity of the afternoon when
students evaporate so Hamlet can be
heard speaking with his father's ghost

about filial duty. A man in his thirties
and a male child alight upon the alley
nearest my table to disturb Hamlet's

eternal struggle. The child lacked the
striking strength of the man frame
upon frame as frustration overtook

me as I held my breath with each
attempt he made to control the too
heavy weight. He knocked over

four pins once and I cheered almost
but his spare attempt again floundered
into the gutter as I hid my empathy

behind *Hamlet*. "Do you want to
leave?" the man asked. "No" said
the boy "I want to do it like you."

Soliloquy

To build or not to build—that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
the slings and arrows of financial collapse
or to takes arms against free market delusions
and by supporting our own—end them.

To die, to sleep, no more and in our sleep
to say we end the heartache of the thousand
unnatural shocks Wall Street is prone to. 'Twas
a consumer-nation devoutly self-reliant.

But now, to die, to sleep, to sleep perchance
to dream of days of yore. Ay, there's the rub
for in this sleep of trade imbalance what
nightmares have come as we have shuffled
our factories off to slave-mongering shores
coiled for shareholder's profits—no pause for
humanity, a calamity for generations to come.

For who can bear the whips and scorns of
Wall Street recklessness, the oppressive
trade deficit, our willful ignorance, the insolence
of political party collusion and the spurns
of our impatient, unworthy, empty, outsourced
economy? Then we ourselves can not our
quietus make—due to a bare bank-vault!

Who would these fardels bear to grunt
and sweat under this collective madness
but that the dread of something worse
than death—the multinational company
whose shelves bring only debt—puzzles
the consumer and makes us bear cheap
items at big box stores rather than fly to
'American made' which we know not of?

Thus ignorance will make paupers of us all.
And thus the native hue of totalitarian
resolve has sicklied o'er with a pale cast
our thoughts on freedom and our lack of great
enterprise buries this moment of our stupidity
to regard their products—which are turned
against us, as we lose the name of consumer.