

Poem

The Unseen

I often wonder if, below the surface
of my skin, beneath the mirrored self,
my parts and pieces, hardworking organs
all, are faltering in their lifelong jobs
or plotting a heartfelt strike. What old slight
they may be nursing, what injury might

linger. I wonder (don't you?) what might
misfire or blow up, beneath a surface
only whisper-thin, a scarred and slight
gauze of tissue, full of mementoes of the self
as child, teenager, through hazardous jobs

in the real world. And yet, as body organs
go, skin is the largest. And as organs
go, it is the one that wrinkles and sags. You might
say skin is the canary whose deep job's
now in cruel light. It surveys the surface,
cheeps louder daily to warn the vain self
that disaster lurks; corporeal mine shafts, slight

veins and arteries are collapsing. That sleight
of hand we all employ, denial, organs
within find laughable. They think our self-
preservation plans are a bedlamite's
dreams. Beneath that silent surface
they've been toiling too long at their same old jobs;

retirement looms. Just as hated jobs
we've worked for inadequate pay and slight
recognition rankled even as our faces
smiled for the boss, *yes sir; yes ma'am*, organs
of administration tried as they might
to win our loyalty but you yourself

know what that was worth. The rebel self
moved on, one day just quit; that dead end job's
final day sudden, without warning. Might
be you left a favourite co-worker, or had slight
impact on those you left behind. Organza
dress, dress shoes, their surfaces

shined and buffed — the self, a slight body
on display now — all jobs done — let the church organs
blast mightily, only surface remains.

Cathy Barber

cathy.ann.barber@gmail.com

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