

# WORK POETRY/ POÉSIE DE TRAVAIL

## Keep Going

“the old shear man speaks:  
during the war a power outage wouldn't stop them  
they worked on by candlelight  
riveting ships bound for atlantic convoys”

— David Conn

the booking office late at night  
between surgeries I have time  
to type out David's poems for the publisher

the guy on the phone is rounding up relief nurses  
Anne it's me. Would you like to work evening on 3 North?  
Bill, can you work double shift tomorrow? Thanks,  
I knew you'd be overjoyed.

Hospitals always have emergency generators  
when the power went off at the General, the lights flicked on again  
within two or three seconds  
somehow we are really afraid of hospitals without electricity  
the show must go on.  
it isn't a bit romantic to operate by candlelight  
the swinging kerosene lantern shining into the wound? No sir

The continuous crews of wartime factories  
have nothing on us: the OR runs all night  
blocked grafts, pacemakers, incomplete miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy  
fractured legs and skulls, Caesarean section, 2 a.m. knife wounds  
one after the other carried in past silently mopping cleanup crews

On my shift too I drive hundreds of fine silk rivets  
into tubby hulls  
bound only for the battles  
of lower Granville Street

K.B. Emmott

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