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On Being Beaten by the Beat

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On Being Beaten by the Beat

John Van Rys

The yoke galls us hour by hour,
grand schemes or dishes in the sink-
hole of the daylight dying.

Our mortgaged rooms balloon
with comic sighs and our borrowed
and banked on automobiles sputter
with brow spit.

Plans, plans, pains, dead-
lines forming in our rapid
eye movement dreams, twitching limbs,
recalling the day's quota of rejection
slipped under the locked
eye lids.

Our brains swell like sponges,
blow up with self-
importance, desks piled high
with correspondence (containing
chains of significant signifiers),
chips packed with retrievable bits (waiting
bridesmaids, worn-out Solomon's
concubines), paper notes piled
in pools (reminders to self to remember
when)—all rotting leaves
thickening, obscuring earth.

Here-now, the extortioner Responsible
squeezes shut our hours
till we strike the clock and cry
"No more! We will relax,
neglect, not worry ourselves
to death."

But the clock we thought licked
Is but a little bit ticked—
and ticks, ticks, ticks still
in our brain and blood's pulse.