

Return on Investment

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About the Work:

“Return on Investment” is a poem about management responsibility. It was written during my career in management consulting as a way to come to terms with my frustration with abusive supervisors with whom I interacted or observed.

Key words: Abusive supervision, ethics, harassment, meaning of work

About the Author:

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Return on Investment

Inexorable this damned
 cold sore
 whose rise
 coincides with his
 a complex acquisition
 in an otherwise
 simply bullish outlook

Lip service
 he to she
 "ooh, my pleasure"
 "you don't (have a) mind,
 do you?"
 "please bring me
 yesterday's figures"
 copping a feel
 on her
 way out
 before she
 sounds the horn

Stop loss
 on v 1.0
 and her
 graying areas
 a failed integration
 a conflict of interest
 a discontinued operation

And their subsidiaries
 spun off
 for dividends
 on his
 work
 life
 and his business class

High flying
 interfaces
 with a smooth laptop screen
 and intercourse
 with a low slung lap dancer
 (also smooth)

"Looking good"
he to he
 taking in this man made to measure
unraveling a thread
 of material
 nonpublic information
and strangling ties
 that bind
 him to him
 cool customers
 in this
 red collared world

A surly smile
 pries off a scab
 fluttering down
 down
into the fifth
 martini
 martini
 martini
 martini
 martini
its ripples reflecting
 so much warmth in his cheeks
 a moist red cavern
 and a very
 cold
 stare
 that is his
 return on investment.