

ROUTINES

After a while the body doesn't want to work.
When the alarm clock rings in the morning
the body refuses to get up. "You go to work if you're so keen,"
it says. "Me, I'm going back to sleep."
I have to nudge it in the ribs to get it out of bed.
If I had my way I'd just leave you here, I tell it
as it stands blinking. *But I need you to carry your end of the load.*

I take the body into the bathroom
intending to start the day as usual with a healthy dump.
But the body refuses to perform.
Come on, come on, I say between my teeth.
Produce, damn you. It's getting late.
"Listen, this is all your idea," the body says.
"If you want some turds so badly you provide 'em.
I'd just as soon be back in bed."
I give up, flush, wash and go make breakfast.
Pretty soon I'm at work. All goes smoothly enough
until the first break. I open my lunchpail
and start to munch on some cookies and milk.
"Cut that out," the body says, burping loudly.
"It's only a couple of hours since breakfast.
And two hours from this will be lunch, and two hours after that
will be the afternoon break. I'm not a machine
you can force-feed every two hours.
And it was the same yesterday, too . . ."
I hurriedly stuff an apple in its mouth to shut it up.

By four o'clock the body is tired
and even more surly. It will hardly speak to me
as I drive home. I bathe it, let it lounge around.
After supper it regains some of its good spirits.
But as soon as I get ready for bed it starts to make trouble.
Look, I tell it, I've explained this over and over.
I know it's only ten o'clock but we have to be up in eight hours.

If you don't get enough rest, you'll be dragging around all day tomorrow again, cranky and irritable.

"I don't care," the body says. "It's too early.

When do I get to have any fun? If you want to sleep go right ahead. I'm going to lie here wide awake until I feel good and ready to pass out."

It is hours before I manage to convince it to fall asleep.

And only a few hours after that the alarm clock sounds again.

"Must be for you," the body murmurs. "You answer it."

The body rolls over. Furious, and without saying a word, I grab one of its feet and begin to yank it toward the edge of the bed.

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