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## One Second to the Next

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## ONE SECOND TO THE NEXT

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*Aaron Anstett*

It's dangerous, how little the world convinces me, and then how much, falling around my feet like this. I wonder if Inspector 308, who approved my pants, feels like I do, jumping one second to the next with the candor dropped things have, coming unstuck. If 308 is a work station, one worker per shift, my chances are tripled, doubled. When it was my job to verify the number of satellite and missile parts per package, circuit boards, computer chips, shrink-wrapped in blue plastic, I made it through the day pretending I was curator for an archaeological dig on Saturn. I might have been. The parts were brought to my table by a blinking, remote-control robot. It took the counted parts away. Some of them could be in space. Later, I painted houses, and told myself I was leaving a record, that I wasn't just charted in taxes, but in the houses, which were a proof of how I'd moved my hands. The woman I loved was moving west. She helped wash me when I'd come home covered. There's a bottle of beer and a matchbook in front of me on the kitchen counter, and like I was saying about the world, I don't believe this ember's this orange at the end of my cigarette. I don't believe I've been

let out under the trees down there, looked  
in the car lights for my house key, then watched  
the brake lights go from here. If I loved a woman  
who called from her house near the railroad tracks  
when trains were sounding, I'm sure she'd do it  
so I'd hear them closer on the phone. 308  
must love someone. I love a woman who comes from  
Studio City, California, and talks about movie backdrops  
constantly, or I want her to. It's dangerous how I want  
a landscape that still and collapsable,  
a horizon we could dismantle and stack  
anytime we wanted, right now if you asked.