

## Stancliff's Lament

James McMurtry

Too old to work for wages  
No time left to kill  
Put your eggs in one basket  
Mind that basket don't spill  
You've got to be successful  
Just to be all right  
Lest the old man's ghost comes walking  
In the middle of the night

Spend some years in the business  
Learn how the big boys play  
Marry your high school sweetheart  
Man don't let her get away  
And if it don't work out  
You can walk away without a stitch  
Wreckage in the rearview mirror  
Bouncing down a roadside ditch

It's behind you now  
It's behind you now  
The worst was over long ago  
Pat yourself on the back  
Stand up and take a bow

There's voices all around you  
They're yelling Go Team  
You're sitting at the top of the bleachers  
Staring at a laptop screen  
You can't waste a minute  
You can't waste a one  
The minutes are bought and paid for  
At least till the job gets done

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They're holding all of your phone calls  
But it's no relief  
You're staring out the smoked glass window  
At the cars down on the cloverleaf  
And a picture of a kid with a ball glove smiling at  
The lense  
And a woman on a sailboat  
And all those years you just had to hope they'd bend  
Well you pushed so hard you bent so far  
That they won't either one get straight again

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