

Stagnation and the ultimate desire to break free from the rut of factory work

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Stagnation and the ultimate desire to break free from the rut of factory work are the key themes of David Dominguez poetic narrative *Work Done Right*. Unlike other books, the story unfolds in verses and meter rather than the usual paragraphs and chapters.

However, the method used still captures the essence of the main character's personal journey from being stuck at a Sausage processing plant and finally striking it out in the world which was triggered by the death of his only friend Guillermo. Also the use of poetry as chapters allows more vivid images. It allows the readers to supply the unspoken words in the story with their own ideas of work, freedom and growth.

By the use of poetry and stanzas Abraham's day to day struggle in the factory and the constant wish to get out become more felt. In the end, the decision to "quit" the job is felt as a major turning point in his life as well as an epiphany of sorts, where after several poems about the dangers of using big machines, the boredom in industry work and the routine lifestyle, is magnified for the reader to actually feel good about freedom.

There are many important elements in the entire narrative. There is death, friendship, hardship, menial labor, the plight of workers as modern day slaves, love and most importantly growth, search for one's identity and liberation. Abraham, the main voice in the story, can be likened to an apprentice or a young lad who still has high spirits about the world and who finds everything interesting.

Abraham, "the great-grandson of Alberto, a Mexican soldier who crouched below a shrub of honey mesquite and buried in his uniform" (Between

Magnolia and Ash, 3), descends from a line of immigrants. The history Alberto, his great grandfather, is shown in the first poem where it is told that he was caught ravaging a young woman which was the reason why he was perhaps banished from the land. This story begins what can be called hardship because from estate owner, the Alberto clan became poor with nothing but “ a cart and a young mare” to their name (4).

The second poem would explain the present condition of Abraham. Like all high-spirited youths, he means to travel the world with his second-hand pickup truck with nothing but “ two pairs of jeans, a few T-shirts, and a pair of work boots” (Mi Historia, 7).

What can be seen here is that Abraham has become independent and is out looking for a job. He does not like to have a dead-end life because it feels like that his liking for the road speaks of his wish to go on and on in a journey for himself. In the same poem, it is revealed that Abraham wants to right his own history—not the history of men, of earth or of anyone else but his own. Again, he does not want to get stuck at becoming some stereotype and it is felt that he is hell bent on making sure that he makes a name—a history for himself which is a grand ambition for a young teen.

Following this brief history of Abraham’s life, the author now zooms in to the main setting of the story which is the Galdini Sausage factory. Abraham applies for the job perhaps eager to earn money to pay for his needs now that he is on his own. He is a newcomer to the factory but settles in quite easily because of the welcoming factory workers who helped him out. However, his senses are assaulted by the overwhelming stench of raw pork meat.

He notes that “ “ pork gripped the men and was everywhere, in the form of blood, in the form of fat, and in pink meat stuck to the worker's shoes” (Pig, 11). The title of the poem chapter captures the lingering stench of raw material and thoughts of hours of hard work along with the overwhelming sense of industrial slavery if not stagnation. Put differently, the smell of pig and the fact that bits and pieces of raw meat are stuck everywhere immediately gives to the readers a feeling of being trapped.

The pervasiveness of pig meat is a powerful imagery that it brings up the emotion of hopelessness and desperation. Abraham even observes that “ one man stood straight up into the sky, closed his eyes, and with his thumb and forefinger worked out bits of meat from his eyelashes” (ibid.). This only goes to show that the workers there have dedicated their lives to their work so much so that parts of their work turn up in different places in their bodies and clothes. Still, Abraham attempts to work in the factory. Despite the dirty job involve he pushes on determined perhaps to make some money and become an adult.

He starts work with “ strange men” who are his co-workers. The scene is a little bit hostile because Abraham does not yet know how to use the machine and how to cut the links. He is at once intimidated by a co-worker who they call Mamas who is able to cut links with precision for hours on end. As if by way of comparison, he notices that his job was “ ‘Woman's work’ ” and he feels that his “ nicked-up knuckles began to burn and fray with blood, [while] Mamas move her hands with grace” (Contigo 13).

The image that is shown is one of a newcomer trying to keep at pace with a veteran in the factory. Yet the differences in their skills do not deter Abraham from taking on the job, but only reminds him of distant memories from the past of another woman with the same slender hands (ibid.).

It is important to point out that at the very first day of his work Abraham's thoughts begin to wander around. He is physically manning the grinder but his mind is elsewhere. This is indicative of the fact that he is the type of person who will not like to be tied down to one place or to one activity. Immediately after watching his co-workers work, his thoughts take him back to memories of his grandfather, to empanadas and to other days when he was still a young child. He compares the life of an adult filled with so many problems and responsibilities to a child who is carefree and is free from any obligation.