

Philip Levine

On a day cold enough to kill poetry,
Philip Levine died.
They feed they lion. They lie so
he goes unheeded, so
we have no time for living or Levine
amid the monotonous clacking and cracks
or slope of our shoulders to the keyboard.
We're fat and tired and at our dead-
line piled in the towering offices at the dead-
end where the factories once stood.
I'm a step further from where I was headed.
Oil drenched through Detroit's work-gloves,
the windchill aching into the Midwest's
bones like a shift on the brake line.
Can you imagine the air filled with smoke?
On a break, maybe after the lunch bell,
yes. They feed they lion, Phil.

—*Tim West*

This occasional verse refers to Philip Levine, the revered Detroit-area blue-collar poet, who died on February 14 of this year at the age of 87. —Eds.