

# Men at the Gates

They wait at the gates  
in flannel shirts and  
heavy denim pants.  
They wait for the gates to open,  
the whistle to blow  
signaling change of shift.  
They wait for the mill jobs  
to come back, with wages  
that will feed a family,  
wages to be proud of.  
They wait in the parking lot  
where one-stop-shoppers  
now, twenty-five years later,  
look through them like ghosts.  
They wait in a rain  
of gadgets and plunder,  
companies from somewhere else  
picking their pockets  
trying to sell them everything  
they don't need at bargain  
prices.  
They wait for the world  
to make sense again,  
where calluses grow on your  
hands  
and the soreness in your back  
means you're worth a damn.



**From *Writers' Almanac*, Friday, October 12, 2007**

**Poem: "Men at the Gates" by Gary L. Lark, from *Men at the Gates*.**

**© Finishing Line Press, 2007. Reprinted with permission.**