

CICADA

SHAUN TAN







Cicada work in tall building.
Data entry clerk. Seventeen year.
No sick day. No mistake.
Tok Tok Tok!



Seventeen year. No promotion.
Human resources say cicada not human.
Need no resources.
Tok Tok Tok!



No cicada allowed in office bathroom.
Cicada go downtown. Twelve blocks.
Each time company dock pay.
Tok Tok Tok!



Human never finish work.
Cicada always stay late. Finish work.
Nobody thank cicada.
Tok Tok Tok!



Human coworker no like cicada.
Say things. Do things.
Think cicada stupid.
Tok Tok Tok!



Cicada no afford rent.
Live in office wallspace.
Company pretend not know.
Tok Tok Tok!



Seventeen year. Cicada retire.
No party. No handshake.
Boss say clean desk.
Tok Tok Tok!



No work. No home. No money.
Cicada go to top of tall building.
Time to say goodbye.
Tok Tok Tok!













Cicada all fly back to forest.
Sometimes think about human.
Can't stop laughing.

Tok Tok Tok!





閑かさや
岩にしみ入る
蟬の声

*calm and serene
the sound of a cicada
penetrates the rock*

Matsuo Bashō (1644–94)
trans. Yuzuru Miura

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