

At Franklin, corner Quay, Uneeda, a cyclone fence blockades your lot, two padlocked gates secured with heavy chains. The workers of W.H. Christian Uniform park their cars on you. A quiet life for you, no need to earn your keep. The gates are locked, all right, but loose, and I slip through. I trace the paths of Jacob (gone) and Ben (gone) and Saul (old man in Florida.) And I (not gone!) would like to look above the boarded doorway for that snapshot, maybe left, forgotten. Or if not, just see the small square space where it hung, a little brighter than the grit and grime around it.*

**Note: Much to the author's dismay, this building that housed the former Shechter family service station was razed after this essay was written.*

FACING THE MIRROR

Darrell Petska

You're lucky I'm not Donald Trump.
Your performance to date's been
spotty at best. I'll abide no excuses.
You're six decades in! I expect
more of a person with assets like those!
My patience grows thin.
I'm tired of these pep talks.
And by the way what's with that
hair on your chin? There's no hiding
from me. Your objectives aren't met,
and that's disappointing. You're
stand-offish with colleagues and friends,
churlish with your family. And face it:
your work could improve.
Do I make myself clear? I know you try,
and midlife's confusing, but this
isn't TV. There's no silver medal.
I've told you a thousand times
you only get out what you put in!
It's a new day, bud. There's still
gas in your tank, so get out there and
do this in style! You know, when you try,
you're almost pleasant being around.
You're not fired. There's a Donald for that.
But report back tomorrow with better results.
And see to that chin!