

I Don't Think He Had Any Intention to Hire

after Philip Levine

since the clock ticked so discretely
That daylight ebbed down

Without the squeak of drawers, or remote
Clack of computer keys. No

Sound of work—no workers—passed
Through his doors, like a bomb

Packed in a bag, waiting for time
To go off. Explosively, he exhaled,

Drummed shut a thought, held
Wound a fact, favored a

Posture of parsimony. "This
Business is coming back," he

Said, before shaking and
Swiveling me out. "We'll

Be in touch." He lightly scaled
The sounds, touched the back

Of my hope, scurried: a shame
-faced guest, its pilled coat

Unbuttoned. His words hung like
dust motes, tossed from his lungs

Into boredom, their flat music straining
My shoulders, marring the prosperous air.