

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Hugo dos Santos: Two Poems

Hugo dos Santos · Saturday, October 25th, 2025

*These poems are from the upcoming collection, **Reduction in Force** (Bauhan Publishing, 2026), winner of the May Sarter New Hampshire Poetry Prize.*

\*

### Control

More interviews and I play the part  
though beneath my skin there are only  
hollowed out caves following deeper  
and in loops.

To be in final interviews that aren't final,  
to pick up the same conversations  
again, at different times, in  
different processes for  
different companies.

In between the interviews I apply to yet more jobs  
and catalog my documents in  
a spreadsheet so ornately architected  
I could submit it as its own work sample.

Then more interviews and I am a blank gaze,  
a piece of clothing strewn on the floor  
and unable to give itself shape.

More interviews and my circle marvels  
because I have so many and  
they're constant

though even when they're good  
it's a different me now.

I mean, whose interviewed voice is this describing

the professional experiences I have lived?

I am a ghost, pretending to be myself.  
There is no substance here.

I cannot usher forth any excellence  
in myself. All the amazing things  
I did in previous jobs—where are they  
now? Were they even real?

I am not in control here.  
And there is nothing I can do to prove  
I am enough.

\*

### **Dress for the job you want**

Still, these  
humid summer  
days, I wear  
a collared shirt

to sit in  
the basement,  
observe something  
resembling

schedule, which  
might be just a habit,  
something not unlike  
superstition.

\*\*

*(Featured image from Pexels)*

This entry was posted on Saturday, October 25th, 2025 at 6:11 am and is filed under [Poetry](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.