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# Typing

de  
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*(fragmento en inglés)*

*An office with two desks and two swivel chairs. Two typewriters and a telephone on each desk, and two clerks: Smith (in his mid-twenties) and Stewart (in his mid-forties). They are sitting there, typing "something" (sometimes it's like they are playing a piano, sometimes it's like a game, sometimes they push the same key in a monotone way or as they were trying to kill a mosquito who flies over the keyboard). A lot of papers everywhere and some origami figures on the floor and on the furniture of the office. It's like a stage of Kafka's The Trial, bureaucratic atmosphere with filing cabinets and folders everywhere. Smith seems to be very bored, suddenly he stops typing and looks at his colleague, Stewart.*

SMITH

Excuse me, Stewart, exactly... What are you writing?

STEWART

A document, you know...

SMITH

....I see, a... a document...

STEWART

Yes, you know, one of... those...

SMITH

One of those... yeah... You know, to tell the truth, every now and then I think that I'm just typing the same thing, over and over. Just exactly the same.

STEWART

What do you mean?

SMITH

It's always the same, yesterday, the day before that, last week, every day the same, the only thing that changes is the date!

STEWART

Well, no, I hadn't noticed anything. But since I don't really read them...

SMITH

You don't read them? So... how can you...?

STEWART

It's a question of technique... After so many years, you learn.... Ignore the words, just look at the letters and type.

SMITH

So you don't understand anything of what you are typing? And you don't mind?

STEWART

Nothing at all! That's the secret. If they're only letters, not words, then there is no meaning! It's great! Don't you see?

*(Stewart looks happy and continues typing very cheerful, as if he were playing a piano)*

SMITH

I see. So you don't notice if it's the same document, do you?... It scares me sometimes... it's as if we were always trapped in the same day... The date changes on the top of the page, one day, another day, another... doing the same thing over and over again... and the neverending typing sound drilling into my ears... at night, in bed, I still hear it, do you know?

STEWART

That's called routine, my friend. But routine has good things too. It's safe: you know exactly how your day is going to be, without surprises...

SMITH

...and the next day, and the next, and the next... and the next week... and the next month, repeating the same over and over.... even though you seem happy here.

STEWART

Yes, it's warm, isn't it? Since they installed the new heater

SMITH

I mean the work, it seems like you like it

STEWART

It's easy, quiet...

SMITH

Yes, but don't you think that it's useless? It's like repeating the same thing, again, and again, and again...

STEWART

...like a machine

SMITH

Exactly! Like a machine!

STEWART

Yes, it's great!

SMITH

Great? Really? You think it's great?

STEWART

*(With some nostalgia in his voice)*

Don't look at me like that. Yes... now I do, but I remember a time when I used to read the documents, trying to understand them... *(he laughs)* when I asked questions, and I tried to improve... to do a good job, perfect, all day with the witeout, erasing and erasing... so naive! Such a good employee, such.... Such an idiot!.. and those stabbing pains in the back of my neck all the time *(he touches his neck, remembering the pain)* And now, look at me, fresh as a rose... I'm just a machine, and you know what? I feel better. You just have to separate the letters from the words.

SMITH

... but it doesn't make sense...

STEWART

What sense? What do you mean? This always happens with the new employees... They try to understand everything... it's so ridiculous! This is what it is: stay eight hours, paycheck at the end of the month... Don't dwell on it. If it's the same... then it's even easier, and if all of a sudden you need more excitement, underline a title with red ink, drink tea instead of decaf or sniff some of the witeout... But routine, I'm telling you, is not a bad place to be. It's safe, and even cozy! But if you are always asking, does this make sense, does this make sense?... Then no. This is a serious work.

*(Smith tries to type in another way, more "automatic")*

SMITH

So, you mean... like this?... only letters, not words.... r,e,g,u,l,a,t,i,o,n *(typing)*

STEWART

No sentences... no meaning... it's easier like this, you'll see! Try it, try it!

*(Smith, resigned, tries for a while to type like a machine but he can't. Meanwhile Stewart is typing very happily, like playing a piano)*

SMITH

But I can't! It's not possible! I always end up reading the words. It's habit, since I was a kid, you put the letters together and automatically words appear *(bragging)* besides, you must know that I used to write poetry before I took the Civil Service Exam, I wrote some wonderful verses for my girlfriend!!

STEWART

Poetry? You should get that checked out, I think they make medication for that. It's bad for you, it'll give you a pain in the neck *(he touches his neck)*

SMITH *(he touches his neck too)*

Could be, now that you mention it....

STEWART

Mmm. Those haikus can really fester. You should stop reading, at the end of the day it only brings you trouble. Look at me, fresh as a rose! *(He pathetically broadens his chest, a scrawny and grey employee)*

SMITH

But, how do you quit reading? It's like breathing..

STEWART

I'll tell you my secret, pretend that letters are numbers and then you only have to add them up, an A is 1, a B is 2, a C is 3...In the end, all you have is numbers, no words, it's easier like this and you'll sleep better, for sure. Actually, this word thing is only decoration ... deep down, the only thing left is numbers, the paycheck every month, the mortgage that you have to pay, the car insurance... the loan from the bank...

SMITH

It seems like math

STEWART

Yes It's great! Don't you think so? For instance, today I have 25347...*(reading)*

SMITH

And are you able to avoid reading?

STEWART

It's just practice... 16 years... one learns... *(laughing)* At the beginning I thought about the words... and it was a mistake. Numbers are more specific, what you are paid, what you have to pay... words are very ambiguous... they only bring problems...

SMITH

That's true... and pain in the neck *(touching it)*

*(They continue typing and suddenly a light illuminates the boss. He stands in a corner of the stage behind a venetian blind just beside a door that says BOSS. He is dialing a telephone. Smith's phone rings)*

BOSS

Hi Smith, I'm calling to check if I have your number right

SMITH

I guess, since you are calling me...

BOSS

Let's check then.... 567 298 444

SMITH

No... 487 225 162!

BOSS

what? sorry, again.... 567

SMITH

No, 487 225 162

BOSS

What? Again, I didn't hear you...567

SMITH

No, 487 225 162

BOSS

Are you sure?