

The Executive Assistant's Astral Existence

*"I'm a bit perplexed by all the attention paid to me,
when it is the comet that deserves the credit,"*

—Yuji Hyakutake

I look down from the astral plane with a bigger-
than-boss-size view of the office, each cubby &
copier, every working soul's contacts & calendar.

That's why I took this job:

An Exec Assistant, I can glide anywhere—I'm
supposed to be invisible. Because virtuous,

cheerful, efficient, easy to slide from the surface
and watch the spheres turn in this
human world made of Chap-stick,

breath mints, spare pair of glasses
so sight is never misplaced.
Pills white as snow, potent enough

to parry an avalanche of panic. My boss
stashes a mirror that magnifies & red lipstick
so her nine-to-five mouth speaks the same

dialect as the other mouths. Up here in the ether, no
one is speaking; I can hear everything. Some
are logomaniacs, some can't get a word in.

Each voice a string plucked, a lack amplified
from childhood. The past polyphonic
in the present: someone's operatic

mother, TV-remote father. Contrapuntal
in conference rooms, copy
rooms, corridors, layered into every office

encounter, counteracting the main melody, the actual
work day. No one's exempt, no matter how
lofty their title. I grab my boss coffee,

no sugar, board my astral vehicle every morning,
enter my winged coordinates
in my eternal reminders. From up here,

I hear the hurt ticking in every heart hired.
How can I remind them we're
also composed of the stars, the fifth element,

an inaudible harmony. Some of them never
bother to greet me, never call me by name:
Fortunia Antares Hyakutake.