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Marathon for a Union

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"The revolution is here. [. . .] This is a marathon, not a sprint."
—Christian Smalls, US labor organizer, *The Guardian*, April 10, 2022

In worn sneakers,
the workers gather
listen intently and pound the pavement
to protect themselves and their families
in this new gilded age upon the world.

The workers scurry across the acres of cement
warehouses and crowded assembly lines filled
with cardboard boxes and cartons and products.
(Somebody awaits this endless serpentine of stuff!)

Timed monitors on ankles and arms
with handheld devices timing the seconds
of worker-driven, ergonomic economics
and agile metrics, rates, and speeds for the corps.

Beneath the push and pound and aches of output,
the workers unite for the marathon of endurance
they know so well with many hurdles of tasks
and paramount operations and orders to fill
fast—day in, day out—of endless
laboring!

The dignity of the marathon runners reaches
the working masses, a swelling of the sweating and tears
of Chrises and Jasons and Xiomaras at MTA bus stops
with shared rides and tent gatherings for victories,
for a brave run, a necessary race, as one.