

MOTEL
by John Bennett

When I wake at night, a guest
of the John Bennett Inn, I'm careful
not to curse the sloppy cleaning job

done behind the toilet in my bathroom,
because I'm the manager and staff,
and can predict what's coming on the

comment cards at check-out. So I won't
complain of the room service food,
or disorderly sex next door, either.

But at 4am, when I wander to my sofa
to beat sleep with late night TV, I wouldn't
mind a caring concierge to jolt me with

questions:

How are you, sir?

Are you enjoying your time here?

Has your stay been satisfactory?

There are some motels whose vacancy
lights blink, then blank off, proofing another
word for the world's tired eyes.

Months of ignoring the flickering V, A and C,
the Innkeeper has finally ordered new
bulbs to make the business statement clear.

I'd be a fool to believe I couldn't assume
what's been dimmed — what's happening
by what's left unattended — and by silent

distraction I couldn't read
what's always been there.