

Free will in the late capitalist era

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [December 24, 2014](#) issue

The long slow mills have no choice, the freeway has no choice. The empty fields have no choice, when the snow falls they agree to turn white and later muddy, when the sun burns they parch and crack, learn to be tough. What choice do I have, wakened at dawn, bleary and empty, except to stand up and totter on, slowly gather the pieces of myself, the day ahead ordinary or not, who will arrive and who depart, on the radio a new calamity far away. Eat something, drink something, pull on my shoes and coat and walk through the backyard of the brick house whose owners moved out months ago, the knobby grass soggy from the last rains, smelly gifts from the neighbors' dogs hiding in the hollows. I have no choice and I'm one of the lucky ones, one of the last ones, who else will have such an easy sweet time of it, tucked into this town like a child into bed, free to leave any time I can afford it. What else can I do but slide my card in the slot, pull open the door, trudge up the stairs to the desk where the whole day is waiting?