

# STRIKE VOTE

When you've got a tough nut to crack, a rusted bolt, and a lug wrench with a short handle, the only tool worth its name is a pipe working people call, "The Persuader."

You know what I mean. To borrow a phrase from Phillip Levine, "if you're old enough to read this, you know what work is." You slip the pipe over the handle of the wrench and suddenly you've got *leverage*. You've doubled your strength and that stubborn nut gives. It feels good. Real and good and strong.

A strike vote is a persuader. It changes the conversation. It translates the word powerless into dangerous, silly into serious, begging into bargaining.

A strong strike vote gives the union leverage.

If you're old enough to read this, you know how important leverage is when you argue with the boss. Without leverage you feel like a worm, that is, you squirm. But when all your brothers and sisters stand up with you and express in a vote their willingness to strike, the persuader changes the conversation and suddenly you've got a tool as convincing as a pistol in a duel.

Let me put this another way. What good is a nail without a hammer? Why bargain at all if you can't drive the point home — without labor there is no profit.

A union that doesn't vote overwhelmingly to strike, isn't engaged in collective bargaining so much as collective begging.

If your bargaining committee suggests that a strike vote isn't necessary, you know for certain they've already made their deal and the workers got screwed. In which case the persuader is a resounding rejection of the tentative agreement and public ridicule of the traitors.

Get ready. In this age of collective begging every worker should carry the pipe of solidarity to persuade the opposition our conviction is as hardy as our desire to provide prosperity for our families.

A strike vote is the best tool for cracking tough nuts.

"What Work Is" by Phillip Levine