

Brian Builta

## **Departure Wake**

Like baby shoes, never worn, his orange work gloves.  
These empty fingers gather dust  
until I slip into the leather hands  
to trash his childhood. For a while  
he coaxed sparks from glowing metal  
by edge grinding and anvil hammering.  
He would've choked on a desk job,  
could've been a snowplower  
unfrolicking flakes. Instead,  
the kid forged a can of ash.  
In his departure wake are touchstones  
buried under broken glass.  
Carabiner clinch, soapstone, nylon cords,  
a muffin tin for melted metal. All to the dump  
to the dump to the dump dump dump.  
All's left now is musty metal sweat smell,  
fine particulates hanging in the air,  
always something bit in the teeth of the vice.  
I haul it all away and am left with a jagged  
collection of shards and worn-down blades  
I keep for faltering forward,  
my hands sweaty and safe inside  
the orange work gloves he never wore.