

Simon Perchik

Half jack, half when the ace
finds its way back
and the vague stomp
each time you deal a spade

--you teach the kids
dead ends and random turns
half cards, half burial grass

--you say take the risk
bet! and suddenly the black jack
will fall to your knees
and dragged out the deck

--you deal with those dead sparks
from the sun smothered by pennies
the way each night is born again
as laughter safe inside this table

hid by a milky thread
and your eyes not yet ready
for the light or if the next card
is the other end you leave behind.

You shave so the rain
can't stop --twice every day
as if the sky were twins

half shoreless, half too heavy
and these rotary blades
reaching take-off speed

--you climb the way this mirror
fills with water, becomes some boy
shaking a tree, expects your hair

will drop safely in the sink
though Norelco claims the motor
runs even in a shower

--what does it know about rain
or accuracy or for hours
the absent-minded way your face

presses almost too close
dimmer, dimmer into that turn
there all the time on your cheeks

kept beardless :a light held back
at the far end where the runway
wants one from the few left to it.

It's hopeless! every nail
exhausted, falls over
as if the treeline

--there's not enough air
though the hammer, half
relentless, half turning back

the way all rescue begins
just below the horizon
for leverage --Casey

the nail you lift up
can be used again
--a second try to hold together

the same sky, familiar now
--there's hope --darkness
is what you're learning

for when a warm breeze
bends down to cup your hands
around the evening star

you will soon wait for
till all that's left to breathe
is a love song, one after another

--you pull out this nail
as if it were a flower
maybe tomorrow, would become

your voice, already scented
and in your arms
a beautiful woman is listening.

You limp and her casket
breaking open, its splinters
lose hold and this dirt

is water again, each ripple
wider and wider drags ashore
though the pebble you tossed

covers the sea with a darkness
that spends its life drowning
--a tiny rock broken off

from your step by step holding on
forever --you walk on water, close
to the crater's rim half wood

half storm, half where her voice
could be mistaken for moonlight
for the one stone more who in the end

is dead and you lift it
gently, lower it to your lips
as if it was a whisper, or a mouth.

This envelope never dries, her name
tightening a faceless turn
that has the sky to itself

--she is still leaving, rising
thinning out while your hand
still damp holds on to a curtain

that is not a dress
and between your fingers
wasted words, wasted years

wasted you --what's left
is a room half walls
half emptiness, half cold mist

as if there's not enough light
to sweeten this note kept naked
covered with rivers and your arms.