

The Old Nail

Old nails hold the best,
sliced by rough machinery into four flat sides,
square point flaring into flattened rectangle head.
This one found after dark in rayovac moonlight,
squeezed from another dryrot log
in this old tobacco barn.
Lamps are lit here,
fluorescent in the kitchen, a gooseneck there
with sixty watts;
window units moderate their heat.
Gnats trudge the tabletop,
lift like harpies,
land in the rusty shadow of an ancient nail,
purposefully mount its edges.
Rusted iron is dug deep into all these beams,
keeps our household, our little family with cats, together.
We float and settle throughout the rooms,
forget for some minutes the importance of metal
cast or stamped out before one's mother's birth.
Insects avoid hot lightbulb glass,
a typewriter rumbles and strikes,
the feelings of cats are given full consideration.
But past the curtained window we lately cut
dark spirits gnaw the treated logs,
suck out nails. We dance to the stereo,
animals in our arms.