

What You Left Behind

Gretchen McCroskey

A dirty carpenter's apron hanging
on a nail in the garage
Half -empty paint buckets lining
shelves in the basement
Hammers, their wooden handles
blackened with wear
Nail guns, used beyond repair
Empty beer cans hidden
in boxwoods beside the front porch
where a possum walked across
the yard and you counted stars
Your father's crosscut saw
A half pack of Winstons
in a coat pocket
Wadded-up Kleenex in your
camouflage jacket
Your good-looking son
who sends me flowers to ease
the pain of losing you
Your younger son
who brings the grandchildren,
little pictures of you
with blond hair and gentle ways
At night, when Nathan wraps
his arms around me and says,
"Grandma, I love you," I feel
again all the embraces that made
us one, and I go to sleep
in a house filled up with you.