

UNDER THE SAWDUST

The words were laid out
like tools from the carpenter's kit,
onto a white polishing rag,
splotched with grease,
shining strips of steel.

Each with its defined role,
each in its proper place,
each graspable by firm grip:
some wood, others metallic,
some to modify, others to solidify,
still others to precisely measure—
while most can destroy.

Remember: a tool itself
had to be invented—
and how many inventions
invention creates.

We are within the confines
of a wrench's intended function,
but in peculiar circumstances,
even a wrench is a hammer,
even a nail is a paperweight,
even a ruler is a backscratcher,
a funnel is a jester's hat.

But a table saw
is not a dining table.