

Tribute to a craftsman

Small child, I waited at the gate for you
Returning home, smelling of sawdust,
Piece bag filled with off-cuts of planks
To split into kindling.

Year by year, in the shed,
I watched you spit on the sharpening stone
Restoring the points of your chisels
Rubbing them back to sharp shining steel.

I fingered the stamp of your initials
Embedded in the handles of your saws
As you rasped with your files and
Reset their teeth, restoring their functionality.

I knew the name and the use
Of each and every tool
In that heavy hand-made box
That you lugged from job to job.

As I sat on the stool that you made
Leaning on the table you mended
Filling in the form they gave me
To choose subjects to study

I wanted to follow in your footsteps
To learn your craft, to the letter
But it was 1959
And I was a girl.....