

CHRISTOPHER MUNDE
Entomology of Exhaustion

There's the work, and then
there's the dig, down through carbon-
brayed Manhattan, just to brush the dust
from the shingles of the old job
wherein the work lies waiting.

Someone's father feels a sure and certain
gestation here, beneath the caked waste
of the buildings' single clot, pulse
and flutter same as the wings
of any botfly, come to prick this minute

and fill it on up with larvae:
pain, obviously, but foremostly there's
accrual, with each sliver of time
passing into coin and piling up
in little anthills in his mind (one,

perhaps, for each birth, birthday, each one's
good grades, bad root canals, wedding
bills) (accrual in the lungs too, counting down
to days of gagging, nights in deep sleep
at the next job), little piles

to block up the processes, to stamp out
the synaptic network of antlife
before it can gnash roads wide enough
to traffic in the colossal, political
bunker buster of what happened here.

Someone's father must be only parts, like the beams,
like the limbs laced among beams below, only
a work boot steadying on powdered stone, then
only fingers picking concrete
from only tear ducts, here a shovel driven askew

that he might hope is unlike the paralyzing work
of the expectant hornet, even less like the prey
rendered quiet and ever awake, that the heart may persist
for the housing and the feeding of the strange lives
sluiced inside him.