

**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 steady 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.