

**Wednesday, March 24**

**Roofers**

Five roofers are wedging off the old,  
scraping it over the edge. Great black birds  
diving in front of the window.  
In another place, a nail gun goes off in patterns  
of four, sometimes five. They're nice guys:  
one has a funny beard that sticks  
straight out, one has a lip ring. One is pounding,  
testing for rot. One is flipping the sections of shingles  
down: I hear them slap like clown's feet,  
something out of Shakespeare. These guys know  
what they're doing and they do it,  
great rolls of thunder, the roof  
of heaven cluttered with gods: Homer's  
Tityus, Leto, Tantalus—the ones  
who work the obscure jobs, who come  
when called, the ones before Milton's great-  
voiced dignitary, before Hopkins's rod bearer,  
the ones from the old days, from my old days,  
when over my head there was music  
in the air, the pitch of my church-camp voice  
raised out of the heat and the breeze  
and the sun on the spillway rocks, all of it  
holding me in as if I were in a shadow box,  
the kind where someone looks through  
a peephole and everything is 3-D, so the eye  
is like the Important God. I am filled  
with tenderness for the little world I had going on  
inside, my grief that it was not the world.

*Fleda Brown*