December Is a Dirty Glass

Joe Zendarski

Every day of winter
a hammer
skips a nail and bursts a thumb

numb with cold
and curses
fall

amidst red slatters.
Elsewhere,
a piece of fascia, some gaudy composite,
fractures under an 8d nail
and two hours pay
departs.

Wading through icy dumpsters,
through mounds
of asphalt shingles, sodden rafters,
gauzy-eyed, delirious for a
prodigal stick
of pine or an unbroken brick

men wonder why in the name of God
they left
the jungles of Bolivia, or Ohio.

With bones so cold no shower, no coffee,
no woman
can warm them,
they die
with tobacco stained fingers
calloused and cracked

around hammers.