

Joe Cottonwood

At Goodwill Thrift Store

Browsing with my new love
here's a contraption sent through time-warp
crafted in the age of steam
size of a dump truck
lost, separated from its mysterious task
like a giant sewing machine
combined with oil derrick
built from an Erector Set for monster fairies
coated in a wooly blanket of rust
dotted by pigeon poop.

Cranking the handle
turns a groaning gear
showering shards of oxidized iron
while rotates a barrel
with metal arms like baseball bats
clang-clang lifting a steel I-beam
like a seesaw jerk-jerk up
clunk-clunk down
with no purpose. None.

I tell my new love I'd buy it
except it must weigh 9000 pounds.
She asks "What would you do with it?"
Oil the gears. Shoo the pigeons. Turn the wheels.
But mostly...
Own it, I say. Simply own it.
"Men," she says and frowns.
We are doomed.

Joe Cottonwood is a carpenter by day, poet by night. His most recent book is *Foggy Dog*. More at www.joecottonwood.com.