

Peter Krok

Your Grip

Before they put you in the fire
they talked about your hands,
("so rare today" they said)
thick hands, calloused hands embedded
with hard labor. Hands larger than a handshake.
Hands that knew the wet saw, table saw, hammer, drill,
pliers, the usefulness of every tool.

You were never done with fixing:
the back fence, bathroom tile, shed,
my book shelves, electric outlets, the spigot,
family room, all bear the mark of your hands.

When I hold a hammer,
hit a nail or use your drill, I think of your grip.

When I brew the morning coffee, an emptiness
moves around the kitchen. A cup waiting to be filled

Now you have no way of traveling except through us.
If they dusted the house, they'd find
your fingerprints on all the molding.
Your dust around my neck.

Peter Krok is the Humanities director of the Manayunk Roxborough Art Center in Philadelphia where he has been coordinating literary programs since 1990. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the *Schuylkill Valley Journal* (SVJ) which was founded in 1990 and the SVJ Online at svjlit.com. His poem, "10 PM at a Philadelphia Recreation Center," was included in *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania*. He is much-published and known as the "red brick poet" because of his connection with the city. His book, *Looking For An Eye*, was published by Foothills Press. He volunteers at Montgomery County Prison where he and his wife conduct a Thresholds program which is to help those in prison develop better coping skills for their lives in prison and when they get out. The real villains are alcoholism and addiction.