

Shovel

by Chris Stafford

this is me, but i'm not this familiar stranger.

"these are my hands,
but i don't recognize the callouses."
all ten of these fingers have opinions,
but rally to my cause; a spindly team.
how they've become berserk scrapers
lurching through tedious gravel;
perhaps to augur an escape route.

"those are my feet.
but i don't recognize the lethargy."
my two feverish dancers; elated
to viscerally interpret aural kisses.
now they're fumbling scoundrels.
villianous and stupid conspirators
dragging unseen anchors tiredly.

"this is my back,
but i don't recognize the posture."
each vertebra is a golden cavalier,
brave in upright vigilance; stoic heroes.
suddenly they mewl at me; ornery nags.
compacted crooked buttons subdued
to a grovelling pile of a question mark.
?

"this is my face,
but i don't recognize the countenance."
a beautiful envelope with soul-windows
turned placid bewilderment dust tarpaulin

pegged to purple quandaries and
drawn over restless bedlam swirls.

