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.