

The Grinder

by Scot Siegel

~ For Debbie

For several days thinking they had found
a dead man's boot beside the highway
the brothers scared each other with stories
of how it came to rest there: A hitchhiker

Struck by a runaway van. The homeless man
struggling up the embankment after drinking
from the river. Maybe a criminal on the run
caught in the patrol car spotlight ditched his

Prison clothes there... Then they thought...
Maybe it was older and fell from a
covered wagon, an Indian ambush...
The boot was heavy like that...

They dared each another to pick the mud away
undo the laces, see what's inside — Bones,
they hoped, or maybe some rotting flesh...
Because of the boot's apparent age and heft

Their father said they must turn it over
to the authorities, which they did, of course,
with much reluctance...

When the forensics came back, to everyone's
surprise, that boot was a woolly mammoth's tooth
ten million years old! — or at least that's what
the staid man from the university said...

Now that boot, or tooth, is kept safe out of view

in a basement room at the Department of Paleontology —
To get inside, security clearance is required...
When the local news lady asked about their luck

and what they thought of the ongoing study, the boys
turned to each other as only boys can do and shrugged;
but then the younger one gushed, said he didn't mind
all the attention, really, getting to miss school and all...

What he looked forward to most he said was an appearance
on David Letterman & getting to meet that silver-sequined
girl with the steel hoola hoops,

and the other one with the grinder!

First published in New Verse News, appears in SOME WEATHER
(Plain View Press, 2008)

