

# *Flush*

DAVID JAUSS

My father didn't throw the hammer at me,  
just toward me. I told myself it didn't hurt  
anything but the grass. But when I hear the word  
that caused it all, I feel that hammer hit me.

We were re-siding the north face of the house  
and he'd asked if the new board was flush.  
I was thirteen. To me, "flush" was what faces did,  
or toilets. I was afraid to seem stupid

so I nodded yes. After he'd nailed it to the wall  
he saw the board came up two inches short.  
Red-faced, he glared, his eyes tempered steel.

The hammer was heavy and hard. It would have hurt.  
It lay there on the lawn, the rust on its claws  
like dried blood. I knew, despite his face,  
he hadn't tried to hit me. He hadn't come close.

Still, when he picked it up, I couldn't help but flinch.

Father, I'd like things between us to be flush.  
Help me hammer these words into place.