

THE PHILOSOPHICAL EMANCIPATION

We are on the roof today
laying fiberglass shingles
and Steve Parisi, who is younger than I,
but much more experienced
is measuring the lap with his hammer.
My hammer is makeshift
an old axe I once used as a tomahawk
when my father wasn't looking.

I look down my line of shingles
and see that it waves.
Beyond the wave rise the palm trees
for the half mile to the beach.
They're straighter than my line is.

So I ask Steve, "You know, I think
I'd better rip these up. Look at them."
He stands with his roofing hammer in his hand
and looks down the line.
"Don't worry about it," he says.
"Roofing is not an exact art."

OUT IN THE WORK ROOM

Taylor could always make anything
out of wood or silver.
Out in his work room
half-made bracelets and rodeo buckles,
rings and squash blossom necklaces
lie on the table next to his
torches and hammers.
"I can get eight hundred for some
squash blossom necklaces," he says
while he hammers the silver.
"People are always calling me up
to make one."
I say,
"Why don't you quit your job
at the paper mill and just make these?"
He takes a sip of beer and looks at
the squash blossom he's making,
then says, "I like doing it too much
for that. I don't want to go and
make a job out of it."