

PAUL WATSKY

Hell Hath No Windows

no bird flight, no unfettered clouds,
but it compensates with fluorescent, steel-
trussed cathedral ceilings, aisle
upon aisle of hardware shelving: At 8:15,
Saturday's A.M., cubscoutmasters
badger boys of seven and eight toward
virtue and a mini-seminar in craftsmanship,
while parents trail after, few as disoriented
as I, who at nine wrestled miserably
with himself over his irritated, stooping
father's bald head, an all-thumbs boobchild
stuck holding the inventor's hammer
so Dad could fiddle, meticulously slow—*Give
him a whack and end it all*, counselled
my demon of despair—in that bad
memory of what might have been, now
just one more floater in my uninitiated
eye, among distortions triggered
by labels and the wiles packaging works
on ignorance—sex, violence, visions
as grabby as the grunge component
of a Medieval altar piece, some
merely weird—*plate joining biscuits, air
chisel, anti spatter, self-centering
brad set*—others twisted—*grinding
point tree, jitterbug sander, stud
finders* loitering beside *The Aggressor,
bastard files, deep-throat
c-clamp*—a witches' sabbath climaxed
by malpractice—*magnetic power
nut driver, Freud Circular Saw
Blades—50 teeth*—torment, not
temptation, not yummy, windowless

Las Vegas, where, nephew of a handsome
gambler I once locked my rare
winnings in a box till checkout, thereby
tying myself to the mast, action
singing glitzy in my ears and rubbing at my party-
animal crotch; no,
clipboard in hand, I'm in narrow aisles, taking
names on the home turf of busy
gnomes, my purpose, exorcism (hardly
the wish list several fellow dads imagine),
and serving out my time, till noon, when
I'll sweep past the registers empty-
handed, without even a telescoping-
pole bulb changer, every last
pomegranate seed, unconsumed.

Paul Watsky grew up in New York City and began writing poetry during high school. He now lives and works in San Francisco, where he earns his living as a Jungian analyst. He has published two chapbooks, "More Questions Than Answers" (tel-let 2001) and "Sea Side" (tel-let 2003), co-translated with Emiko Miyashita Santoka (Tokyo, PIE Books, 2006), and has poems in various journals, including *Poetry Flash*, *The Cream City Review*, *onthebus*, as well as forthcoming in *Confrontation*, *Fugue*, *Cadillac Cicatrix*, and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.