

## *Brass Knuckles*

It will not help you to think of them  
as maiden's fingers, fat boys, wedding  
rings, knuckle dusters, or, for the most

exotic and international of thugs: tiger's  
claws, trench knives, diamond fists. Steel  
over brass, momentum over pause, each

discount counts. You can be hit whether  
or not you're at home. There are times  
when a person wants one's fists to wear

truths that advertise their desires.  
These are not pitchers asking permission  
to blow on their own hands, Rembrandt's

painting along the very corners. Be yet wary  
of the protection afforded by brass knuckles.  
There are no scans for violence,

no siphoning, allergy eyes, a one-thing-  
at-a-time-thing, eating live squirrels with  
your bare hands. You would not hit so hard

for fear of hurting your own hands.  
Make omelets from brass knuckles.  
Use brass knuckles as the handles

of your coffee cups. You can find  
brass knuckles perfect for ladies,  
discreet as rhinestones and boy-ties,

gearshifts rustproof and more feverish  
than the moon. Look for brass knuckles  
as paperweights tearing through

the parchment of a face. Look  
for brass knuckles masquerading as belt  
buckles: brass knuckles with (imprintable):

longhorn steer, lions, skulls, classic patterns  
for every motif you never dreamed of.  
Pity the brass knuckles more than those

who wear them. Consider the alternatives:  
aluminum, concrete dragging your hands  
tectonically against the fabulous glittery

remnants of lives wasted on the phone.  
Consider their usefulness to a priest  
dragged away by balloons, suspended

between the violence and the never  
enough. Brass knuckles add speed  
to life. Find the right words and don't

say them. You will become this: an  
extension of the body, an action with no  
power, a prosthesis of no hope, knuckles,

a way to ensure a memorable exit: light  
middleweight Andrew "Six Heads"  
Lewis told the ref he needed to take a shit

in 2006 and never returned to the ring.