

my cousin Richard and I decided to build a car  
from the leftover nuts, bolts,  
screws, springs and random bits of metal  
from our grandfather's workshop

on weekends  
we would spend the day sitting on the shady bit of dirt  
(where grass never seemed to grow)  
to the right of the workshop doors

the parts for our car were kept in a brown box  
made of thick cardboard  
with grease stains around the edges

each time we would contemplate what we had  
and what we needed,  
and if we put this bit and this bit  
and that bit together,  
how we'd have the chassis or suspension  
or engine halfway done

occasionally we'd go inside the workshop,  
where the air was always  
thick with oil and hot from welding,  
asking if there were any other spare parts we could use

we would usually be given an extra washer  
or two

we didn't have tyres or doors  
or windows or brakes  
or anything even vaguely car-like

but to us  
that summer  
it was entirely possible to build a car  
with what we had

at the end of summer  
we took apart the configurations of metal  
that we had pieced together with such care  
put it all back in the box  
and waited for the next summer  
to start again

one summer, when I was six,  
my grandfather died

we never finished building our car