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## Rare Books

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# Rare Books

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*Bob De Smith*

In the rare book room,  
Tan codices—  
Margins doodled  
By the inattentive—  
Are stained with ale,  
Their gutters  
Sprinkled with bread, hair,  
And cheese.

DNA, too, I suppose.

My father's toolbox  
Preserves his greasy fingerprints,  
Cuticles,  
Coffee stains.

Marks on tools,  
Handwritten labels,  
Shed skin in the creases  
Of a folding knife.

There, too, are found  
His odd collection of re-purposed  
Punches—odds and ends,  
To apply the phrase literally—  
And one-off tools,  
Their precise purpose lost.

I think of this as I  
Run the valley of my book,  
Removing traces of me.