Home Delivery

Building Dwelling Thinking
- Martin Heidegger

In this hovel that has become my lifelong work,
beyond the dirt crossroads where they leave the mail,
still rickety despite the more or less constant
M & R and on-the-job training in make-do —
additions, subtractions divisions and more scrabbled together
from salvage-yard odds and ends and swapmeet treasures,
cash scrimped up when something had to be bought new
(temporary jobs, some that lasted years
and sometimes a smidgen put into Social Security
from one where they took out taxes so they had to be filed).

The idea was: feet on the ground instead of pavement,
grow food with our own hands, build homestead and home
high enough to not get washed away, deep enough
shelter from the hot air on an overheated planet,
close enough to the ground to imagine we're good neighbors
with those who tunnel, burrow, furrow and dig
to sidestep those visibly hostile to our squatting here,
to somehow compensate for causing their hallowed space
to cave in on them despite our better selves.

Inside, most of a lifetime later, I listen to raindrops
fall into saucepans and wind wheeze through doorjambs,
shrug off the unseasonable chill, the ache in joints and muscles
I never used to notice, the floaters before my eyes
that call to mind the sad state of our welfare state
since the trickle-down con-men and -women took over
full time after their chemical genocide in Vietnam,
the wonderful unforgettable give and take of your thighs,
wonder if when the time comes it will be ants,
beetles, maggots or mold that get to me first.

What do you suppose we can do about this,
Love? The simple faith has long escaped me,
even my mother's version, may she be at peace,
that those gone before will greet us with open smiles
no jealousy or loneliness ever again,
pains of dying erased like those of giving birth.
That oneness we felt sometimes in bed is iffy at best
like any high you come down from and art,

meaning, intent and so forth don't seem so important
when we know it all can go in a flash on the spur of a moment.

Once I pipedreamed a Hollywood western fade-out where,
having nothing to say worth hearing nothing of use to offer,
when what is left of me was enough to bother with
a supporting character would trudge my stardust
up the steep slope past the rimrock that crowns
the little cone-shaped mountain due west of here
half-cradled by the arc of higher peaks behind it
then prop my remains against a rock to look out over
this little plot of good intentions, this postage stamp
northwest quarter of a northwest quarter

of upper Sonoran semidesert grass
surrounded by a straggle of skewed posts and sagging wire,
hard to tell from thousands of other checkerboard squares
on the tax map except for this humble abode,
makeshift, tumbledown, ramshackle
unlike any other, a child of its time,
for what it's worth — which, however much that may be
to its denizens, human and otherwise,
doesn't amount to a single still in a western movie,
in real-estate terms adds nothing to the face value.