

**Wilderness House Literary Review 17/1**

*Elissa Downey*  
**Wooden Heart**

The sound of a hammer  
And the dry, clean smell  
Of sawdust.  
My dad is visiting...  
And fixing... God knows what.  
He will find something in my life,  
My well-ordered, tax-paying, spick-n-span life  
To fix.  
Despite my protestation –  
That I know is useless –  
I will see him hunched  
In the faded blue-gray shadows.  
Curled up like my oldest,  
Best-loved pair of jeans,  
Trying to find the things  
That need  
Fixing.  
The things that he  
Can bring to order  
And completion,  
With a hammer, nails, and rule,  
And then hold forth  
For my approbation  
And thanks.

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But today is different.  
Today, the upheaval,  
The tapping and the wood dust,  
Are the work of the creator –  
Sanding the wood smooth  
With his rough palm  
So soft hands never feel  
A splinter.  
He fills my home with the  
Sawdust mess  
Of a hundred rocking horses  
He says he is making for my son.  
But I know, deep down,  
He is still carving them for me  
Out of the wood of his heart.