

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