
They're Building a House Next Door

Ron Lauderbach

Clay tiles on weathered rafters weeks after delivery look weary, like the plumber's countenance as he carries out a shiny sink, the wrong model, and drops it into his truck-bed. His truck needs tires. He might be waiting for a bargain or it could be news from his oncologist. I see two electricians wander the job, eat their lunches, laugh a lot, and leave. A concrete finishing crew works fast because two guys didn't show up on this hot day and the mud doesn't care. Their boss jabs his finger into the chest of some guy who's holding a big bucket of paint and I think about Jim Rhoads, the meanest foreman I've ever known, who years ago had me in tears before draping his arm around my shoulders and saying, Don't worry kid, this place may get built in spite of us.