



*John Drais,  
photographed by the author.*

## ***THE NAIL***

Long before  
they were machine-made by the thousands,  
each like the other:  
identical, indistinguishable,  
for all purposes,  
nails were crafted by hand,  
each unique.

Though function not changed —  
the joinder of the two or more substances —  
through its uneven surface,  
the early nail performed its task  
at greater strength,  
each ridge  
seating itself by character.

Today, from time to time,  
albeit rarely,  
the smooth, indistinguishable nails  
encounter an ancient brother.

John is such a nail,  
easily distinguished from the common lot,  
not just by appearance,  
by function,  
by strength,  
but by corridors of an insatiable mind,  
one yet to find its limit,  
able through texture  
to bring and hold us together.

*To John Drais,  
seemingly of a different time...  
January, 2009*



**Michael Thorsnes**  
*American-Ireland Fund  
Robert A. MacNamara Award  
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