

On the Way to the Institutionalized Insane

Laura Manuelidis

Steam smelted with lead
Spreads horizontally, twisted as past work
Discarded, on this thick milled town.

I drive along the stream that carves out rust-soaked rock
where buildings hummed with ancestral wives borrowed during war.
Behind the broken windows the teeth of gears now disappeared

Worn down, still make ugly scratching
Sounds of: Have to Will do To survive.
In basketball's black Keds and dungarees
Ruffian children play their abandoned, honorable games:

Their leap of fish I dream. As if the Housatonic were still pristine
with sweet water trout thrusting their open and barely
Carbonized wide mouths, eyes still sublimely closed: Accelerating

There's little available work now for the hands.