

DAVID SALNER

Oil and a Stone
for my grandfather, Julius Salner

You picked up a scythe and wiped the curved blade
until the orange rust
darkened with the oil's sweetness.
Then you produced a sharpening stone,
slid it in circles over the steel
as you beamed and swayed. "Careful,"
you breathed into my ear, as I fingered
the razor-sharp edge. The air seemed to breathe,
to wheeze with your breathing.

Grandma had a flower business,
sold armfuls of colorful petals
from a stall on the highway. Across the road,
the Cathedral of Tomorrow went up.
As the Baptists drove by,
she hawked sunflowers, roses on Sundays.
She fussed with her flowers
long after your death, survived you
by so many years my sister grew up
to remember her grandma, not you.

A life polished smooth, unknown.
Oil and a stone.



ABOUT DAVID SALNER



David Salner's second book, *Working Here*, was published by Minnesota State University's Rooster Hill Press in 2010. His poetry has appeared in *Threepenny Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *North American Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Pedestal*, several issues of *Poetry Daily*, and Garrison Keillor's *Writer's Almanac*. Chapters from his novel about hard-rock miners in the Old West appear in *Cottonwood Magazine* and *New Plains Review*. He worked for 25 years as an iron ore miner, steelworker, machinist, and general laborer. He lives in Fredrick, Maryland, with his wife, Barbara Greenway.

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