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Northern Planing Mills

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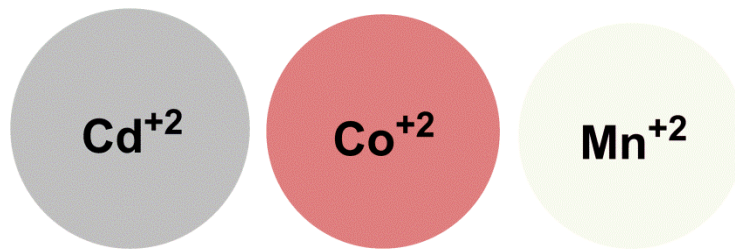
poetry



NORTHERN PLANING MILLS

Cadmium	Blood	0.13	ug/L
Cobalt	Blood	0.20	ug/L
Manganese	Blood	7.69	ug/L

Doug kept a wedge of limburger cheese in the rafters of the saw shed. He liked the smell of feet. Mark shot a bear and brought the roasted meat for lunch. He had been to jail for 50 days after trying to steal a lawnmower. His drunken, slow-motion getaway from the Rent-All on Main Street was a nightcap turned tranquilizer dart and was on the third page of the local newspaper. After I went back to high school in the fall, Mark showed up at my house late one afternoon in tears. He couldn't think straight, he said. Nobody gets me. Hopelessness is a micronutrient in mammals, a transition metal. Wayne was our boss and sat high in the forklift all day moving pallets of cedar and fir and spruce. He teased Mark and Mark took it like mucus. The diesel smoke belched from the forklift stack like after-dinner farts at the hunt camp. Don't be such a fag was the one stable isotope of the yard. Anne was Ojibway and didn't take shit from any of them. But there was a lot of shit. Doug's cheese smelled like it. It was my job to keep a lookout for customers while we were drinking. I was the school kid. We'd drink in the saw shed and give each other advice on how not to be assholes. Wayne's forklift idled just outside the door. The fumes laid their metals in our blood like excrement.



ADAM DICKINSON's most recent book, *The Polymers*, was a finalist for the Governor General's Award for Poetry. He teaches poetics and creative writing at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. To see Dickinson's other work in *The Goose* go to <http://www.alecc.ca/uploads/goose/The%20Goose%201%20Fall%202005.pdf>

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