

They made you Chief
 Adjuster, hustled you up
 the stairs. Husky men
 followed with file cabinets,
 dusted. Life settled sweet,
 Jell-o in frigid air:
 wife in heat, cabernet
 sauvignon, summer share. Budget
 cuts, trailer rolls, cancer
 cells never made shore,
 scuttled parallel.

What then
 was wanting, what speck
 of boat flashed mornings
 under a secret sun?
 Why did you dream
 hills of teeth beneath
 hiking boots, buzzard wings
 choking the sky? Then you
 would wake, stretch, relace
 Asics in darkness, brave the barbed
 wire behind Catholic high
 schools to trace, retrace
 the white spines of clay
 zeroes, each step weigh
 and reweigh the staggering
 odds, double down, outrun
 whatever might chase.

Noah Kucij teaches at Hudson Valley Community College in upstate NY. His work appears in *32 Poems*, *The Cortland Review*, and elsewhere. He also writes for *OldSchoolRecordReview.wordpress.com*.