

## Daughter of the Sandman

War-story woman stands astride  
the country now,  
book-store tour bleary now,  
author hands aching  
from signing the \$20.99  
paperback professing her father's  
Marne Corps Desert Storm glory now.  
Book-tour daughter  
lays inside the hotel room now,  
calling her shattered dad  
across the gulf,  
calling the shaking-hands dad man  
"Geppetto" because,  
when she calls,  
he is always in the workshop basement  
of her childhood,  
still struggling with bandsaws  
against protesting wood.  
War-story woman asks the first-draft  
question that has tied down  
her mind, even during  
her best-seller tour,  
for so long now:  
How well did she write the smell  
of a burning man?  
The sanding-dad Geppetto,  
exhales against his labor,  
says that her words were enough

to peel the covers from hard-backed  
leathernecks in the Kuwaiti desert,  
circa 1990 -  
seethes through his teeth,  
says how he can smell  
the roasted beef of muscle,  
sulfur stink of hair,  
sticky-sweet spinal fluid  
spiraling up  
like a black-cloud desert *jinn*,  
how her work makes him  
proud, but that, now,  
he must hide in his workshop,  
in his work,  
in this room,  
to honor his writer daughter  
and build his bookshelves  
even wider.