

Little Black Feet

by Bob Boucher, June 2011

I still remember that hot August day.
I was only four and wanted to play.
In short pants, and a brand new white shirt,
Mama had warned me, Stay out of the dirt.

Nice new brown shoes, nice clean white socks,
stay on the sidewalk and walk to the park.
The park was only five houses away,
a nice little walk on a hot summer day.

The park was empty with no kids around
then I was attracted by a strange sound.
It came from a building with a big red sign
I could not read it: too young at the time.

The front door was closed, side doors were open.
I could hear hammers and see dust blowin.
Next to the building a large empty lot,
big stones in the back of a black parking lot.

Men cutting stone with chisel and hammer.
Stone chips were flying making a clamor.
Wow! Men cutting stone, that must be such fun,
Got to get closer to see how it's done.

Walking on black top was a bit sticky.
The soles of my shoes must have been icky.
The carving of stone, it was so sublime.
I stood transfixed oblivious of time.

Then I tried to move, but I could not budge,
Sunk to my ankles, deep into black sludge.
Help! Help! I cried and waved my arms about.
Then two men came over and pulled me out.

I was OK, but had two big black feet.
They carried me to our house up the street.
Mama was screaming, No! No! Not in here!
Clean off those black feet somewhere out there!

They took off my shoes and tossed them away,
and scrubbed my feet with kerosene that day.
Mama gave them a real grateful thanks,
then she gave me a couple hard spansks.

Yes, I still enjoy just watching men work,
But the smell of kerosene still drives me berserk.