

What You Can Create with Cardboard and Duct Tape

by Sherry Cook Stanforth

We bumped past a burnt out trailer
projecting poverty in Hollywood set
style—two barking mongrels followed
us half a mile up Lost Mountain, then
slowed to panting at the hairpin bend:
the sign said Blasting Conducted
Warning—Explosives in Use
Daily
From Sunrise
To Sunset
Long Blasts and Short Blasts

We trespassed through rock-
flung fields—viewed clichéd
images, props tagged for tree
hugging activists, sang bye-bye
lullabye dirges. We will expose
the master graveyards, map
out sorry plots of recycled
devastation—nothing new
under the sun.
No, we did not
prop up our dead family stiffs
for the daguerreotype.
We didn't videotape the casket
closing or line the pink granite
slab with Dollar Store toys
or tacky plastic bluebells
clutched inside a tube.

All we had in the trunk was
cardboard and duct tape.
We scrawled "Lost" then
patched it onto a stick, held
it up for viewing. We stood
against the highwall, hillbilly
posing inside valley fill,
ground zero found anywhere,
everywhere.

We held ourselves still,
snapping shots of family
plots—saved—for visiting.
We posed inside our land

and your land
signifying that all things
ugly or beautiful
will remain unsealed
for documentation.