

**ROALD HOFFMAN**  
**With, or Against**

From a worka-  
day rusty bar

the saw cuts  
a cube of steel.

Its face shines  
bright, as love.

Welded in arc  
and sparks

to a rod,  
in and out

of a forge  
spilling flame,

a steel cube  
is swung to

anvil; it's  
yellow-red,

like rosehips  
in our valley.

A woman,  
bracing a

chisel, a man  
swinging sledge-

hammer. Twenty  
kinds of nerves

go to the hand.  
Like the line cut

in the block, now  
cooling, soon

ROALD HOFFMAN

to make patterns  
in another, you

marked me. Do  
we follow the

way of steel,  
its impure

alloy strength?  
A master smith

said: comply, but  
contend—make

hard soft, hard  
again, beat blade

and girder into  
the other, be it

rabbit's ear or  
morel. Love, oh

love for steel too,  
is built sweet, out

of strict desire,  
for the you, that

is not you. You.