

## Donald Levering

### MUSCLES

After the surgery  
the doctor warned of  
loss of muscle memory,  
and it's true: the very  
tissue knows the serving  
of a ball, though the brain  
congratulates itself  
for every ace. Brawn  
is ridiculed — Atlas  
tricked by Hercules  
and left to bear the earth,  
while Sandburg catalogues  
the muscle power turning  
industrial wheels,  
the world revolving  
in a kind of workers'  
Rugby. But where's  
the eulogy for muscles  
making breath, the ode  
to the thoughtless  
pumping of the heart,  
the praise for the blind  
rectum, the accolades  
for the small muscles  
that blink away the dross.  
The surgeon's hands  
are marvelous, and should  
be cast in marble, but  
what about the smooth  
muscles moving food  
to fuel his synapses?