

Michael McFee

OVATION

He stood on his stoop
and clapped her sneakers together
hard, a sharp report,
smacking right sole against left,
trying to shock the mud
from each overcomplicated tread,
spanking those expensive footprints
until clay flakes and plugs
ticked onto the boxwood's leaves
like a light filthy sleet
from the rubber craters and crannies
where they stuck weeks ago,
until her shoes were banged clean
though that didn't stop
his stiff-armed slow-motion applause
with her feet's emptied gloves,
slapping mate against mate
without missing a beat,
half-wishing that hollow sound
echoing off their neighbors' houses
could call her back.

