

SAVING NAILS

THOMAS MOORE

I strip the porch roof, pick out the used
nails, and toss the shingles down onto

a drop-cloth, remembering when I shingled
my grandmother's roof fifty years ago:

the tar smell, the brackets, planks, and
ladders all the same, but level now

with hemlock limbs instead of locust.
I lug four shingles up the ladder, kneel

and drive the old nails home, slide
another shingle into place, pound, toes

bent under, knees creaking. *Miserliness*,
a friend jokes about the nails, but I call it

caring, thinking of the man who gave
us this land on the cove, the house, the boat-

house full of boats. The only time I saw
him he was at his work-bench, a rich

man straightening nails, moving from
the *bent* can to the anvil to the *straight*.