SELF-EDGE

 1

Shell, husk, bark, tank armor,

carapace. There are softer

machineries of protection:

A finger tip tracks the cream

paper trim of a sheet of

commemoratives each flashy,

engraved clone set patient

in inner processions of per-

foration, inkling of a ripping

apart future. The rim:

a squarish ambulatory

bearing occasional

plate numbers, admonishing

messages to use zip codes,

the color proofs of whatever

rotogravure press spit

this sheet. If not frayed

in handling, the selvage

is abandoned, torn off.

Turning the sheet over

you see the slick trace

of a mind or machine that

had hoped for more: the gumming,

all the way out to the edge.

 2

My taste runs to textiles. So

you proffer alternative

saving means: In the hem

of a Shirvan carpet, weft

doubles back over the twinned

warp, securing its own

return. Or, in afterthought,

the body of the rug plenty

supple and done, you loop

and twirl around, over and

over the long edge warp

thread. A binding, in toned

indigo, of survivor soul

into this runner. At the short

ends cotton fringes serve.

 3

But what if shuffling

time, dirt, the intrusive

heels of others act to fray

off all the throw-away

hulls and wrap we built on?

The true edge sharp

exposed, a threat of total

unraveling. Nicks grow

into crevasses, wild

stressed rips cut in

and through a structure

that small energies saved for a while.