

*Restoration of the
Gary Heat, Light & Water Building*

by Joseph S. Pete

My steelworker grandpa long ago
forsook the grimy steel town
on the steam-choked lakeshore
that built all the 20th-century skylines and landmarks.

Today, I tried to atone for this original sin
by hauling brush, laying brick,
lifting high abandoned relics.

Sweat doesn't always purify.
Sometimes it just stings,
clings acridly to the pale whites
of weary eyes awash in cynicism.