

FACTORY REJECT

Renee Owley

As children we are guided by warm hands, soft hands—
but not shaped. our elders merely spin the pottery wheel
the clay of us choosing our own shape
the glaze of us becoming our own color

when we are ready for forging, for the kiln
the hands pull back but are always ready
to mend what breaks
to strengthen that which is brittle

I was shaped. I was molded.
I originate from a factory. no hands, only machines.
you do not choose. you will not become.
you are not clay. you are steel.

you will not forge. you will cool and harden.
you are not porous. you reflect.
you will not break.
your materials will not be brittle.

steel is strong, everlasting. it does not give.
it does not absorb. I
cannot be steel, for I am brittle
and I have absorbed. I need mending.

clay is not meant for machinery so I
must have been shaped by warm hands, soft loving hands

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warmth is a malfunction
and it creates that which the factory must not acknowledge

the factory is not a wheel
the machines have no warm hands
factories do not make individuals
there is no uniqueness, no difference

a difference is a defect and it must not be
allowed to cause defects in other products
that clay must not be mixed with the rest
it cannot go with the rest