Straitening Nails – Allan Johnston 2026-10-21

Steel hammer in my hand
forgotten nails there to bend
A tonnage blow with which to send
the nail forth into the wood

Yet the nail on the end
of twisted tangled two-by-ten
which handed to me by my friend
would not be straight so as it should

Tangled mess of which to mend
the lumber previously rend
by age and rot and wear and wind
refusing nail where it stood

Broken house I try to mend
with trusty hammer in my hand
send forceful blows upon the end
of nails rusted and chagrined

All the floor repairs depend
on my ability to mend
the broken timbers I attend
with mangled fingers they have skinned

Time unlimited I spend
on straight'ning spikes without an end
while nails dance and spin and stend
up in the air as they fly 'round

Tins of nails I intend
to find a use for and contend
to save a nickel yet they shend
my eagerness to save a pound

Efforts I put forth to wend
to save resources they contend
have all resulted in abend
a waste of efforts in my prime

Useless ventures to append
my screws and nails to no end
they offer neither dividend
nor compensation for my time

All these nails I have denned
in little buckets in the end
may come in handy when I mend
a broken fence with wood all curled

They may just be an impend
of wasted efforts to extend
the world's resources, why pretend
to make a difference in the world

But ideals I propend
are worth pursuing in the end
for nothing more but to unbend
to sink a nail in the wood

(iambic tetrameter, more or less)