D.S. Martin

Ode to an Antique Sideboard
(after Blake)

An oak of distant time must have swayed
its fearful mass dark leaves in dreadful whispering
of high winds in the forest of the night
What sinews must have twisted & whirled
from the depth of root to skies
before a hand & shoulder
before an axe & chain dared bring it low

But that was long ago
before it was hauled to the dark planing mills
before the craftsman seized it
& framed its symmetry
before the grain whirling in the tree
whirled in the oak face of the furniture
that the craftsman smiled to see

In another time it must have taken its material place
in the heart of one whose eye aspired
to the art of home decor her mortal hand
gracefully arranging china tea cups
symmetrically within the frame
of the bevelled mirror
which reflected the hearth fire burning bright
Did he who made the grain whirling in the tree
smile at the craftsman’s creativity
the pleasure the first owner had in its integrity
or your joy at making it our own?
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its fearful mass dark leaves in dreadful whispering
of high winds in the forest of the night