

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?  
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

