

THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

His hardened hands were wise in ways of wood.
His gleaming treasures warm the finest rooms.
White oak and maple grains were understood
So well his furnishings became heirlooms.

He felt a gangling board and knew its heart,
The gain to come from steady sawing's bite.
He worked the native quirks into his art
Or used steel clamps to make an angle right.

When his sure pressure bent and was released,
No part of any chosen trees returned
To former ways. His hands, so deeply creased,
Retiring now, have passed on what they learned

To nimbler heirs-- a dozen boys, now men--
Who once had heard the state's cold cell doors close.
He turned them on a lathe of love and then
Aligned them with a spirit level, chose

A greater will to join with each, dovetailed.
So most are expert cabinetmakers now--
And some are preachers, teachers-- none has failed.
He knew they'd win. The Master showed them how.