

THE CRAFTSMAN

His hands were wise in the ways of wood,  
understanding the grain and strength  
of maple, cherry, oak. His hands could handle  
a gangling board and know its heart, foresee  
the gain from a saw's hot bite. He pursued  
the hidden beauty of natural patterns,  
bending and clamping as needed. And when  
it was time to release the pressure, no part  
of his chosen trees returned to a former intent.

His hands are over eighty now, twin burls,  
mahogany stained, dovetailed across his jeans.  
They've passed their treasury to nimbler heirs--  
a dozen boys, now men, who once knew  
the cold clang of the state's steel doors.

He aligned them with a spirit level, turned  
them on a lathe of love, joining his planes  
with each-- mortise and steadfast tenon  
from the plans of a Nazarene carpenter.

His finishes warm the finest homes. When people  
marvel at his work, his students' triumphs,  
the old man smiles.  
And credits the Master Craftsman.

--Glenna Holloway