



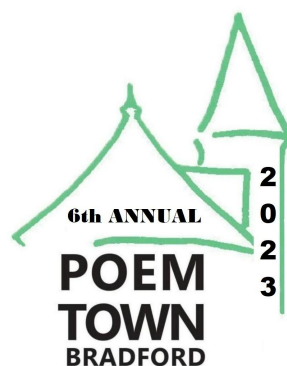
Noble Craft

Mine is and ancient and noble craft begun when early men fashioned huts out of sticks and mud. Many have died swinging hammers, mallets, pushing, forcing, wrestling, lifting loads, heavy for normal men. We have sought a living by giving others shelter while we, ourselves, toiled in wind, rain, snow and oppressive sun. Bodies, like mine, became beasts of burden twisted, contorted, filled with words spoken in anger and pain. Still when the day is over, the hours lost, we come home with our hardscrabble lives and share with those that care.

I have turned my wrist, driving steel upon steel, piercing fibers into trees much older than myself. Another took the lives of the conifers that I use and once offered shelter to other life in the woods. Now it is up to me, a carpenter, joiner of materials, to celebrate the sacrifice and not recklessly waste the gift. My saw enters wood with resolution following the line I have drawn upon it with a grinding noise spinning dust from beneath its teeth spilling onto me and cascading to the ground becoming the incense of the sawhorse where sweet smell rises and beckons joy in the day. It is keeping the observance you are the creator of your own destiny and what you produce is largely seen by others.

There is a kinship among carpenters and I take a moment to gaze at the sky and reflect the teaching of another carpenter who was oppressed by those same powers that, even now, place themselves hard against us, Powers filled with avarice the driving force of all things evil. But they do not understand the irony when used our craft to drive nails into our brother's hands that all carpenters have drawn blood and, always, we come back laughing.

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