

Sleeping on Wood

Nancy Hanks Baird

The blue ice is melting
off the high ridge,
draining down through the trees.
The blade of rock darkens in the sun.
Greening trees take what they can
before the ice streams
funnel down the long valleys.

There are trees in my house,
planed, tongued, full of water.
If you caress the wood
in the curves of your foot,
you can feel the water
swelling in the wood, like blood.

A child will sleep on a wood floor,
pressing its cheek in the
warm grooves,
two skins, smooth as oil.
The child is rooted in the wood;
blood and water,
living things,
mingling as their lives arc.

The great trees lift into the sky:
redwood, eucalyptus, banyan, acacia.
Their hearts know no evil,
their hands fill with gifts.
Like the banyan,
the man in this house,
with every breath
sends more roots into the
heart of God,
fastening himself there
with ropes of power.

He and the child cling to the
trees of life.
In the night, under the sheets,
I caress his foot,
smooth and warm as wood.