

“Wood Sleeves” by Mary Aitken

Tree, (tree) chance dust of cone on seed,
born on wind to earth.

You there,
root deep,
learn water, light,
spread branch-wings,
breathe fog,
whisper in groves,
stretch sunward from your heart wood,
sapwood outward (grows) time-rings
grow and rings, ring,
recording time
until, axe-felled
you die
groaning,
cut down.

Stump-naked, now so we can read
after your death, your life
within your rings,
tree-time.

And we
who think,
ring 'round ourselves
the myths of human life
have dreams,
finger reality
with thinkers' rings
heart-pledged
have hopes
make plans,
fashion reality,
creating more,
while losing more,
until we thinkers all
at last fall down
fall down,
lonely now
rings on rings on
fingers
lost to time.