

The Tree, The Table and Me

Me:

Are you going to tell me about the birth of this table?

Was it difficult?

Did it happen on an assembly line or was she formed on the handyman's lathe?

In the corridor or delivery room?

Tree:

No, at Ikea.

Me:

Was he there at the birth?

Tree:

Yes, he was Head of Packaging.

Pause

Me:

When they braced her up did she fit together well?

Did she match?

Did she mitre in right?

Tree:

I think so.

They didn't tell her fortune or her future.

She didn't know what she would be when she was all grooved up.

She was a life in a whole line of others:
all felled down, logged up and sent off in a flat bed lorry in the direction of Ikea,
Warrington, after the storm.

Table:

I am a reincarnation of something you can climb onto,

stand on safely,

no wobbling:

a dinner servicer,

a flat-pack.

All synchronised, patterned and put together with diagrammatic precision

Complete with me silver bits in me own plastic bag.

Somehow, later, I ended up here

propped up against a long lost ancestor and now I'm bawling

like a bough-broken baby,

all felled down and brow beaten,

all washed up and trying so hard to be upstanding.

Pause

It's bloody cold on this edge

where the wind blows in from the north, south, east and west.

Pause

Tree:

When the poisons came

we gritted our teeth and

layer upon layer, bark upon bark

we hardened our souls

of soft sappy soft wood.

Pause

Me:

They're malleable in the factory,

but these ageless ancestors

stride the sand filled regions of the north, south, east and west of England

where the coast crumbles while the sea marches forward

with time past, time present, time future.

And I am trying to do the same: prop myself up on the ancestors,

Trying to be like them, understand them, the ancient ones.

But I can't, I'm from Ikea.

They are time.

They have been here

Longer.

They are the longest, tallest, most robust, most weathered and withered of all.

They are trees and I am me.

See the film and read the blog about this poem and its context at:

<http://www.ninaandfrederick.co.uk/wordpress1/?p=508>