

Knock On Wood

Dom Laughlin

Knock on wood,

Because the trees can see you.

They have eyes where their heads should be,

And everyone knows one should never cross a tree.

Uprooted and barren in Mother's hopes and dreams

Of an eternal sunshine caught in her

Daughter's cloying breeze.

She waters the seeds given to her by Father.

She waits. She sees.

And so they, too,

Water. They wait. And they see. The trees. They

will see.

Knock on wood,

Because you have forgotten.

Forgotten how to ask, how to receive.

You've forgotten how to forgive. How to believe.

Just like your Father.

You pass by the trees. They have forgotten.

And so you have forgotten.

And the path grows farther and farther.

And the journey, unending. That you have forgotten

the point of it all.

You have forgotten your purpose. And so

You repeat yourself. Your repetitive curse written in

strange, but familiar musings.

You play games in the fields, and trap yourself in fantasies.

You block roads and burn bridges, float down roaring rapids, and swim in the puddles you've made. You gather the mud and sticks and make them into bricks and call it Home.

Knock on wood,

Because children will listen.

You tell them stories, and sing them to sleep. so that they may dream and have hope.

We were all born from the Garden.

We haven't returned ever since Father closed the gates.

Mother sneaks in some seeds and fruits.

And the children see her.

Then you.

They see you scribble sounds on paper.

You play the ivory keys with gentle precision.

They see you. And they listen.

They listen to you sing songs that were once stories, stories that were once memories.

Memories from the Garden.

From way long ago.

You breathe life into their lungs with your songs.

You hope they can hear

The wooden piano Father gave you. He chopped *them* for you.

You knock on the sides for good luck after each song.

The children, they will listen.

They will see.

Knock on wood,

Because Chances are the adversary.

Because every moment is important.

And every chance you get is an opportunity for the better,

And for worse.

You are a magnet for consequence.

You are ruled by Saturn, and he sees you. Listens.

And he makes your glass half empty. He sees you smile unhappy, lines creasing your face as though you're containing something bigger within.

You follow the rules of the games you never wanted to play.

And accept whatever prizes he brings with a smile.

The smile he knows.

He listens to you sing. And you crack and twist your voice.

Like cracks on the ground, you tiptoe across the city.

Unsure of where to go. But,

You know what to do. But,

Only if he permits it.

So you sightsee. You listen to the birds in the trees.

Does a bird crack their voice? You wonder.

You see them knock their beaks on the wood.

Knock on wood,

Because it'll sound good on paper.

You rhyme, but not all at once.

.selur eht kaerb uoY

But not all at once.

(You invoke a magic beyond.)

You tell stories with your eyes closed, fingers
crossed,

And recite poetry out of the inking pool you've
drooled out within the caverns.

You've learned how deadly a pen can be on the day
you've stood at the wooden podium.

Fist tight. Knuckles white. Knocking on the wood
as you summon the monster you knew once before,
before you've forgotten. The monster that you once
could see. And you wrote about her. And now
you're knocking on the wood, because you don't
want to take the chance. Of her listening in.

So you clutch onto your paper and pen and read.

But you've forgotten that your paper was once
watching you.

Knock on wood,

Because your mother can hear you.

She hears your cursings, and redirects the river's
path back to you.

You wish you were better at giving blessings.

Better at seeing.

Better at listening.

Better at rhyming.

But she reads your stories anyways.

She listens, and so you listen.

And as you watch her watering the plants in your
small balcony under California sunshine,
You watch with such intensity as though there's
nothing else to see.

Rooted in this Home you've both made, out of
sticks and mud, she redirects the river from the sky
and through the metal railing, a waterfall cascading
onto the unknown.

You remember that it's painful to remember. But to
forget is to forget to live. And to
forget is to die.

And so you write. Fitting everything you see into a
story.

And she reads it to her seedlings.

So that they may not forget. And she hopes they
listen. And she hopes they see her.

She hopes.

So she knocks on wood.