

BRINGING THINGS BACK FROM THE WOODS

By David Shumate

Each time I wander into the woods, I bring something back with me. Antlers. Toppled nests. Stones smoothed by streams. The mating call of a wren. (Which doesn't seem to work on humans very well.) Sometimes I return imbued with the attitude of a tree and remain stationary for hours on end. Lately the spirits of the forest have begun following me home. Wiping their feet at our front door so as not to scatter their moss about. Flipping our television on. Bumping against my wife's hip as she chops vegetables for a stew. Testing out the type of rain our shower makes. Rearranging my dreams with their lower branches as I doze. I sense they have instigated a rebellion among our wooden furniture making it nostalgic for the forest. One of our oldest chairs is growing back its bark. A beam that spans this side of the house has sprouted a dozen leaves. And just today when I went to move my desk, it wouldn't budge because its legs had taken root.