

## Stacks of *Fine Woodworking* Magazines (Contemplating Eventual Downsizing)

My first thoughts of them aren't with the craft  
but with the atmosphere, with starting work:  
the optimism of the summer sun,  
the early morning light before the task  
of measuring and marking off begins ...  
and then the redolence of sawing wood,  
the scent of cherry, poplar, bitter walnut,  
and further back, to childhood's fragrant pine,  
its essence like a kindness in the room.

Dimensioned patiently to given plans,  
sorted neatly on the shelves, in stacks,  
the pieces lent their geometric shapes  
to suffer tenons, mortises and tongues  
to transform, via joinery, a plank  
into a thing of beauty made for use.

The discipline, from planes to polishing,  
endures through stacks of glossy magazines,  
their use no longer relevant to what  
a man my age should trust his fingers to.  
The drive to make from wood what eyes and mind  
contrive has, like the games of childhood, found  
its place among the passions of my past.  
I keep the magazines in order, where  
(unless a silly urge to recall how  
to make the tombstone-panels for a door  
implores a late-life structural revival)  
they'll sit, still faithful to their month and year,  
until the need to shrink our life down further  
finesses pleasant decades of instruction.  
The truth is, I don't read them anymore,  
but when they're gone, I know I'll miss them all.