

I chose "Time Will Show" for the title of the following poem, written in 1981, the same year I wrote "Christmas Eve, 1981." They are symbolic and have the same theme, as they anticipate the civil rights demonstrations, so they are companion pieces. In "Time Will Show," I am echoing *The Sacred Wood*, a collection of essays on poetry and criticism written by 20th century poet T. S. Eliot.

By the sacred wood, I understand those works from tradition, of various classifications reinterpreted, recreated, and assimilated into contemporary works providing insight into their significance for our times, and perhaps for all times, and contributing to helping us find our way.

The speaker of the poem is walking in the woods thinking about trees (the sacred wood), the preservation of which is linked to "our fate." He is on his way to split and cord wood that had been cut previously and had had a long time to weather. He finally arrives at the place ("here") where he begins to cut and cord the wood, associating some of the tough, knotted stumps with the kind of resistance which may be needed in a conflict much on his mind and concludes, "time will show we cared about the trees."

Time Will Show

By: Ken Ferruccio

Time will show we couldn't concentrate to save our fate only,
but cared also for the trees,
their circles of destiny winding through our minds,
Informing actions of a political kind.

These seed and soil grown delights, fed on nature's dark intrigues,
have a language all their own.

So we're children tracing letters for the first time,
Men told too late we learned too soon all wrong -
lost snow travelers of a new frontier,
pioneers of an old faith,
whose precedential footprints blown away,
stand alone, where all directions seem the same -
Then, circling through the trees, pine, oak, and hickory,

Wind inward toward the core.

Here, even before maul hits wedge well placed along lines of least resistance,
we can feel muscle and stringy fiber give as oak and hickory split,
and the two halves, falling away,
are quartered, then corded with the rest.

But there will come a time when we will have to be more
knot - resistant
to maul and wedge,
and the axe's cutting edge,
more like these old weathered stumps,
which at least have to be carried whole
to the agony of hearth, the center of the home.

Then as now, we won't curse others for our fate,
but rough-hew new hope from old trees,
pine, oak, and hickory.
Time will show we cared about the trees.