

THE ECOLOGIST

(in memory of Bernie Steinzor, psychotherapist, raconteur, hewer of wood)

Nothing was alien to him
and everything lovely:
tormented souls longing
for the light within,
old chisels, augers, axes, hatchets,
detritus of a time when
men and land through useful
work conjoined;
poetry and politics,
laughter and argument
the silence within.

Nothing was alien to him
and everything connected:
Dante and Darwin,
Rogers and Marx,
Beethoven's Fifth,
Ellington's Take the A,
Mozart's Requiem,
and Seeger's Rainbow Race.

Nothing was alien to him
and everything artful:
an antique synagogue lamp,
an old church pew,
a rusted saw
long past its use,
a piece of birch bark
holding words,
a length of cherry
oiled and carved,
dried violets
that would make a poem.

Nothing was alien to him

and everything celebrated:
the chickadee's come hither;
the mourning dove's plaintiff cry
spring's bright rustlings,
summer's defiant declarations;
autumn's colored siftings;
and winter's silent mantle;
dogwood and burdock,
funghi and forget-me-nots,
humus and hare,
the spotted doe
outside his kitchen window.

Nothing is alien to him now,
he is one with the universe of stars,
the symphony of sun and rain,
the galaxies of atoms,
the subterranean work of beetles
of worms, and microbes
breaking down and turning up
recreating the ecology of all
that is, and ever was--
just as he wanted it--
beneath the entwining maples.

~Sheila Collins