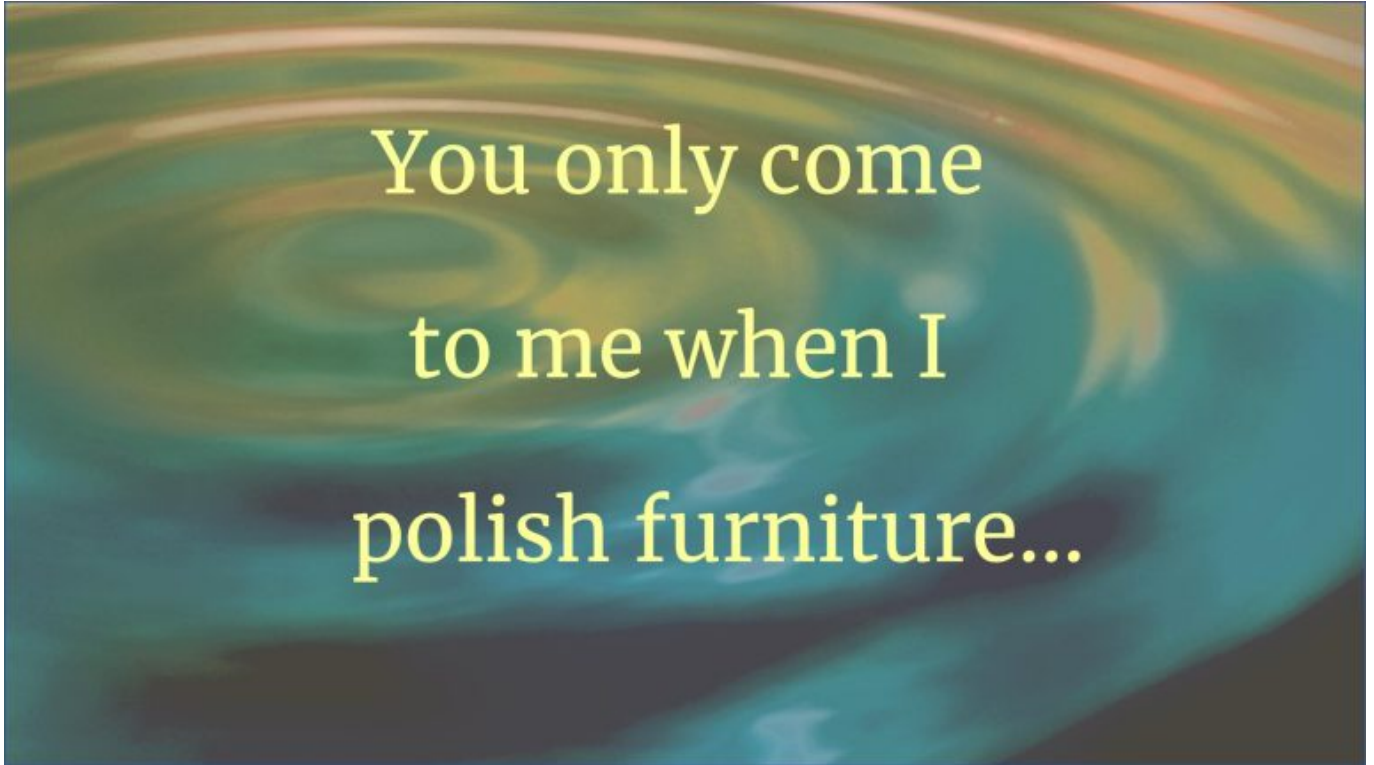


Vinegar and Good Wood

Category: Poems

written by Nancy Scott | December 20, 2024



You often speak to my brother from the bottle
of apple-cider vinegar
fermented for years but saved just in case
in the back of his spice cabinet.
You can tell him how to make your banana bread
and your hamburger gravy
till they are no longer yours,
being generally better.
You even give him God's quiche Lorraine,
never having made it yourself,
and tell him to bake the next one with broccoli,
a vegetable you never made us eat at home.

You only come to me when I polish furniture.
Your warnings creak in the too-dry antique
piano stool you bought for three bucks
at a Vermont auction which
I must never lift from the top.
I feel your hand in the hard
rock-maple headboard you picked
out a month before my wedding
because it would outlast us all
and it was on sale.
Even your last present to me was good wood,
Made by another nursing-home patient
Who sold reindeer that smelled of pine.

You whispered your knowing into it just in time-
vinegar for the every day;
good wood for the long haul.