

*Polished Table*

When this koa tree stood,  
honeycreepers nested among its burls,  
hopped and waddled where they wanted  
to go, tightroped along roots  
stretched over forest floor.

When this koa tree fell,  
mongoose darted nest to nest.  
At twilight, stowaway rats  
nosed windfall guava,  
papaya, passionfruit.

Feral pigs yanked out by the roots  
tender fiddleheads, new shoots  
of ti, o'hia, maile.

When this koa was milled,  
the honeycreeper's song

echoed – laughter of cousins  
splashing barefoot in ocean,  
children long gone now, dressed  
in the long sleeves of their lives,  
their eyes now and then closing

to let in the song  
of winged ones  
unnested, gone.

**Peggy Shumaker's** newest book of poetry is *Blaze*, a collaboration with the painter Kesler Woodward (Red Hen Press). Her nonfiction book *Just Breathe Normally* will come out in 2007 from the University of Nebraska Press. She teaches in the MFA Rainier Writing Workshop at the Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington.