

A black and white photograph of a meeting room. In the foreground, the back of a wooden chair is visible. In the background, there is a long wooden table and several other wooden chairs. The room is dimly lit, with light coming from a window on the left. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

The Meeting - 1946

We sat on wonderful wooden seats
in the wax polished and scented silence,
gazing at the errant dust motes
dancing up the slanting beams of sunlight
and waited for the Spirit to move.

Outside, in the hall, the great grandfather clock
recited the slow roll call of expiring seconds
as each departed this existence.
vanishing in their instant of creation.

The huge long table, chest high to me, made as if from
a single tree, glowed transparent mahogany in the light.
The squares of rush matting on the floor
fascinated me. I had no word to call them.

Outside, the muffled sounds of studded boots
stomped along the pavement; occasionally
a motor vehicle growled past, rarer still a horse and cart
jingled and clomped down South Street, past our Meeting Room.

No Spirit moved and we did not speak.
Someday, one day, it will be different.
Until then our vigil continues.

My first Quaker Fifth Day Meeting (Thursday) at the now laid-down Leominster Meeting
Herefordshire, England. I was six years old.
Rod Packwood, Ottawa Monthly Meeting