

## TASMANIAN FORESTS

In the early hours of 24th June 2011, the Tasmanian logging industry and environmental groups signed off on a final agreement to protect 570,000 hectares of ancient high conservation value forests. The bitter conflict between these two groups has been a part of the political landscape for a generation of Australians – and there is now an agreement to end it.

The agreement recognises the economic benefits that will flow from protecting Tasmania's unique environmental assets, and deriving benefit from the huge amount of carbon they store and from tourism. While it is acknowledged that many forestry workers and businesses and parts of regional Tasmania will be negatively impacted by the agreement, the agreement calls for a range of measures to provide for the forestry workers who will have to exit the industry, including retaining and redundancies.

The importance of these forests reaches far beyond the shores of Tasmania. Tasmania's forests are recognised as being one of the greatest carbon stores on the face of the planet. Areas such as the Tarkine, Upper Florentine Valley, Styx Valley, Blue Tier, Great Western Tiers, Wielangta, Bruny Island and other amazing forests right across Tasmania will can be saved from destruction. These forests are home to endangered species such as the giant fresh water lobster, spotted tail quoll, swift parrots, and wedge tail eagles to name just a few. They are also the lifeblood of many communities, providing a constant source of clean drinking water.

<http://blog.getup.org.au/2011/06/24/tasmanian-forestry-agreement/>



There was a time, a time when beautiful calm  
The forest breathed, our hearts to soothe and charm.  
For Lithuanians relish calm and ease  
As lush grass relishes a gentle breeze  
That stirs dark ripples as it passes by:  
We often weep in woods, not knowing why.

For it is there we feel a pain is eased,  
The heart soothed and anxiety appeased;  
Warm tears born of a sentiment unique  
Come rolling then like pearl dew down the cheek.  
Long afterwards our lungs breathe forest air,  
Our breast as gently stirs as pines do there.

Such deep tranquility pervades the soul  
It bows as wheatears do when ripe and whole.  
This is the source from which our tears and sighs,  
Our solace and our poetry arise.

From *Forest Prayer* by Marija Kuncaitis

<http://www.druidry.org/obod/eisteddfod/entries/poetry/forestprayer.html>