



# Timeless Turnings

TMBaker. Woodturner

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## Welcome to my Timeless Turnings Newsletter!

Enjoy some information, entertainment, and, first and foremost, a glimpse into the whys and wherefores of my creative journey. Please join me...

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### As the New Year Turns...

Many may wonder how I am able to stay on my creative course amid the extreme noise of current events in our country and around the world. 2026 has begun in a particularly challenging manner, one that makes it increasingly difficult to account for.

When I'm particularly perplexed, for whatever reason, I find sanctuary

in my shop environs. Interestingly, it is much as it was for me when my creativity was expressed through playing and writing music. My creative process allows me to simultaneously bring perspective to the events surrounding me and sharpen my focus on creative pursuits. Admittedly paradoxical, yet it is what happens in my mind and my heart. It is sometimes a brief internal battle, although typically short-lived, with my creative focus taking control. Emblematic of this process is the image of "Skjoldr" (pronounced 'skelder'), a Norse war shield that I turned recently.



For me, it represents the resilience to ever-present external pressures to sidetrack me — they may attack at the edges and even inflict internal damage, yet there is always a serene beauty that emerges in the end.

The creative process is not always as pretty as one might expect it to be. It is often wrought with internal stressors. The key is to allow beauty, in its many forms, to reveal itself to my creative side and, most importantly, to the new owner/caretaker of the resultant art. There are many moments of self-doubt when selling at shows, but I always have to remind myself the the new owner just hasn't shown up yet. And voilá! Suddenly there they are — eyes lit up, and the piece is speaking directly to their heart, as it should be for every art purchase.

## Wood Words: Chatoyance

I don't believe that I've covered the marvel of 'chatoyance' yet. BTW, it is pronounced: shə-tóy-ən(t)s. Chatoyance (or chatoyancy, if you prefer) is from the French phrase for 'cat's eye.' It is a phenomenon where parallel fibers create the effect of a moving band of light. Most are familiar with it in the Cat's Eye or Tiger Eye gemstone.

A similar, yet more exaggerated shimmer effect occurs within various woods, typically from curl in the wood's grain. It is most pronounced in various figured maples, variously known as curly, fiddleback, tiger-stripe, or quilted. It occurs frequently in other woods as well, such as koa (the highly prized Hawaiian wood), Oregon's famed myrtle wood, Port Orford cedar, and mango.

It is, of course, impossible to depict chatoyance in a two-dimensional image since you can't see the interplay of light, but I think you get the idea from the fiddleback maple platter shown here.

The first sight of chatoyance in a dramatic piece such as this is captivating, to say the least. I have to wonder if wood chatoyancy was the inspiration for the ubiquitous depiction of angels in the heavens from the masters of the High Renaissance (Michelangelo, et al.). When you experience the movement of light within the finely finished patterned wood grain of such work, you too may wonder the same. It's truly a marvel to behold!



## Final Words

2025 was an amazing year for me, creatively speaking. I feel as though I've hit my stride in exploring, experimenting, and further developing my artistic expression. While there have certainly been some catastrophic failures (!) along the way, each has provided valuable lessons that fed into the success of other, what I like to call, 'statement' pieces. From the business side of my pursuits, I had two extremely successful multiple-day shows, I was represented by the Art On First gallery, and I participated in most of the Lithia Artisan Market weekend fairs throughout the summer. I found new homes for over 100 pieces of wood-turned art. The best part of all was the innumerable conversations I had with patrons of the arts, whose eyes would light up, hearts would lift, and heartfelt connections were made.

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