

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network
Tree Stories

From Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Bremerton, WA
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Chalice Lighting

A tree is a wonderful living organism which gives shelter, food, warmth and protection to all living things.

It even gives shade to those who wield an axe to cut it down

Buddha

Readings*

A California song... A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hamadryads departing,
A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and sky,
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest dense,
Farewell my brethren,
Farewell O earth and sky, farewell ye neighbouring waters,
My time has ended, my term has come.

Walt Whitman, Song of the Redwood-Tree

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.

Ogden Nash, The Open Road

I fear those grey old men of Moccas, those grey, gnarled, low-browed, knock-kneed, bowed, bent huge, strange, long-armed, deformed, hunch-backed misshapen oak men that stand waiting and watching century after century, biding God's time with both feet in the grave and yet tiring down and seeing out generation after generation . . . No human hand set those oaks. They are 'the trees which the Lord hath planted.' They look as if they had been at the beginning and making of the world, and they will probably see its end.

Francis Kilvert on the Moccas Oaks, Diary, 1876

Little laurel trees, your roots can find
No mountain, yet your leaves extend
Beyond your own world into mine
Perennial wands, unfolding in my thought
The budding evergreen of time
Kathleen Raine, The Trees in Tubs

Being unable to climb or hew down any pine cones, I took my gun and was busy clipping them from branches with ball, when eight Indians came at the report of my gun. They were.., anything but friendly.... I was determined to fight for my life...Stood eight or ten minutes looking at them and they at me without a word passing, til one...made a sign for tobacco which I said they should get on the condition of going and fetching me pine cones...

From the journal of David Douglas, 1826, describing his discovery of the Sugar pine near the Umpqua river, Oregon.

Therefore, with resolution as his only support and companion, he set his mind on enlightenment and proceeded to the root of a pipal tree (bo-tree), where the ground was carpeted with green grass.

Prince Buddha finds enlightenment under a Bo-tree from the Life of Buddha, Avril de Silva-Vigier

**Remarkable Trees of the World (2002) and Meetings with Remarkable Trees (1996) by Thomas Pakenham.*

Discussion

Our topic is trees. Trees are rooted in earth and reach for the heavens as do our spirits. They are why we can breathe. They protect us, give us shelter and more. But they are important for our spirits too. Many of us have "tree stories", stories of connection to a special tree. We will be sharing tree stories.

Closing

"You know me, I think there ought to be a big old tree right there. And let's give him a friend. Everybody needs a friend." — Bob Ross