

Poems about Trees

The Trees by Philip Larkin

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread.
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old ?
No, they die too.
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In full-grown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say.
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

Leaves by William Barnes

Leaves of the summer, lovely summer's pride,
Sweet is the shade below your silent tree,
Whether in waving copses, where ye hide
My roamings, or in fields that let me see

The open sky: and whether ye may be
Around the low stemm'd oak, robust and wide;
Or taper ash upon the mountain aide:
Or lowland dim; your shade is sweet to me.

Whether ye wave above the early flow'rs
I' lively green; or whether rustling sere,
Ye fly on playful winds around my feet,

In dying autumn: lovely are your bow'rs,
Ye early -dying children of the year;
Holy the silence of your calm retreat.

Consider the Grass Growing by Patrick Kavanagh

Consider the grass growing
As it grew last year and the year before,
Cool about the ankles like summer rivers
When we walked on a May evening through the meadows
To watch the mare that was going to foal.

Birches by Robert Frost

When I see birches bend to left or right
Across the lines of straighter, darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many coloured
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth make them shed chrystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust –
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice storm.
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows –
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching too soon
And not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung forward, feet first, with a swish
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once a swinger of branches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations
And life is too much like a pathless wood
When your face turns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed it open.
I'd like to get away form earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.

May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Paradise by George Herbert (Poet and Arboriculturalist)

I Blesse thee, Lord, because I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force, or hidden CHARM
Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM,
While the inclosure is thine ARM?

Inclose me still for fear I START.
Be to me rather sharp and TART,
Then let me want thy hand & ART.

When thou dost greater judgments SPARE,
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,
Ev'n fruitfull trees more fruitfull ARE.

Such sharpnes shows the sweetest FRIEND:
Such cuttings rather heal then REND:
And such beginnings touch their END.

Sweeny Praises the Trees (Anon) Translated from the Irish by Seamus Heaney

The branchy leafy oak tree
is highest in the wood,
the shooting hazel bushes
hide sweet hazel nuts.

The alder is my darling,
all thornless in the gap,
some milk of human kindness
coursing in its sap.

The blackthorn is a jaggy creel
stippled with dark sloes,
green watercress is thatch on wells
where the drinking blackbird goes.

Sweetest of the leafy stalks
the vetches strew the pathway:
the oyster grass is my delight
and the wild strawberry.

Low set clumps of apple trees
drum down fruit when shaken.
scarlet berries clot like blood
on mountain rowan.

Briars curl in sideways,
arch a stickle back,
draw blood, and curl back innocent
to sneak the next attack.

The yew tree in each churchyard
wraps night in its dark hood.
Ivy is a shadowy
genius of the wood.

Holly tears its windbreak,
a door in winter's face;
life blood on a spear shaft
darkens the grain of ash.

Birch trees, smooth and pale skinned,
delicious to the breeze,
high twigs plait and crown it
the queen of trees.

The aspen pales
and whispers, hesitates:
a thousand frightened scuts
race in its leaves.

But what disturbs me most
in the living wood
is the swishing to and fro
of an oak-rod.

Thatch Palms by James Berry

Small settlement of Thatch Palms,
here beside the sea,
I come to see you.

Living in turbulent face of the sea,
umbrella leaves shadow cliff-top.
Trunks all straight and smooth,
roots grip rock like ironclaws.

An old tree is a standing pole,
bare of limbs,
time and wind beheaded.

I pick up
a dropped broad leaf:
so well ribbed

it flies from my hand
like a kite
into the sea.

I hug
a living tree.
I wonder at
the straightness
of Royal Palms
and at
the plumed show
of Queen Palms
and at
the timeless crop
of Date Palms.

I remember
monkey face
of fallen coconuts
will burst
into growth after months
of sea drifting.

And people go
from here and knit palms
into roofs
and brooms
into hats
and mats
into baskets
and novelties.

I wonder at the guardian stance of palms.
I wonder at their beginning.

I wonder at
the stubborn nature
of the fanlike leaves.

Trees Cannot Name the Seasons - Roger McGough

Trees cannot name the seasons
Nor flowers tell the time.
But when the sun shines
And they are charged with light,
They take a day-long breath.
What we call 'night'
Is their soft exhalation.

And when joints creak yet again
And the dead skin of leaves falls,
Trees don't complain
Nor mourn the passing of the hours.
What we call 'winter'
Is simply hibernation.

And as continuation
Comes to them as no surprise,
They feel no need
To divide and itemize.
Nature has never needed reasons
For flowers to tell the time
Or trees put a name to seasons.

Trees are great by Roger McGough

Trees are great, they just stand and wait
They don't cry when they're teased
They don't eat much and they seldom shout
Trees are easily pleased.

Trees are great, they like to congregate
For meetings in the park
They dance and sway, they stay all day
And talk till well after dark.

Trees are great, they accept their fate
When it's pouring down with rain
They don't wear macs, it runs off their backs
But you never hear them complain.

So answer me please, if there weren't any trees
Where would naughty boys climb?
Where would lovers carve their names?
Where would little birds nest?
Where would we hang the leaves?

Trees by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

First Fig by Alison Elrod

The fig tree has spread its generous
canopy across my late summer side yard.
Its branches are heavy with fruit.

Every day now, the figs grow softer
and fuller; they are taking the rain
and the warmth of a hundred summer days
and making them over into pleasure;
taut green skin and soft pink flesh.

Wearing only my nightgown
and my work boots, I have come
outside at dawn like some
post-modern Eve, yearning
for a taste of the fruit of the tree. I reach up
into the branches, reach up for the fruit
that hangs just beyond my reach,
the fig whose skin is just beginning
to bear the flush of readiness.

Maybe I am Eve. After all,
isn't the light in my garden still
what came of "Let there be light?"
And isn't everything to come
in human history beginning
on this very day, this very morning,
when this very fig—the one I am holding
in my hand—is finally ripe?

Or maybe, I am
a middle-aged woman outside
in my nightgown at six a.m.—

filled with happiness so pure it feels
like innocence—savouring the sweetness
of summer's first ripe fig
before the light shifts,
before history resumes,
before I come inside to wake you,
temptation on my mind.

Trees Please by Benjamin Zephaniah

Leave de trees please
Cause de trees
Work wid de breeze
To put all living tings at ease,
So leave de trees please.
Yu see
Down in Somerset, England,
I know a tree
Dat is one thousand
An five hundred years old.
Dat is a wise tree
Dat is a tree I need
To talk to,
Dat is a tree
We animals should listen to.
For millions of animals
Trees are a home,
Trees can help shelter yu home,
So leave de trees alone.
Trees mek oxygen.
Let me say dat again:
Trees mek oxygen,
So mek a tree yu fren.
Leave de trees please
Cause de trees
Work wid de breeze
To put all living tings at ease,
An they help de birds and bees
Old an wise are all of these,
So leave de trees please
Juss
Leave de trees please.