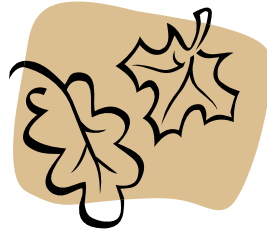


The Wisdom Tree

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Why is it that I've become so old, when my friends have come and gone?
I've watched them sprout from acorns...then savagely hacked and sawn.

Why is it I still linger...still weather, here on this hill...
where younger, vibrant souls were cut, and the sap of their youth was spilt.

For I had grown to know them, cherished their youthful ways...
watched lichen cover bark and twig, as limbs gently swayed.

My aged, knarled, twisted roots reach deep into the bluff.
My weathered, rotted, branches have reached to the sky enough...

to whiten in the daytime sun, and dampen with evening dew.
They've cradled the fledgling red-tail hawks, hatched in life's full view.

My rough and crackled, hollow bark houses young field mice.
Ivy has crept fully up my sides...not just once, but twice.

My autumn leaves have fallen, more years than I can count.
They've sailed beyond this jagged bluff in such a large amount...

that they have seen the farther valleys, and floated upon the stream.
They've viewed what lies across the ridge, where I can only dream.

And despite this giant, rolling forest, covering countless acres...
I feel like I'm here by happenstance, rather than choice of my maker.

There are numerous giant stones that cower just above me.
Water flows beneath my roots, and my sidewalls are so steep...

that no one could navigate a path or easily drag a saw...
to hack or bite or sever...my trunk along this wall.

They've chopped down all my brethren and left their boughs to rot.
They've dragged their lifeless carcasses to faraway saw-yard lots.

And what if they treated their own kind in the very same way...
killing them off in their prime, before their later days?

What if they were killed while their bodies were still useful?
Long before the retirement days...enjoying life in full?

I don't think they would agree...I doubt that they would accept.
But we of the wooden statue world can never really adapt.

We can't just up-and-pull our roots, and move ourselves away.
We will stand to feel their saw...they won't feel our dismay.

So why is it that I still linger...why do I still live?
I've outgrown my usefulness...shade is all I give.

My younger, vibrant, youthful friends were severed in their prime,
While I've endured my life here...I've stood the test of time.

But I see those eyes upon me. I know how their minds think.
They'd love to saw my waist in half. They'd do it without a blink.

So, how come they haven't done it? Why haven't they sawed me down?
They see my branches in board-feet...my planks in walls downtown.

They see my tiny little twigs woven into baskets.
They see the sides of my trunk, sawed up into caskets.

My wooden friends will house their bodies...help carry all their wares.
And I will endure their heartless glances. I'll feel their heated stares.

So if I guessed why I'm still standing, what might that guess be?
Perhaps the reason that I'm still here...

...is the fact that they just can't reach me.