

Hogback Tree Study

Marlboro Elementary School 3rd/4th Grade September, 2009



About this book

3rd/4th graders from Marlboro Elementary School created these paintings and poems at Hogback Mountain on September 25, 2009.

The “Adopt a Tree” project is part of an ongoing collaboration between MES, Hogback Mountain Conservation Association and community artists and naturalists in Marlboro, VT.

MES teachers Erica Morse, Emma Hallowell and Pam Burke planned, guided and documented this study.

Hogback Study Tree



Hogback Tree Study

Something is up on Hogback Mountain. Children are out exploring woodlands, wetlands and wildlife. Kids are talking to trees and trees are talking back. "Tree, I heard you calling my name," writes Mercer, "now I've come for you." The Adopt-a-Tree Project is one example of how Marlboro Elementary School students are using the mountain as an outdoor classroom. Their work is part of a community effort to conserve and manage Hogback Mountain as a town forest.

Erica Morse's 3rd/4th grade students spent a bright September day revisiting their trees, writing poems with Ann Gengarely and painting watercolors with Susan Bull Riley. This collection of poetry and art is a celebration of children's work and an invitation to see the forest and the trees through their eyes. Like the three rivers that have their headwaters on Hogback, these poems and paintings connect the place where they were created with the people they reach downstream.

Carol Berner
River of Words Regional Coordinator



Tree

I am an oak tree.
No one thinks I am any different than any
other tree, except for one child,
Curious as the wind.
Now I am excited as a child, opening their
first Christmas present.
I wait. Expecting happiness.
But the little girl doesn't return for weeks.
Finally, she arrives.
My branches relax.
I feel peaceful.
Happy.
Relaxed.
Warm.
Thankful.
Relieved.
I
Am an oak tree.

Izzy

Lphaea



A Tree's Life

I am a tree that is so tall
That in the winter
I lay my branches upon the soft clouds and go to sleep.
The snow makes such a nice warm blanket
That nothing could disturb me.
My bark is white and rough.
I am not a climbing tree, but I am a looking tree.
In fall, I look upon the meadow and see
All the other trees' leaves turn orange,
Red and yellow and a little brown.
Just a few green ones left.
And I know one day, we will all go down to the ground
And have children who will see the things
I saw when I was alive.

Linnaea



The Leaning One

I wonder what you will look like after all
your leaves fall off.

I wonder if you will look as bare as the
desert,

or as lovely as a rainbow after a
thunderstorm.

I wonder, if after you get old, you will fall
down.

If you fall down, I will be as sad as a boy
whose dog ran away.

You lean like a bishop speeding
diagonally across a chessboard.

I wonder so many things about you.

Liam



My Tree

My tree is tall, tall as a giraffe.
It sits on the side of a trail, quiet as a fern.
She has a split down her side, just like a piece
of paper with a rip in it.
All the leaves are at the top, like all your hair is
at the top.
She is beginning to lose leaves, just like a little
girl that lost her tooth.
When it's winter, she feels cold.
In the summer she feels warm and happy.
Happy as a little girl who got her first present.
I love Patch.

Gigi



My Tree

My tree's fat trunk feels like a balloon that
popped.
It feels wrinkly and soft under my finger tips.
My tree has two branches on the top.
It looks like a butterfly's antennae.
My hand fits my tree's trunk
Like a girl's foot fits a croc shoe.
My tree has as many arms as a fern's leaves.

Paige



Ode to My Tree

When I see you
I feel safe. I feel
protected like a bird in its nest.
Your strong
branches and thick trunk
protecting me from any
dangers around.
Your thick coat of
leaves keeping you warm,
yet keeping me cool.
You keep me dry when
it rains.
Oak tree,
your canopy, which
protects me, which cools, which
keeps me dry, I celebrate.
You are the greatest
gift I, or anyone, or
any living soul could
dream of. You are the best,
the most glorious thing ever.

Morgan



As I sit here in the grass
Next to my tree
I feel calm.
I feel loved.
I feel peaceful.
And I NEVER have
To feel alone
Because when I am
With my tree
I feel like we
Are in our own
WORLD.

Lindsey



I Was Born a Tree

I was born a tree,
an oak tree,
my leaves changing color
as fast
as winter winds,
sometimes orange as the
sunset,
sometimes red as fire,
sometimes yellow as a
black-eyed susan's petals,
sometimes green as the snake I just saw.
When it is nighttime
And the birds fly away,
I feel as sad
as when a pet has
passed away.

Adaylia



I am a tree
I stand taller than a windmill,
so tall I can almost touch the cloudless blue sky.
My bark is a rough, peely silver.
When the sunlight hits me
I joyously soak it up like I've never felt it before.
I am a tree and I am glad to be one.

Delaney



If My Tree Were a Friend

If my tree were a friend, she would be shy

With long blond hair and you would usually

Find her sitting under an oak tree.

Her eyes would be turquoise.

Me and her would swing on a swing made of
birch bark.

We would move through the air like a
rollercoaster.

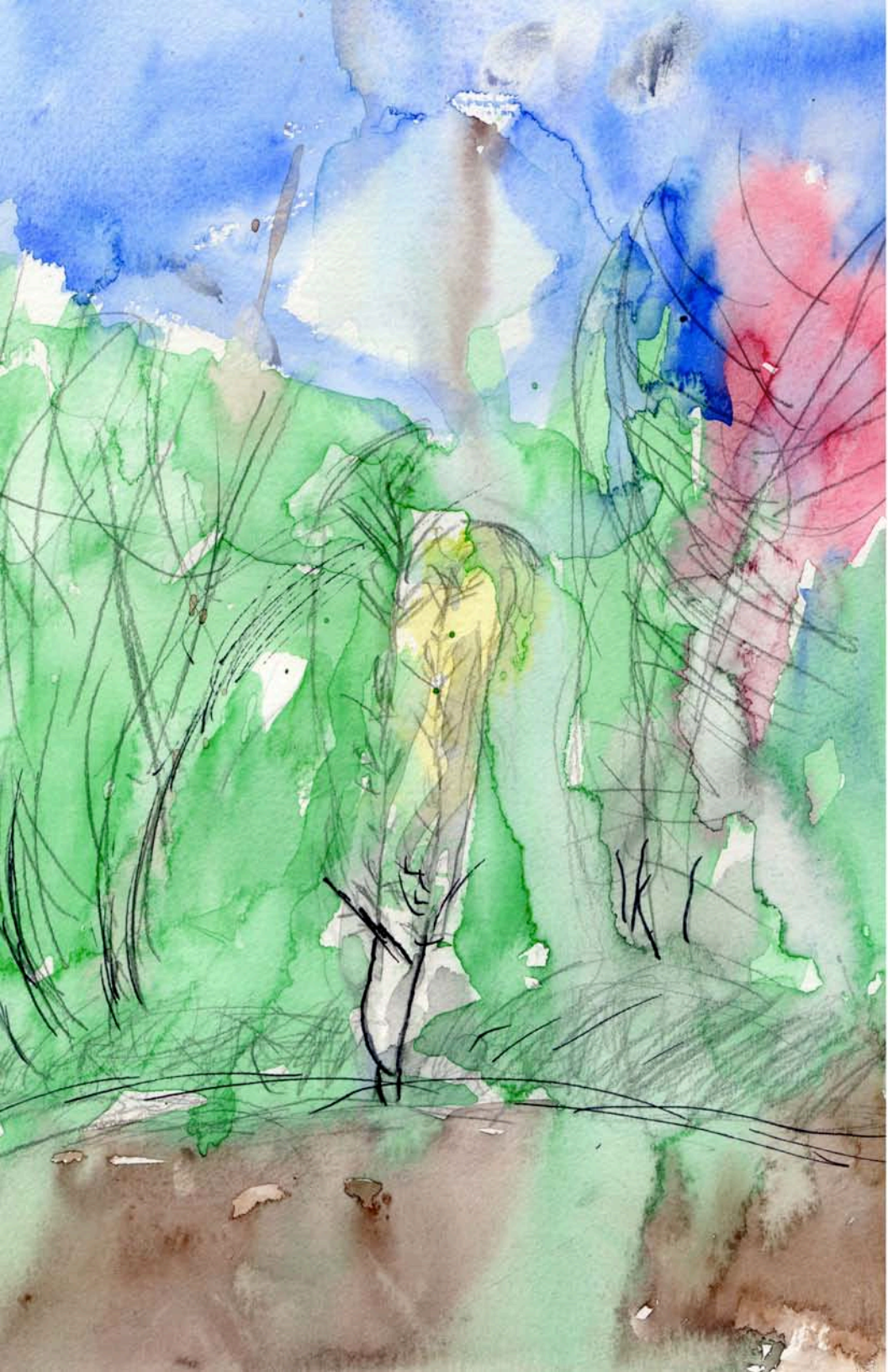
Frida



Oak Tree

Oak tree you stand there on the cliff tall and grand
looking over the mountains in all their glory.
Their autumn colors dazzling in the morning sunlight.
Your leaves rustling in the wind.
Your rough bark shiny in the sunlight.
You tower above everything like a skyscraper towers
above a townhouse.
You are like a saint to me.
To me you are just as grand as the grandest mansion
ever built.
But you are not cunning or cruel.
You are joyful. You are thankful for life.
Oak tree, you are a true friend.

Zev



Ode to My Sugar Maple

When the sun shines on you
your yellow leaves glimmer
like a crystal.
When I touch you, your bark feels as smooth
as paper.
Oh sugar maple sapling
I imagine you are 10 years old
With a spirit
Kind and loving
Just like Ann
Our poetry teacher.

Walker



My birch tree is named Thunder Bolt.
His bark is rough to my touch.
His leaves are like sunbeams.
He lives on Hogback Mountain.

Brite



Trees

Tree, I heard you calling
my name
a long time ago.
But now I've come for you.
What do you need, tree?
Are you feeling well
or are you feeling sad
in your roots
Down
down
down
in a deep dark hole
darker than the night sky
no stars
no moon?
Tree, I heard you calling my name.

Mercer



Tree you are big.
Bigger than an
Elephant.
Bigger than my
House.
Tree you are as old
as a rock.
Tree, as old as the mountains.
Tree, your memories
are as many as leaves in the forest.
Tree, I celebrate you!

Mason



I am a birch.
I sway in the wind like a hammock.
I am as bumpy as a toad.
My leaves are as yellow as the sun.
Some of my leaves are as green as the grass.
There are many trees around me,
 but none like me.
I am the biggest tree around me.
I am as big as an elephant.
I am as easy to climb as a ladder.
I am the best you see.
I am as white as a sheep.
I am as black as a dog.
I am as gentle as a baby.
I feel lonely in the wintertime.
I am everything you see.
I am as beautiful as a butterfly.
When the sunshine hits me, I feel like a drip
 of hot coffee.
I am as harmless as a baby.
If I had any child it would be you.
I am a birch and I love my poetry teacher.

Sequoyah



Tree when I see you
You always look different
Tree when I see you
I feel happy.
Tree when I see you
Everything around you is different.
Tree when I see you
You seem happy.
Tree when I see you
Everything around you seems happy.
Tree.

Aidan



My spirit is connected to the maple tree,
I feel it is my brother.
Its arms sway as it talks to me
in a voice
as soft as a kitten's purr.
Its gray bark is like a rain cloud.
Its leaves are like a sunset.
Maple, I am
your brother.

Wes

That Maple Tree

That maple tree
its smooth gray bark, its jagged green leaves reach
out towards me.
Its long slender branches swaying in the breeze.
It's all so wonderful to me.
I just wish I could stay here with that maple tree all
summer.
That maple tree is like a best friend to me.

Cooper







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With special thanks to Ann Gengarely and Susan Bull Riley: “If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.” Rachel Carson