Let today’s poem feature a tree or trees, as metaphor or physical presence.

The Quiet Listeners

Go into the woods
and tell your story
to the trees.
They are wise
standing in their folds of silence
among white crystals of rock
and dying limbs.
And they have time.
Time for the swaying of leaves,
the floating down,
the dust.
They have time for gathering
and holding the earth about their feet.
Do this.
It is something I have learned.
How they will bend down to you
softly.
They will bend down to you
and listen.

Laura Foley
in Poetry of Presence: an anthology of mindfulness poems
edited by Phyllis Cole-Dai and Ruby R. Wilson

Teach Me, Trees

Shadows rule
the early day
before the trees
rein them in
to the corrals
beneath their canopies.

Teach me, trees,
your dancing secrets:
how to swing
shadow partners

while you keep
your radiant
faces
lifted.

With undulating limbs,
you whisper
wind harmonies
for ever so small
an audience
or none.

Teach me.

jch 7/10/2003

To Be Held

To be held
by the light
was what I wanted,
to be a tree drinking the rain,
no longer parched in this hot land.
To be roots in a tunnel growing
but also to be sheltering the inborn leaves
and the green slide of mineral
down the immense distances
into the infinite comfort
and the land here, only clay,
still contains and consumes
the thirsty need
the way a tree always shelters the unborn life
waiting for the healing
after the storm
which has been our life.

Linda Hogan
anthologized in Healing the Divide:
poems of kindness and connection
edited by James Crews
Threat

You can live for years next door
to a big pinetree, honored to have
so venerable a neighbor, even
when it sheds needles all over your flowers
or wakes you, dropping big cones
onto your deck at still of night.
Only when, before dawn one year
at the vernal equinox, the wind
rises and rises, raising images
of cockleshell boats tossing among huge
advancing walls of waves,
do you become aware that always,
under respect, under your faith
in the pinetree’s beauty, there lies
the fear it will crash some day
down on your house, on you in your bed,
on the fragility of the safe
dailiness you have almost
grown used to.

Denise Levertov
anthologized in Coming to Age:
growing older with poetry
editors: Mary Ann Hoberman and
Carolyn Hopley

Tree

It is foolish
to let a young redwood
grow next to a house.

Even in this
one lifetime,
you will have to choose.

That great calm being,
this clutter of soup pots and books—

Already the first branch tips brush the window.
softly, calmly, immensity taps at your life.

Jane Hirshfield
in Given Sugar, Given Salt