

The Tree in Love's Garden

by Miasha

When we plant a tree, for most of us it is for a future we cannot know or see. We can only imagine the shade, the cool breeze rustling beneath its canopy. Whether we are conscious of it or not, it is always for a legacy of hope that we set its roots into the ground, and thus give it a part of our human heart. Long ago we planted a tree within the garden of our souls, tethered it for a while to weather the rough times, then set it free to enjoy the natural wax and wane of the seasons. This tree was our love. And we promised to tend it for better or worse. Not the type of promise bound by a religion or ceremony or even a piece of paper. Not even a promise that we shall be impassioned lovers. No, it was a promise that each of us be true to ourselves, as if we were limbs on that tree, both seeking the light of our true nature, yet attached to something greater than ourselves - to the idea that we shared the same rooted needs for honor, caring, support.

Oh, we both have loved before - have planted numerous trees in hopes of nurturing a mighty cathedral under which we find sanctuary. But always we moved on for some reason. Tree planters - love planters, one and the same, simply desiring that time and place to fully surrender our heart and soul. To set roots down deep in an abiding relationship.

You talk about missing me, but how can that be so? I am in the tree you symbolically planted, the favorite spot of landscape near the swing. I am the plant you water, the caring neighbor. I am that great strong limb leaning out from this tree of love, giving your tender heart shelter. If this great limb is suddenly shattered in a storm, this love-tree still stands, now offering fully a new stage of light on which to live your life. Though love appears tenuous, it is always lasting. It is what makes us more human and closer to the gods - to feel pain and joy in the same heart that prays for grace.

I hear your words, "I am lost without you." There is always a season when the gardener must leave the garden, with the gate open behind. There is nothing more to do here now but to let life's fire slumber beneath the cold earth. But the open gate is a gesture of deep humility - there is nothing more to do, *can* be nothing more to do, but to allow all beings and spirits and experiences full access to the remains of the garden's day. We tend to cradle and invest too much of ourselves into the rush of the garden's spring and summer, when we swear love, passion, and beauty will never end. Then we look on fall with sadness or fatigue - we mis-valued the bounty, were too caught up in that which we could see or touch. But it is the winter of our discontent, when we are lost as to what more we can do, that we have the most to gain - in the stark barrenness of that garden which is our life or love or special relationship to a place or being, we read and hear and find our way around those parts of our soul most exposed to change.

And we always wish change could come more gracefully. That we could someday finally get the lesson straight: That love, like a garden, when walled in risks becoming fragile, like oh so many hybrids genetically altered for a short seasonal show. We must know when to open the garden gate wide and let love fly out, or at the least let a new love fly in! There is a whole wilderness of seeds - new experiences, new relationships, new loves - waiting to land somewhere in the heart's tilth. Yes, we need to be lost without something or somebody. It is how the gate to our heart is flung wide in order to receive. And if just one seed of hope lands on the wintered earth of our soul, we can be assured that it is as if it hurried home.