

Tree Reporters

MAGAZINE

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Incredible
tree-secrets!



I wish someone would at least stand
by and tell me about their day.

I ♥ GLOBE

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THE STORY OF A BIRCH FOREST

*(Beyond the Ordinary: A World of
Science, Wonder, Magic, Fairness)*

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Author's other published books-

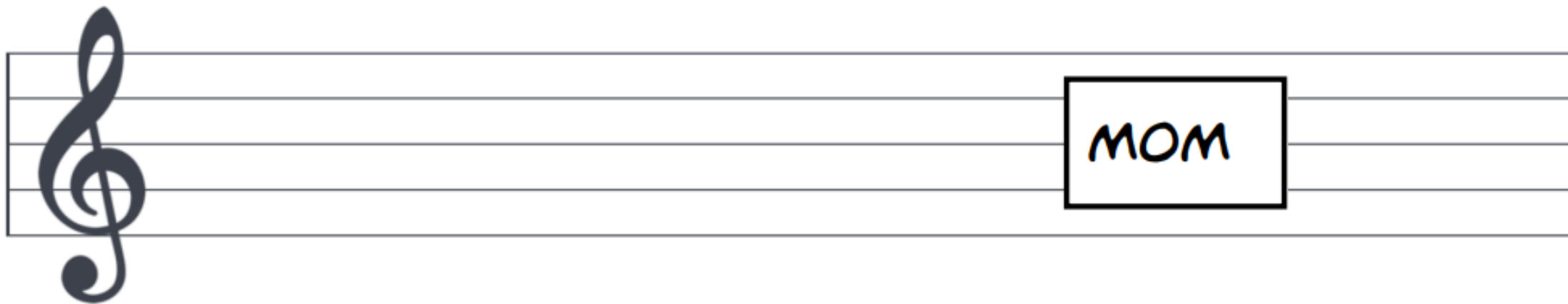
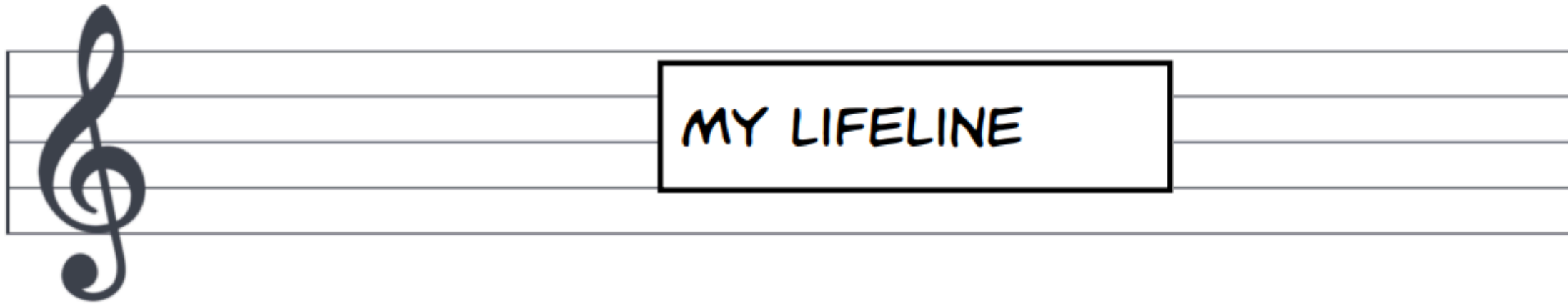
Once On A Golden Autumn Day, 2023. e-Book.

On The Banks Of Meghna River, 2021. Print.

For Dearest Tutul, 2018. Print.

Let The Coral Jasmines Bloom Again, 2016. Print.

Waiting For Dawn, 2013. Print.



Once upon a time, in a beautiful mountain region, in the heart of a dense, mysterious birch forest, there stood a wondrous birch tree. What a wonderful birch tree next to the greenish valley!

Scientifically it was a European birch. For a long time it stood there, its white bark shining in the sunshine, the wind rustling the edges of its wavy leaves.

Winter, summer, autumn, that birch tree was a witness to the cycle of nature, to the changes in the sky. It talked with other trees including other birches, all happy to share, and at night, when everyone was asleep, it woke in the moonlight, whispering on the leaves.



One November afternoon, when the white fog flowed & frozen between birches, the forest floor is strewn with red granular soil, Coco, a little boy, who lived in a neighboring small hut entered the forest, searching for birch leaves, which has been an interesting hobby for him since many years. Coco was not just an ordinary boy, he could appreciate the beauty around him & respect the wildlife. He used to live in a harmony with nature. He used to play in the foot of mountain & enjoyed being there.

Winter forest, tree bark, bare branches...red soil scattered on the ground...dry twigs, small stems, logs here & there...all these made Coco think that he had seen the most beautiful things in the world!



Coco was a true admirer of nature, a real nature lover. He could listen to the language of the trees, the whisper of their leaves, the rhythm of the grasses, the dew-droplets.

-What a beauty! Coco astonished in a deep voice.

-Welcome to this magical birch forest. Someone spoke.

Coco thought who might it be, but, he could not see anyone. Maybe its the hill in the distance?!

-All the beauty of the world has been painted here. Don't you see its been written in the gap between the branches of this birch forest!

Someone whispered again to his ears. Coco felt adventurous. As he walked deeper into the forest, the early moonlight shone on his face.



A beautiful birch tree towered over him. Above it was the starry sky. Coco felt a strange sensation, like the tree waking up, becoming human.

-Can you speak, the beautiful birch tree?

He asked, his voice filled with excitement. Indeed, the birch tree now answered,

-We can talk, about all the trees can talk, but its not often we talk & share our stories with humans, only people with feelings can hear us.

-Wow, sounds fascinating. I feel like being one of them. Anyway you look so gorgeous today!

-The pleasure is mine, Coco-The birch replied softly.

Coco is now curious to know how old the birch is.



-Very old. It says.

-I have lived in this forest for over 75 years. My leaves know the forest's secrets, & can see the forecasts. Maybe I have been here long enough for someone like you, Coco, to come & befriend. Nice to meet you, Coco.

Coco introduced himself as NASA GLOBE's tree reporter, there to learn more about trees & document information. Birch felt very connected to him.

Coco is now excited,

-What's secret of the birch forest do you hold?

Birch said,

-I'll tell you the last, let's write down the quick facts first, that'll be necessary for your project.

Coco's curiosity sparked.



He wanted to learn more about interconnections of birch leaves' phenological cycle, delicate of nature's balance, about the surface of the forest floor etc.

The birch's voice guided & replied all his questions.

-I want to know you better, the beautiful birch...so first tell me, what is your scientific name? What is your species, what kind of birch tree are you?

The birch replied nodding its branches,



-I'm a silver birch, *Betula pendula*. We're native to Europe & parts of Asia, though in southern Europe, we can only be found at higher altitudes.

-That sounds wonderful. Can you tell me what is special about your papery bark? I have always noticed that there is something unique about it.

-That's a great question. One notable feature is the peeling nature of our bark. This peeling process helps to get rid of old layers that may be harbouring pests or disease, thus contributing to the overall health of the tree.

-Mhh that makes sense. How do you get water & other nutrients...I mean, how do your roots do their work there?

-We, birches have a shallow root system, additionally we have a huge number of fine roots, through that we absorb all necessary materials from the soil.

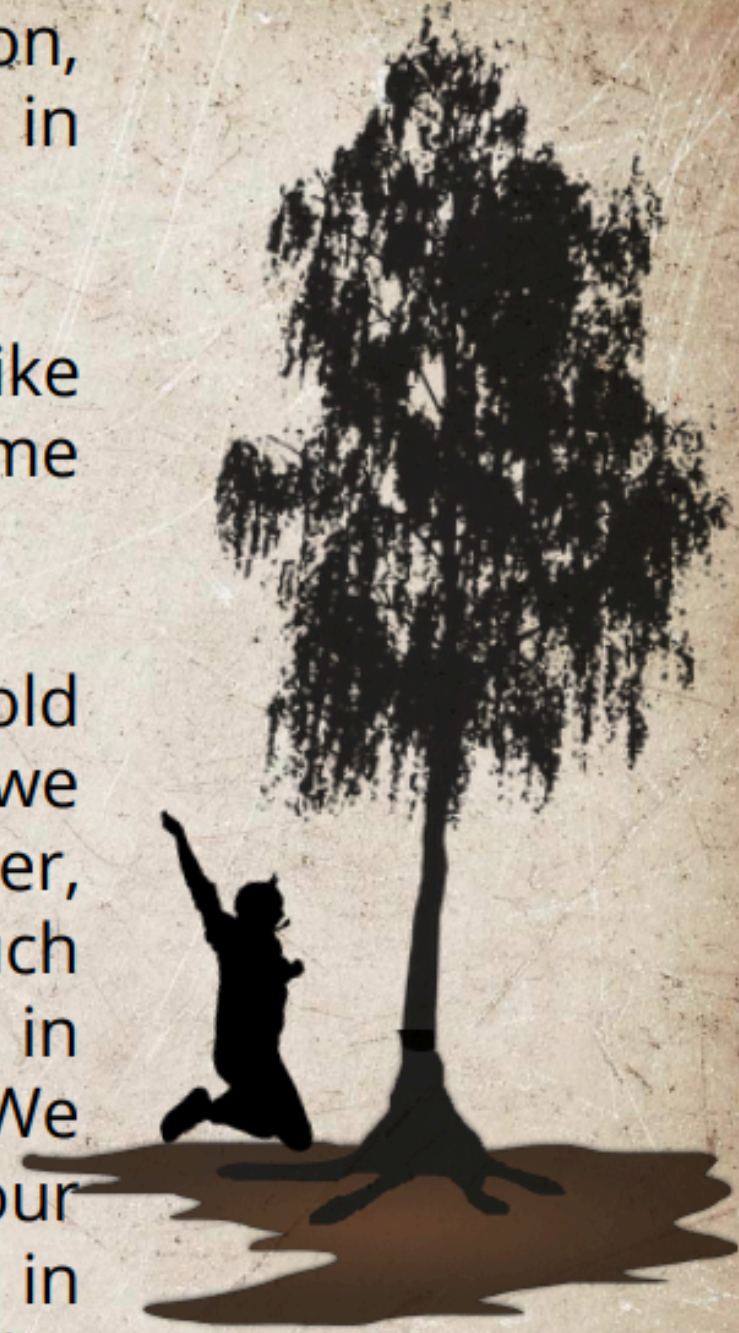
-Wow, that's amazing. Can you elaborate more, how do you play your ecological part?

-Sure. We play our part in looking after the environment by keeping the soil stable & making conditions better for other plants by creating shade & organic matter through leaf litter. We also provide a home for lots of birds & mammals.

We grow in poor soils & can tolerate pollution, which makes it useful for reforestation efforts in degraded landscapes.

-That's great. Can you also deal with things like natural disasters, drought, floods, extreme temperatures?

-We have learned to survive & grow well in cold climates & changing world around us, although we can sometimes be sensitive to extreme weather, like extreme heat or cold. When there is not much rain, we drop our leaves to save water, and in winter, we go dormant to protect ourselves. We can tolerate temporary flooding because of our shallow root systems & ability to grow in conditions with very low oxygen levels. But if the flooding lasts for too long, our roots can rot and we can get really unhealthy.



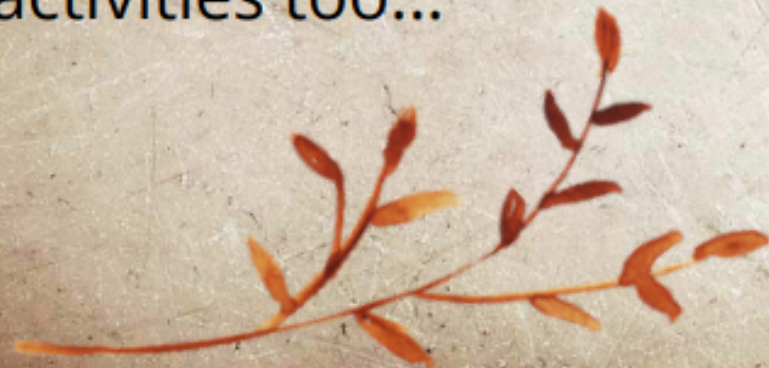
-That's great to know. Do you have a favorite season?

-All the seasons are my favorite, I've seen many types of weather come & go, but I like them all, because they each dress up in their own colors, in different unique forms.

-I can see why. You also dress up in different colors by season, sometimes glistening green, sometimes magical yellow, sometimes a pale orange lays beneath your branches.

-Oh I see. I'd be interested to know for my GLOBE phenological project, how old are you & how much longer do you usually live?

-I'm approximately 80 years old, birches like me can live up to 100 years or more. However our life span depends on diseases & human activities too...



Coco now feels wiser. He expects to go further with his GLOBE project smoothly with all the information the birch provided him. Last but not least, he suddenly asked,

-How's it like being a tree?



The birch seems to be happy hearing such an interesting question from such a little boy. It bubbled with enthusiasm:

-Its a heavenly feeling, but sometimes sorrowful too, do you know, how? Its lovely when I see flock of birds sit on my branch, when the deer plays beneath my twigs, squirrels got naughty through my bark, when I can soak up the sunshine etc. The sorrow stays still...

Coco expressed curiosity if its related to an unheard or long-forgotten story! Birch stated that it was about fairness & unfairness in the forest. Coco's eyes sparkled with excitement.

Rustling its remaining dry leaves the birch stated,

-Thanks for your patience Coco. I hold many memories of the forest & I recall them while I feel dreamy with the soft moonlight on my leaves.

-Start narrating it please, I cannot control my curiosity anymore.

Coco's heart was waiting to listen to an interesting story. The Birch began, the moonlight fall on its bare branches. A gentle breeze blew through the forest...

-I remember the day was very cloudy; a small cloud was stuck in my branches. Wild pigeons were flying in the mountains. A little fluffy blue-tit sat with its mom fondly on my branch. I heard that little blue-tit was feeling bored with all the clouds, the gloomy sky.



A little bird of a weight of only ten grams, what kind of annoyance does it feel just because of the weather!



He asked his mother, "Why does the sky turn black day after day?"

The sky darkened & a storm broke out, the mother bird went under the birch leaves with her chick, & many more things already happened since that morning.

A group of hunters came, their roar, the roar of the crew, cut down the biggest oak in the forest. The beavers, who lived nearby, said that the tree had been cut down illegally, for the sake of money, because it would be used for business. We all cried a lot that day, all the trees. Thereafter I have often noticed that when humans are hostile, when they do injustice, nature gets angry. The whirlwind roared & raged, as a symbol against all injustice.





Another day, that day the wind howled and tossed the branches, lightning flashed through the sky, the whole day was darkened by clouds, that day some cruel people killed a young deer, on the banks of that lake you see, the storm did not stop for seven consecutive days, with terrible snowstorms.

I remember the sky turned dark on a summer morning, the day a mother in a distant city did not get justice. All the happiness of her life was lost in the trap of lies. The owls brought the news, I felt the pain of her tears that day, not just me, but all of nature, and maybe that's why it rained in the birch forest for ten days afterwards. Can you feel it too, Coco? Once an artist did not get the honor he deserved, the birds flew in triangular flocks that day, just before the sky darkened.



Where the shadow of injustice lies, the black clouds approach the sky, the lightning continues, the nature gets dark, I understand that sometimes, when the sun comes up, there is hope, somewhere, somewhere in the world, someone, human or animal, gets a little justice. I feel the warmth of the sun through my entire body, my leaves dance, my roots understand the happiness in the veins.

I have seen the sun shine and the sky turn blue every time I have witnessed or heard the news of justice, the news of the awakening of goodness, goodwill in humans. In a world full of sin, some people still have that good Coco, just like you. Unfortunately they are not much in numbers. That's why the golden smile of the sky does not last long. The sunlight hides its face in shame.



Coco listened for so long that he lost his voice. Birch told him to find out for himself what the science book has to say about it, later when he would research using the cloud-protocol of GLOBE. But the answer hidden in the birch's story has a very deep meaning, which Coco found today.

-Thank you, birch tree. Coco whispered.

The birch said,

-Be strong, Coco! Let's make sure the truth always wins over lies and injustice.

Can't we work together to make the future world a better place? Justice will prevail, and it'll be a beautiful day when the sun smiles between the birch forests. Please pass this message on to other children like you. Coco knows that he can do that.



-You have shared a lot with me. I hope that your leaves, which rustle like waves, will continue to make people think about our connection with each other.

It made Coco think that even if he died now or soon, he would have no regrets. He whispered: "When I die, bury me in one of those majestic birch forests, under a birch tree, with some hope of justice..."



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