By Means of Trees

Poems, Verses and Quotes on Trees and Forests
By means of trees, wildlife could be conserved, pollution decreased, and the beauty of many landscapes enhanced. This is the way, or at least one of the ways, to spiritual, moral, and cultural regeneration.

_E.F. Schumacher_

To plant trees is to give body and life to one's dreams of a better world.

_Russell Page_

The eastern United States is probably the greatest meeting place of people and forests in the world. The region is two-thirds forested but, at the same time, heavily populated.

_Leon S. Minckler_

The groves were God's first temples.

_William Cullen Bryant_
TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree,
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain,
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer

Of all the trees that grow so fair...greater are
none beneath the sun than the Oak and Ash
and Thorn.

Rudyard Kipling

Give me of your bark, O Birch Tree!
Of your yellow bark, O Birch Tree!
Growing by the rushing river,
Tall and stately in the valley.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
GOD'S CATHEDRAL

Whoever walks a mountain trail
   Has never walked alone
Or lifted eyes unto the hills
   But inner strength has known.
Whoever seeks communion sweet
   In God's cathedral there;
Will find the angels very near,
   And joining him in prayer.

The trees and flowers, like acolytes,
   Will fling their incense sweet;
The feathered friends will join in song,
   And make the day complete.
The flowing stream whose melodies
   Are never known to cease;
The giant crags that tower above
   Bring quietness and peace.

The wind will whisper through the pines,
   The sky will smile above,
And everything seems unified—
   Enshrined in God's pure love.
Whoever walks a mountain trail,
   Or kneels upon the sod,
Has been so near to Heaven's gate
   He touched the hand of God.

Eleanor Flock
A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it.

Henry David Thoreau

“It was a chord of maple, cut and split
“And piled—and measured, four by four by eight.”
A cord of maple stacked not for burning or for sale, but probably just to get it out of the way, the only heat it would give off that of slow decay; left there by a woodsman who would not cheat even the notion of a true cord, let alone a woman trying to keep her baby warm through the winter.

Robert Frost

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth.

Herman Hesse
STopping by Woods
On a snowy evening

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

Every man looks at his woodpile with a kind of affection.

Henry David Thoreau

There is something nobly simple and pure in a

Waste for the cultivation of forest trees.

Washington Irving

People who will not sustain trees will soon live in

a world which cannot sustain people.

Bryce Nelson
When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice storms do. Often you must have seen
them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed
crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by
the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they
are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the
ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their
hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all the matter of fact about the ice storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could pay alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the
ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the
cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Robert Frost

PLANT A TREE

Trees are your cradle when you are born
Trees are the plow that tills your corn
The threshold over which to carry your bride
The table where she sits by your side
The warmth of the hearth on a cold winter eve
Trees are a gift of God I believe
Trees are the beds in which you lie
They are the coffins when you die.

Robertson and Futch
The way we are acting, the Lord is liable to turn on us any minute; and even if He don't, our good fortune can't possibly last any longer than our natural resources.

Will Rogers

How pleasant to walk over beds of these fresh and rustling fallen leaves—clean, crisp, and wholesome!

Henry David Thoreau

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

Aldo Leopold

That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics... We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

Aldo Leopold
What I know of divine sciences and Holy Scripture, I learnt in woods and fields. I have had no other masters than the beeches and the oaks.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

WHAT DO WE PLANT?

What do we plant when we plant a tree?
We plant the ship that will cross the sea,
We plant the mast to carry the sails,
We plant the planks to withstand the gales—
The keel, the keelson, and beam and knee—
We plant the ship when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
We plant the houses for you and me.
We plant the rafters, the shingles, the floors,
We plant the studding, the lath, the doors,
The beams and siding, all parts that be;
We plant the house when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
A thousand things that we daily see.
We plant the spire that out-towers the crag,
We plant the staff for our country's flag,
We plant the shade from the hot sun free;
We plant all these when we plant the tree.

Henry Abbey
A nation's growth from sea to sea
Stirs in the heart of a tree.

Henry Bunner

The trees which the children plant, or which they assist in dedicating, will become dearer to them as year after year rolls on. As the trees grow, and their branches expand in beauty, so will the love for them increase in the hearts of those by whom they were planted or dedicated, and long before the children reach old age they will almost venerate these green living memorials of youthful and happy days; and as those who have loved and cared for pets will ever be the friends of our dumb animals, so will they ever be the friends of our forest trees. From the individual to the general, is the law of our nature. Show us a man who in childhood had a pet, and we'll show you a lover of animals. Show us a person who in youth planted a tree that has lived and flourished, and we'll show you a friend of trees and of forest culture.

John B. Peaslee
Grow as the trees grow,
Your head lifted straight to the sky,
Your roots holding fast where they lie,
In the richness below;
Your branches outspread
To the sun pouring down, and the dew,
With the glorious infinite blue
Stretching over your head.
Receiving the storms
That may writhe you, and bend, but not break,
While your roots the more sturdily take
A strength in their forms.
God means us, the growth of His trees,
Alike thro’ the shadow and shine,
Receiving as freely the life-giving wine
Of the air and the breeze.

Not sunshine alone,
The soft summer dew and the breeze
Hath fashioned those wonderful trees.
The tempest hath moaned:
They have tossed their strong arms in despair,
At the blast of the terrible there,
In the thunder’s loud tone.
But under it all
Where the roots clasping closer the sod
The top still aspiring to God
Who prevented their fall.
Come out from the gloom  
And open your heart to the light  
That is flooding God’s world with delight,  
And unfolding its bloom  
His kingdom of grace  
Is symbolized in all that we see  
In budding and leafing of tree,  
And fruit in its place.  

Ellen Bugbee

The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in  
the eyes of others only a green thing which  
stands in the way.  

William Blake

The clearest way into the universe is through a  
forest.  

John Muir

You will find something more in the woods than  
in books. Trees and stones will teach you that  
which you can never learn from masters.  

St. Bernard of Clairvaux
THE TREE.

The tree's early leaf-buds were bursting their brown.

"Shall I take them away?" said the frost sweeping down.

"No; leave them alone
Till the blossoms have grown,"

Prayed the tree, while he trembled from rootlet to crown:

The tree bore his blossoms, and all the birds sung.

"Shall I take them away?" said the wind as he swung.

"No; leave them alone
Till the berries have grown,"

Said the tree, while his leaflets quivering hung.

The tree bore his fruit in the midsummer glow.

Said the child, "May I gather thy berries now?"

"Yes; all thou canst see;
Take them; all are for thee,"

Said the tree, while he bent down his laden boughs low.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson
The use of the forest for recreation, probably
dates back to the time when some wandering
savage, returning to his cave through the depths
of the primeval forest, may have noticed a
beam of sunlight shining on some darkened
tree trunk and felt all at once without
knowledge of the reason a moment of great,
surging joys in the chaotic passage of his life.

Robert Marshall

I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through
the deepest snow to keep an appointment with
a beech-tree, or a yellow birch, or an old
acquaintance among the pines.

Henry David Thoreau

The trees, like the longings of the earth, stand
on tiptoe to peep at the heaven.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore

A true conservationist is a man who knows that
the world is not given by his fathers, but
borrowed from his children.

John Madison
In the direction from which we had come the slopes were covered with trees twenty to twenty-five feet tall, I remembered how the land had looked in 1913: desert... Peaceful, regular toil, the vigorous mountain air, frugality and above all, serenity of spirit had endowed this old man with awe-inspiring health. He was one of God's athletes. I wondered how many more acres he was going to cover with trees.

Jean Giono

The most cheerful thing I know is the calm, the silence, which are so delicious, both in the forest and the fields. For me it is true humanity and great poetry.

Jean Francois Millet

In the woods we return to reason and faith.

Ralph Waldo Emerson
PLANTING TREES

In the mating of trees,
the pollen grain entering invisible
the domed room of the winds, survives
the ghost of the old forest
that stood here when we came. The ground
invites it, and it will not be gone.
I become the familiar of that ghost
and its ally, carrying in a bucket
twenty trees smaller than weeds,
and I plant them along the way
of the departure of the ancient host.
I return to the ground its original music.
It will rise out of the horizon
of the grass, and over the heads
of weeds, and it will rise over
the horizon of men’s heads. As I age
in the world it will rise and spread,
and be for this place horizon
and orison, the voice of its winds.
I have made myself a dream to dream
of its rising, that has gentled my nights.
Let me desire and wish well the life
these trees may live when I
no longer rise in the mornings
to be pleased by the green of them
shining, and their shadows on the ground,
and the sound of the wind in them.

Wendell Berry
Would pay in cities for good trees like those,
Regular vestry-trees whole Sunday Schools
Could hang enough on to pick off enough.
A thousand Christmas trees I didn’t know I had!
Worth three cents more to give away than sell,
As may be shown by simple calculation.
Too bad I couldn’t lay one in a letter.
I can’t help wishing I could send you one
In wishing you herewith a Merry Christmas.

Robert Frost

Trees are the earth’s endless effort to speak to
the listening heaven.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore

He that plants trees loves others besides himself.

English proverb

And this is my home, my native soil; and I am a
New Englander. Of thee, O earth, are my bone
and sinew made; to thee O sun, am I brother
... To this dust my body will gladly return as to
its origin. Here I have my habitat. I am of thee.

Henry David Thoreau
Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets, but humbler folk may circumvent this restriction if they know how. To plant a pine, for example, one needs to be neither god nor poet; one need only own a shovel. By virtue of this curious loophole in the rules, any clodhopper may say: Let there be a tree—and there will be one. If his back be strong and his shovel sharp there may eventually be 10,000. And in the seventh year he may lean upon his shovel, and look upon his trees, and find them good.

Aldo Leopold

What a noble gift to man are the forests! What a debt of gratitude and admiration we owe for their utility and their beauty! How pleasantly the shadows of the wood fall upon our heads when we turn from the glitter and turmoil of the world of man! The winds of heaven seem to linger amid their balmy branches, and the sunshine falls like a blessing upon the green leaves; the wild freshness; and the beautiful woodlight, neither garish or gloomy, full of calm and peaceful influences, sheds repose over the spirit.

Susan Fenimore Cooper
THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost
The leaves that fall in the autumn, the sap that
rises in the spring—is that not, after all, the
symbol of the life to come?

Rosa Bonheur

Though a tree grows ever so high, the falling
leaves return to the root.

Malay proverb

In a moment ashes are made, but a forest is a
long time growing.

Seneca, Naturales Quaestiones

God wrote his loveliest poem on the day
He made the first tall silver poplar tree.

Grace Noll Crowell
CITY TREES

The trees along our city streets
Are lovely, gallant things;
Their roots lie deep in blackened soil,
And yet they spread their wings

Of branching green or fretted twigs
Beneath a sullen sky,
And when the wind howls banshee-like
They bow to passers-by.

In fall their leaves are bannerets
Of dusty red and gold
And fires dim that warm our hearts
Against the coming cold.

Then delicate through winter’s snow
Each silhouette still makes
Black filigree, with frostings rare
Of silver powdered flakes.

But leafed or bare, they bravely rise
With healing in their wings—
The trees along our city streets
Are lovely, gallant things.

Vere Dargan