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The Music in the Trees

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The Music in the Trees

Selected Poems

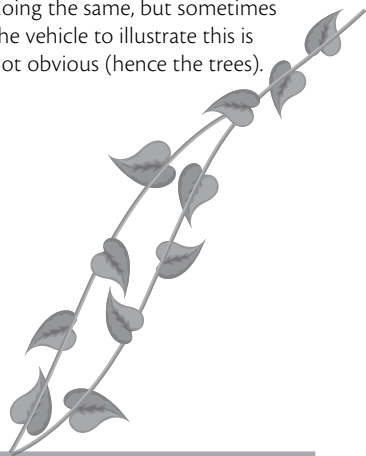
by Peter Jensen

ABSTRACT:

The following poems are meditations about the growth students experience during the learning process. I utilize trees as an analogy for pedagogical development. References to the outward, circular expansion of trees are analogous to the physical actions performed in a learning task. References to upward growth signify the simultaneous, invisible ascent undertaken by the learner to better understand his or her own identity. The series illustrates a four-part learning cycle. 1) Invitation: I wonder if the moments of curiosity in students is an innate response from within the individual when they sense an informational experience that will fill a pedagogical void. This 'calling' to know more is not only about external information (outward growth); it is also to understand a yet undiscovered mystery within themselves (upward growth). 2) Play: In this stage, the student has heeded the invitation to explore a curiosity that has resonated between the external and internal worlds he experiences. I suggest play as one way to make sense of this dual experience of being. Through play, one embodies a story; a primary function of which is to move through being and becoming. 3) Integration: Ultimately, if the student continues to pursue this curiosity, it may give birth to a unique way of synthesizing one's environment. Externally, this talent may be readily apparent but its purpose is also to discover and integrate the incredible depths within himself. 4) Return: Should the student choose to tread the dark wood and also have proper guidance along the way, he will return as one who has not only mastered the content task at hand but also someone with a greater understanding of his own character. He has descended into the death experience of the unknown and is reborn to a larger experience of himself.

SYNOD:

Synodality is a time where the Church is called into a process of listening. This is particularly relevant for these poems because I wrote them during a period of time where I sensed that students were trying to express something deeper about their learning processes even though they could not articulate it verbally. Karl Rahner believed that 'humans are the question to which God is the answer' and I wonder if the Body of Christ also has a lot of questions that have not been articulated in a formal, understandable way. The Rule of St. Benedict calls us to 'listen with the ear of our heart' and this is what I attempted to do in writing these poems. I believe the larger church has an interest in doing the same, but sometimes the vehicle to illustrate this is not obvious (hence the trees).



PART I: INVITATION

“Up”

I tried not to be crazy – I swear it be true,
But what is a man who speaks tree-talk to do?
They wanted to take me away dare tell,
When out of a dear tree my sanity fell.

Down like a brick with a cludber it landed.
I may not be right just be ever tree-branded.
I won't miss that brick when I climb anyways...
...and I live elevated the rest of my days.



PART II: PLAY

“Being”

Fruity is as fruity does,
I thought I am that which I was!
A fruit who fell too far from tree,
Asking the squirrels to help me please.

And in the green-green grass I heard,
A crispy tune as if a bird...
A song within a tree that grew –
Where I was one - but now am two.

A rumble-grumble in the dirt?
The roots! The roots! They must have heard...
...the story of this path I fell;
That is me – I am what I tell.



PART III: INTEGRATION

“Courage”

Oh, past the last of noisy roads,
There is a wood where you must go.
I know, I know, it’s slightly dark –
But there is where-to we embark...

Oh, never mind the map and trail,
You won’t need those to live this tale.
Yet find this wood, yes, you must do –
To seek a treasure sought by few...

Oh, once you’re there it won’t be clear,
But to the trees you must draw near.
Then give a howl and your best grin -
Hold fast! Hold fast! Onward within...



PART IV: RETURN

“Song”

It seems to me a hum I hear,
But it won’t do to use your ear.
Some strings they wiggle brilliant-like;
A cello, maybe, made of light.

And as I tune the frequency,
This song becomes a part of me.
It grows up branching out to fill...
..the spaces I once thought were ill.

Within those places, dark and scary,
All the toils that made me wary.
The cracks I never would have touched,

and times I would not want to love.

I find a sprout there, a treeling –
in this place without my feeling!
Music whispers softly here...
Once was muted – now is clear.

Soft crescendos in the leaves...
...blossoming and planting seeds.

Spreading now, this canopy,
reminds me I was always green.

Tw'as always so and will thus be,

The forest is a part of me.

The trees believe in us you see,

And that is their sweet melody:

Collecting light from sky above,

They shine it where we've lost our love.

This dance, these notes, a mystery

Is like a hug that never leaves.

Oh wondrous symphony from the depths!

Life comes from where I had death.

The trees! They sing - I told you so:

The trees! They teach us how to grow.

