



PersonaliTrees: Let the Human Spirit Awaken in the Presence of Trees

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The subtitle of *PersonaliTrees* could also be read as “Let the Presence of Trees Awaken in the Human Spirit.” The book contains 48 full-page pictures of trees, each representing a different human quality evoked by the photo and accompanied by a quotation. The cover picture of a grinning tree represents “Happy” and, repeated in the book, is accompanied by the Apollinaire quote “Now and then it’s good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.” One photo depicting a tree seemingly singing a deep bass aria with other trees looking on is labeled “Harmonious,” with the Emerson quote, “A man’s growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends.” A single sturdy, weathered tree in winter, standing defiantly in front of a cemetery, is labeled “Formidable,” with the Dickens quote, “He did each single thing as if he did nothing else.” Other tree pictures evoke qualities such as Fleeting, Enthusiastic, Resilient, Evolved, Persistent, Playful, and Protective. Accompanying quotations are from authors including Shakespeare, Thoreau, Chief Seattle, Ovid, and Mark Twain. Some pictures are obvious at first glance, like the cover picture; others are ambiguous, such as a close-up of the bark of a tree with a form that could be either a heart with a crack in it or a face lowered in sadness, with the title “Heartbroken” and the Shakespeare quote, “Expectation is the root of all heartache.”

The author speaks of trees as storybooks and says that her book is about “rediscovering the joy and the mystery of seeing things that are too perfect for coincidence.” Sometimes the pictures invite readers to look more deeply and discover, within the tree as well as within themselves, aspects of the suggested quality that may have been at first unnoticed. Those three qualities of the pictures—the obvious, the ambiguous, and the hidden—make this a book appealing to many readers in addition to those who already view trees as very special, majestic beings.--Richard D. Wright, *Tranquil Things*, Derby Line, Vt.