

## THE ART OF CLIMBING TREES

At the ancient age of eight and forty I finally reclaimed  
A special, childhood fantasy for which most boys are famed –  
The wonder-lust, adventure ground, with skin-scraped hands and knees,  
Of moving skywards, higher still – the art of climbing trees.

In my youth, those innocent years,  
I loved to stroke and touch the bark  
Of big, brave trees or tender saplings,  
Leafed or leafless branches, stark.  
To mount and move up nature-ladders,  
Crisscrossed stairways grown in wood;  
Rustling bustle of bush against skin,  
Caresses from leaves, so soothingly good.

To label activities such as this  
As innocent, mindless, boyish fun  
Becomes dichotomous when one knows  
Complete intercourse as boy becomes one  
With tree, with Nature; the whole Universe  
Enfolding and holding that frail human form  
Which, receiving soul comfort and real understanding,  
Embraces the Self, the Spiritual Norm.

And perhaps a pixie, deep within,  
Or nature-sprite from elfdom lost,  
Inspired a motley magic to  
Surround the trees, wherein I tossed  
And turned and hung  
And climbed and clung  
To branches vibrant with inner vibration  
Inviting seductive sensual sensation –  
My teen-aging body expressing its lust  
Until new seed was spilled in the dust.

To hug a tree for a while, was the fashion  
When mankind found he was losing touch  
With nature, ecology, life's simplicity;  
Complex technology demanded so much  
Of man's focus, attention; he lovingly stroked  
Material money, machines he had made;  
Lost sight of the planet as priceless reserves  
Of soil, air and water began to fade.

That hugging of trees soon lost its lustre,  
For men have short attention spans –  
While I stayed in touch with plant-life in general,  
Nurturing personal growing plans:  
Having rediscovered roots of wealth in rooted living trees,  
The art of climbing, once again, instilled my Spirit's ease.