

Tree Prose



“Find a focus point,”
she said
“a few feet in front of you.”

There I saw a dried up sea grape leaf.
The brown, lifeless leaf had caught
my full attention.

My third eye saw it levitate,
vibrating against the wind.
My real eyes remained steadfast.

I had become fixated
on a brown, brittle thing
that had caught my intention.

The thing drew near
coming into focus,
all else became a blur.

My limbs reached up and out
swaying in a breeze of intention
with other things, living or dead.

In that moment,
I became that tree
I was meant to be.

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April 13, 2023
(Thursday)

DAY 13 PROMPT: Think of something small and insignificant—a paperclip, dryer lint, a leaf—anything that normally goes unnoticed. Write a poem in which this object plays a starring role as a symbol for something bigger. Ask yourself: What does this object mean to me? What could it symbolize in a poem? Allow this insignificant, personal object to expand into a universal idea.

Prompter’s note: Try placing this moment of expansion—when the personal becomes the universal—at the end of the poem. This kind of “mountaintop moment” is what we sometimes call a *flashpoint*. A flashpoint is a moment in poetry (or flash writing) that reveals the heart of the poem and leaves nothing more to be said. Often, it’s the moment when the poem expands beyond the specific, personal images of the poem to a universal idea. It’s what makes a brief poem feel very big.

CREDITS: Sketch by Donna Kato commissioned by the author to accompany his short story entitled [*Psalms of Hiawatha; Seagrape*](#) (*Coccoloba uvifera*) on a beach at San Carlos Bay, Florida courtesy UF/IFAS.

ABOUT 30 in 30: April is National Poetry Month. Poets participating in “30 in 30” strive to write at least one poem each day. The prompts for this series were provided by Ella Peary and Emily Harstone, hosts of a 2023 poetry workshop sponsored by *Authors Publish*.