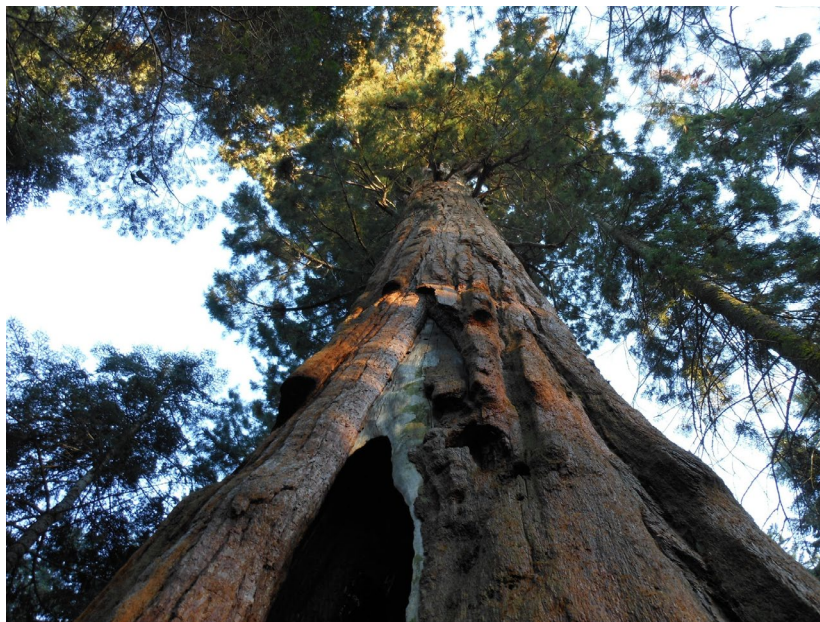


Short Stories

Big T - How Is the Weather Up There



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At the top of the trees' ever-changing world, Big T was a giant. He was never in competition with his friends for the crown; he never even sought it. It was bestowed to his tallness when all his friends looked at each other, rustled their leaves in agreement, and declared him to be Big T, the biggest tree in their forest. Most of them had passed the four-hundred-year mark which they measured underground, with all big roots recounting their stories, passed on every century like a heirloom, except that this one was invisible to any eyes, being chemical in nature and felt at a special middle point where the trunk meets the ground before descending towards Earth's core.

Big T surveyed the forest early every morning as soon as he could see the Sun, and when the sky was clouded, he remembered the Sun like a rooster never forgetting to call out the beginning of a new day. As soon as Big T had his fill of light, which usually took less than an hour, he looked at all his friends and family, shedding a few tears for all those who did not make it for one reason or another. He always remembered to set a thought for his mother, who was also his father. How could he forget them, when he was rooted inside of them and nourished by their bodies every day of his life! Big T was Earth's Big Son, but he was mortal like all life forms, and he did not require schooling to understand such a basic truth.

Each tree did the same every morning, all of them almost in unison, since there was always one or two comics who pretended that it was still night. They were known throughout the forest as the Late trees. There was Big Late and Small Late, who sometimes exchanged their

¹ <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/843443>

schedules, Big Late waking up earlier than usual and Small Late sleeping until noon. But all trees loved them. How could they not? They were their friends, nonetheless, and part of their communal forest. They were also the best storytellers when all trees celebrated their gods. There was the Sun and there was Earth. They only needed two. Some of them knew that there was a third god, but the subject was taboo. Most trees refused to even entertain the notion of a two-legged destroyer that appeared out of thin air and massacred them for no reason. They were always good and never stayed up late.

There was also talk of a fourth god, which we call fire. Most trees never considered it as the end of life but as the beginning of a new one. It was the sacred union between the Sun and Earth, their two gods. While some of them perished when fire suddenly appeared, their roots always survived to regenerate and grow to become stronger trees until the next fire, whenever it came. They even had a special prayer which they recited through their leaves as soon as they saw the beginning of a fire. Big T had also become the master of ceremony for any future fire and had to learn the special prayer. No one knows what they recite, but it is thought that [42](#)² elements are mentioned, also starting with hydrogen, but ending with iodine, with only 40 others in between. One can also wonder whether that was what Douglas Adams meant when he declared the number 42, in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, to be the answer to the ultimate question of life, the Universe, and everything.

The tallest tree currently living, as far as we know, is a specimen of *Sequoia sempervirens* in Redwood National Park in California. Nicknamed Hyperion, this redwood was discovered by Chris Atkins and Michael Taylor in August 2006, and its exact location is being kept secret to try and protect it — alleluia. When measured in 2006, its height was around 116 metres (383 feet), which was the average between the low and high sides of the tree as it grows on a slope. What a cutie! Hyperion seems to grow by about 17 cm (7 inches) per year and has a diameter of close to 5 metres (16.5 feet), with an estimated above-ground dry mass of close to 210 metric tonnes (230 US tons). It also has the distinction of having the world's deepest crown, from the top of the tree to where the foliage begins, at close to 91 metres (300 feet). Hyperion is estimated to be between 600-800 years old. It was already alive when the Europeans decided to conquer the so-called New World.

² https://www.urban-forestry.com/assets/documents/Coder_Tree%20Elements%20Pub%20I.pdf

Poetry

Trees May Feel - More Than Most

Tree touching tree
longing for their twigs to grow even farther
foster their green amalgamation
They stand steadfast together
with *rage against the dying of the light*

Little T hugs a tree
soon enough we are all hugging them
young trees and old trees
small trees and large trees
short trees and tall trees
bright trees and dark trees
jaunty trees and crestfallen trees
dead trees and invisible trees
embracing all of them like close family members
like lovers in autumn
watching their leaves fall

“Planticide” - Herbage Heavy-Heartedness

A trek in a forest is like a walk in the park
except that there are no benches in a forest
or lumberjacks in the park

The clearing of a forest is a sap bath
a constrained slaughter
a crime against plantae
“planticide”

The Woods - A Trees' Haiku

A short walk through the
woods revealed trees laced throughout
with mutant AI

Against the Tree's Trunk - The Tree's Outlook

I sat against the tree's trunk
wondering about what it had witnessed
throughout its hefty life
what was it going to behold

after I was gone

Life was bustling all around us
oblivious carefree
as it should be