

Climbing Trees

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i do not know what
attracts young boys
to climb trees but the
impulse is irresistible

a tree stands strong and firm
in the ground but branches skyward
offering a vantage, perspective,
a certain freedom that ground dwellers
cannot appreciate

accessible lower branches support weight
but care must be taken as one gains height
and every new branch must be tested for strength
as one ascends

perhaps the desire to conquer
or just the raw delight of climbing
and negotiating risk are factors
in the attraction,
who can say?

young girls lack the impulse
an oddity to boys though female
behaviour is always a mystery
to males
but to a boy there is nothing like it
the higher one climbs the more exhilarating
the experience
until precarious levels are reached where
smaller green branches may give way
and ruin a good climb with a broken limb or two
though danger sharpens coordination and teaches
personal limits to be exceeded on the next climb

every tree poses a different challenge
some have slender athletic trunks with
higher difficult to grasp branches
other trees have sturdy,
broad and contoured trunks with
low forming buttress supports
some long powerful branches

seem to float in the air,
such is their strength

most trees have something to offer
intrepid youth and daring
though certain trees cannot be scaled
from the ground without the support
of shoulders from a mate who in turn
waits to be hoisted aloft

i remember those joyous climbs
and later negotiating ledges on sky scrapers
without a harness while cleaning windows
and edging around corners twenty five or more
stories above ground to save time
and avoid the need to gain entry from inside
and then have to climb out on the ledge again
but i learned my limits well as a boy
though i was fired for not observing safety
regulations though i was as sure-footed
as a mountain goat with the added advantage
of experienced climbing arms and a firm grip

my success in life some attribute to my daring
but i calculate every move as i did as a boy
minimising risk though to the uninitiated
it seemed as though i was supremely daring
but observers were obviously mommy's boys,
soft TV watchers, indoor boys who we
teased when they ventured away from their mothers

street kids have a huge advantage even over
toffs given easy rides by their fathers to cushy jobs
and insider dealing, none of them are able to cope
with an educated street kid
who learned his skills climbing trees
and pushing personal limits
to eventually tower above the herd