

## THE STORY OF A TULIP TREE

(unfinished)

by

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I worked one summer in Troy Illinois, helping my boss, Mike Waldo, rebuild an Italian soffit on a beautiful brick house built in the early eighteen hundreds and formerly owned by Paul Simon the senator as opposed to Paul Simon the musician.

In front of this house was a sprawling old tulip tree.

At one time it had been the tallest tree in all of Illinois.

The day that we were out there to work up the bid I went out and introduced myself to the tree. It lowered a branch in greeting and invited me to climb up. In moments I found myself among its uppermost boughs. I had been transported. As we lazily rocked with the wind, the tree told me its story.

It grew from a sapling to be tall and strong, eventually towering above all the other trees around it. It learned all the ancient lessons and languages, and observed with marginal interest the daily turns of human events which unfolded as a town sprung up beneath and around it.

The tree was radiant and bloomed a full splendorous beauty.

Eventually, as the town increased in size, the trees around him became fewer. As the others were felled, further were the distances between them. Though he could still hear the songs of his kin, their glory and exuberance had grown weak and distant.

He still read the poems and prose, which were cast to the wind each year by the other trees, testifying to the accomplishments and evens of the year, imprinting their image on each individual leaf, each page bearing the stamp of it's creator, similar to all the others and yet distinct. He saw the marks of the personalities that contribute to the broad reaching and intertwining communities of trees. He read to bless and to give thanks to the continuous perseverance of their lives and the cycle of energy that won't end.

Yet, so many of the stories were of suffering and loss rather than abundance and expansive fecundity. He stood alone as many of his elders where laid low. He came to see his stature and survival as a testimony not only to his great strength, but also as a mark of his superiority.

As his contact with his fellows waned he sank into loneliness, dark and brooding.