

The Tree of My Life

by Edward Rowland Sill

When I was yet but a child, the gardener gave me a tree,
A little slim elm, to be set wherever seemed good to me
What a wonderful thing it seemed! with its lace-edged leaves uncurled,
And its span-long stem, that should grow to the grandest tree in the world!
So I searched all the garden round, and out over field and hill,
But not a spot could I find that suited my wayward will.
I would have it bowered in the grove, in a close and quiet vale;
I would rear it aloft on the height, to wrestle with the gale.

Then I said, "I will cover its roots with a little earth by the door,
And there it shall live and wait, while I search for a place once more."
But still I could never find it, the place for my wondrous tree,
And it waited and grew by the door, while years passed over me;
Till suddenly, one fine day, I saw it was grown too tall,
And its roots gone down too deep, to be ever moved at all.

So here it is growing still, by the lowly cottage door;
Never so grand and tall as I dreamed it would be of yore,
But it shelters a tired old man in its sunshine-dappled shade,
The children's pattering feet round its knotty knees have played,
Dear singing birds in a storm sometimes take refuge there,
And the stars through its silent boughs shine gloriously fair.