

Interview with a Tree (or any subject in Nature)

Choose a tree that catches your attention. Or perhaps choose a common tree in your yard or neighborhood. Spend time with it, observing and recording what you notice and allowing yourself to wonder.

When we focus our attention on one individual, slow down to observe and journal it, we will begin to really SEE rather than just look. Let's observe like John Muir.

"I'd sit for hours watching the birds or squirrels. When I discovered a new plant, I sat beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance and try to hear what it had to tell me."

--John Muir, My Life with Nature

a. Observation and nature journaling: Do this section for at least 10 minutes.

First, you'll observe the tree, taking note from its shape, and details about its structure.

2-minute Thumbnail or mini landscape. You can sketch the whole tree in a small thumbnail sketch to capture its overall shape.

Start from the root and move upwards. Notice any texture and colors. Do you see lines, curves, bends in the bark and branches? Is the trunk straight or curved or leaning? Does your tree have long or short branches? Are they all around the trunk? Does your tree have needles or leaves? Do you see any other visitors using the tree? Does anyone live in or on the tree? (birds, mistletoe, lichen, etc).

b. Interview:

Now, let's put ourselves in the roots of this tree! Imagine you are this tree. What might it feel like to be this tree? What's it like to live here? What do you see and experience? You can use your imagination on how a tree might answer you.

How long have you lived here?

How did you get here? Did you grow from a root, or did someone plant you?

Have you always been the same shape you are now?

What is it like to live here in this particular place?

What are some events you have seen in your life?

Who comes to visit you (which people or which animals) and what do they do?

How do you help the others around you?

Do they help you? And if so, how?

Is there something special you would like to tell me?