

# Whenever you see a tree

By Padma Venkatraman

Think  
how many long years  
this tree waited as a seed  
for an animal or bird or wind or rain  
to maybe carry it to maybe the right spot  
where again it waited months for seasons to change  
until time and temperature were fine enough to coax it  
to swell and burst its hard shell so it could send slender roots  
to clutch at grains of soil and let tender shoots reach toward the sun  
Think how many decades or centuries it thickened and climbed and grew  
taller and deeper never knowing if it would find enough water or light  
or when conditions would be right so it could keep on spreading leaves  
adding blossoms and dancing  
Next time  
you see  
a tree  
think  
how  
much  
hope  
it holds

Source: *Poetry* (March 2021)