

# The Jungle

by Neema Oshidary

The animals were jumping, and the jungle was alive  
For the birds had announced, "The rain will arrive."  
Trees spread their roots and prepared for the fall  
Of these magic drops that would make them grow tall.

In this jungle was a newly sprouted tree,  
With ambitious dreams of what he'd grow to be,  
And in his branches lived a little bird,  
To whom he said, "mark my word..."

"One day I'll grow to be the tallest tree  
Way above the others in the canopy,  
And from your nest you will have a beautiful view,  
From the distant hills to the ocean's blue."

When the rain came down and soaked the ground,  
The little tree absorbed all the water around,  
He had no regard for the needs of the others,  
Leaving nothing but drops for his sisters and brothers.

And every time the rainfall came,  
The tree would always do the same.  
With all this water he began to grow  
And as he grew bigger, so did his shadow.

He would bask in the sun while others sulked in the dark,  
With no water for their roots or light for their bark.  
The other trees grew frail and were shriveling away,  
And from her nest, the bird noticed this one day.

"Your brothers and sisters are thirsty down there.  
Instead of hoarding water, maybe you should share."  
The tree just laughed and said, "don't be crazy,  
It's not my fault that they are weak and lazy"

"But if you don't share, they could fall any day"  
"Perfect" said the tree. "They'll be out of my way.  
Then I can spread my roots over even more land,  
And the more water I drink, the taller I will stand"

It wasn't long before his siblings were all dead  
And the tree began doing exactly what he said.

He spread his root, giving him space to store  
Even more water than he did before.

The more water he stored, the taller he grew,  
And it wasn't long before his wish came true.  
He was the biggest tree and had grown so tall,  
That to the edge of the jungle his shadow would fall.

So all the other trees were trapped in the dark,  
And before long the jungle was barren and stark.  
Towering over a graveyard of redwood and oak,  
The tree turned to the bird with a smile and spoke:

"Now that I'm so tall, you have the best view,  
So I have finally fulfilled my promise to you"  
But the bird let out a mournful sigh,  
And with teary eyes she began to reply:

"What good is a view when there is nothing in sight?  
The trees are all dead, and my friends all took flight.  
And while you have grown to be the tallest tree,  
It came with the price of the jungle's misery"

Just then a windstorm began to blow,  
And the tree began swaying to and fro.  
With roots so shallow and a height so tall,  
The tree knew that he was about to fall.

So he turned to the bird and with tears in his eyes,  
He admitted his mistakes and began to apologize.  
"I'm Sorry for selfishly trying to achieve my goal,  
And now I must pay the ultimate toll,

"But before I leave I must ask of you  
a favor that I need for you to do.  
When each of my seeds has become a fine young tree,  
Make sure they don't make the same mistake as me."

Just then a gust of wind blew with such might  
That it uprooted the tree and the bird took flight.  
As the tree fell it released its seeds into the ground  
And the bird kept flying until a new jungle it found.

But the bird honored the tree's final pleas  
And every week she checked up on the seeds.  
They first were sprouts swaying in the breeze  
But soon they grew to become upright trees.

So the bird picked a tree to make her nest,  
And gathered the attention of all the rest,  
"Please excuse me, I don't mean to bother,  
but I must tell you the story of your father."

And so she explained about how he grew so tall,  
And about his final wish before his tragic fall  
That his children would learn to grow together,  
By sharing the fruits of the jungle's weather.

After the story, the trees all took an oath  
To share the water and the sunlight both.  
From that point, every time the rain would fall,  
The trees would split it evenly amongst them all.

Taller and taller together they would grow,  
Leaving no tree behind in the shadows below.  
With water for all and plenty of light,  
They soon surpassed their father's height.

One day a fierce storm rolled on through,  
And as the vicious wind gusts blew,  
Each tree tied its roots to its sisters and brothers,  
And when one needed support it leaned on the others.

So together they were able to stay alive.  
In a windstorm no tree alone could survive.  
And by the time the winds had stopped,  
Not even a single branch had dropped.

The bird poked her head out of her nest  
And chirped a call out to the rest:  
"Return my friends, the time has come  
To reunite in our old kingdom"

So the ants came back and were marching in their lines.  
And the monkeys came back and were swinging from their vines  
And the lions came back and were roaming in their den.  
And the birds were chirping, "the jungle's alive again."