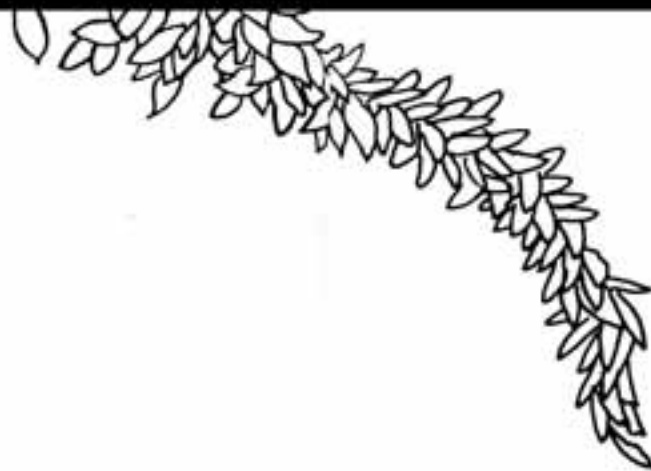


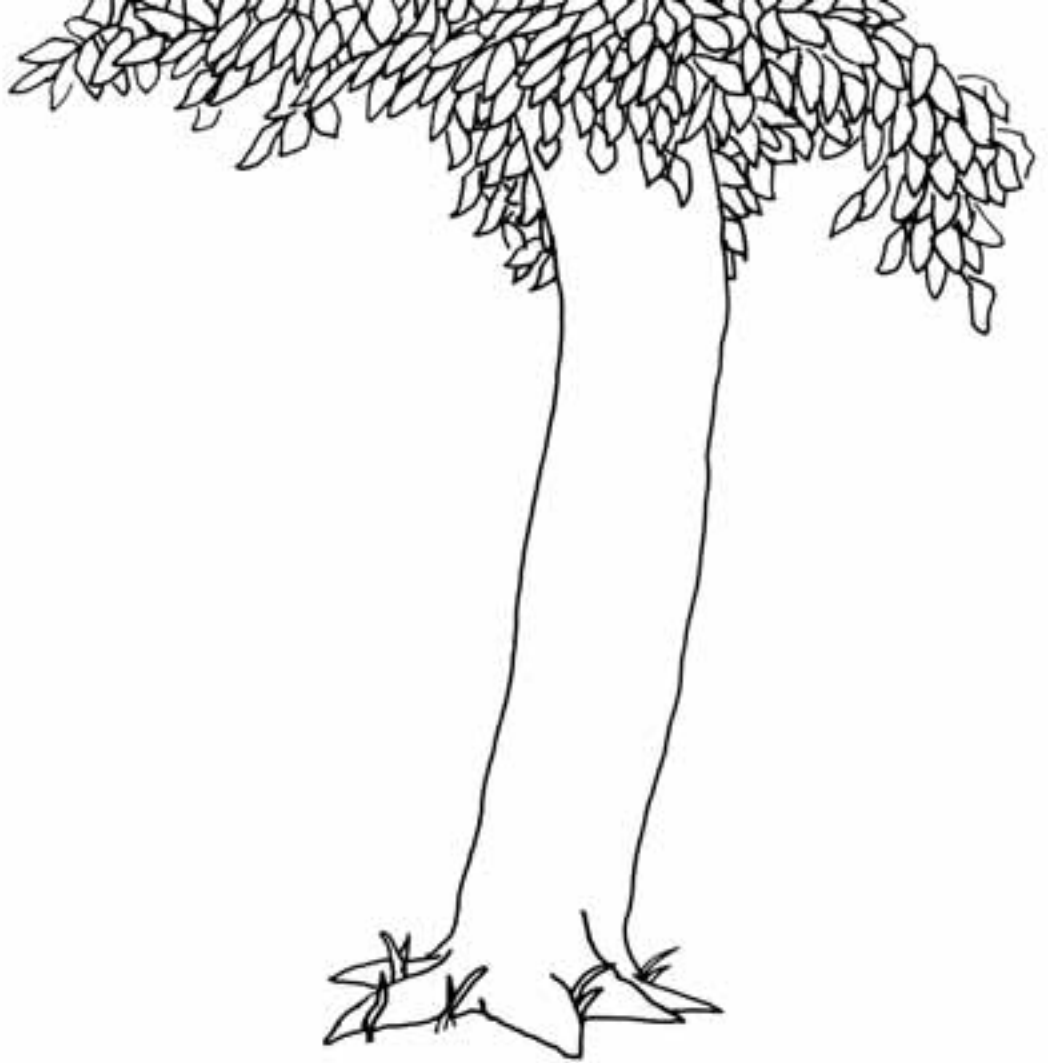
For
Nicky



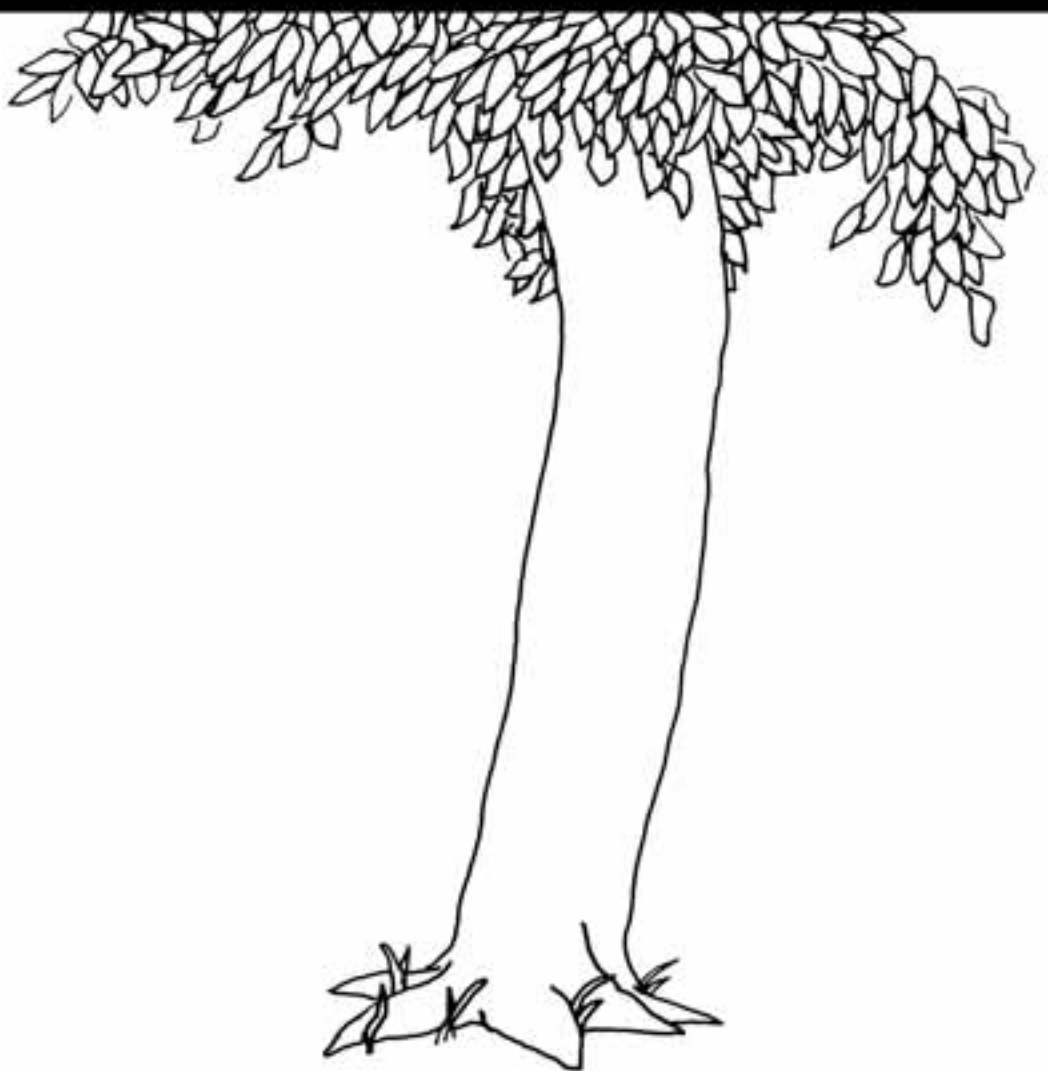
For
Tree



Once there was a tree...

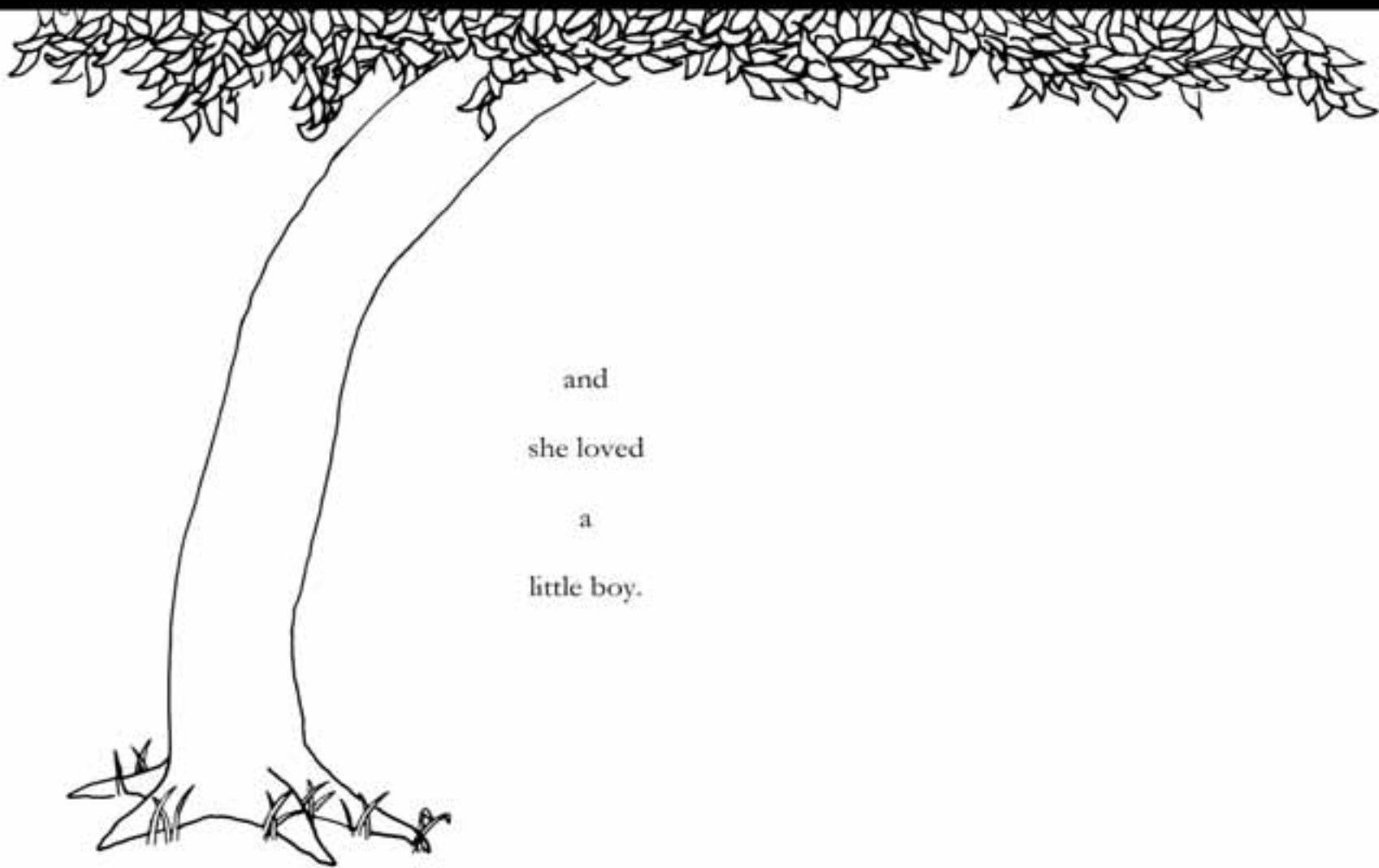


Once there was a tree...





and
she loved
a
little boy.

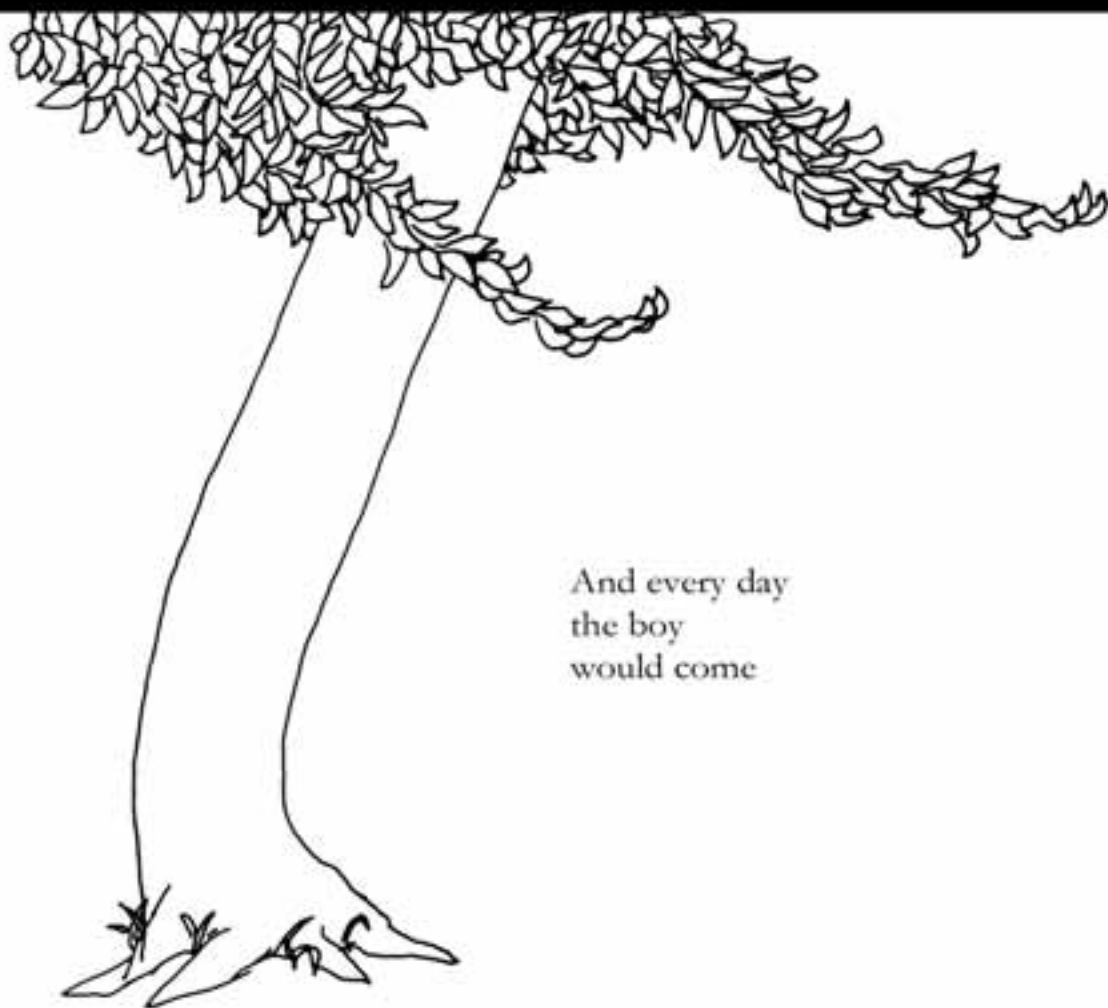


and
she loved
a
little boy.





And every day
the boy
would come

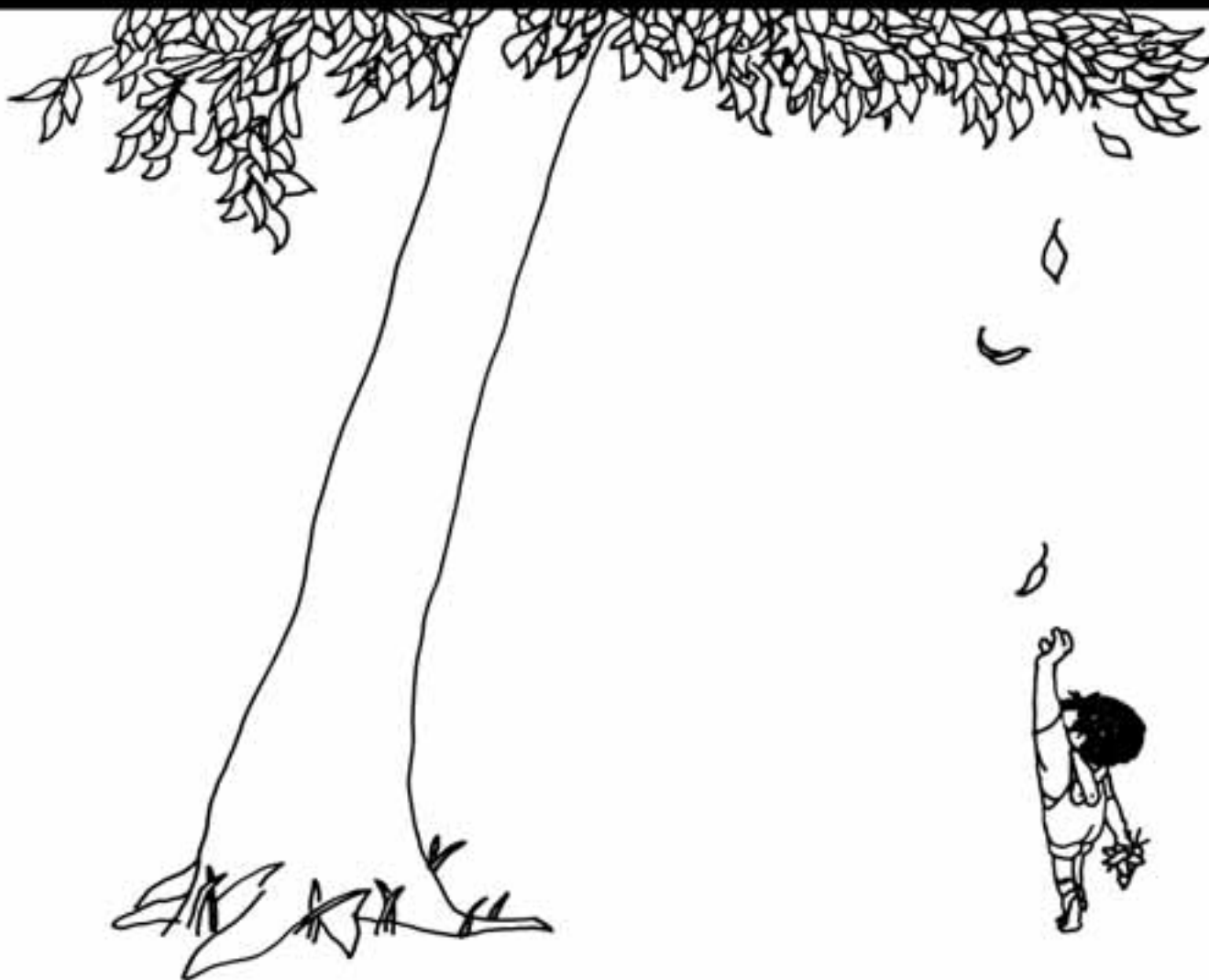


And every day
the boy
would come





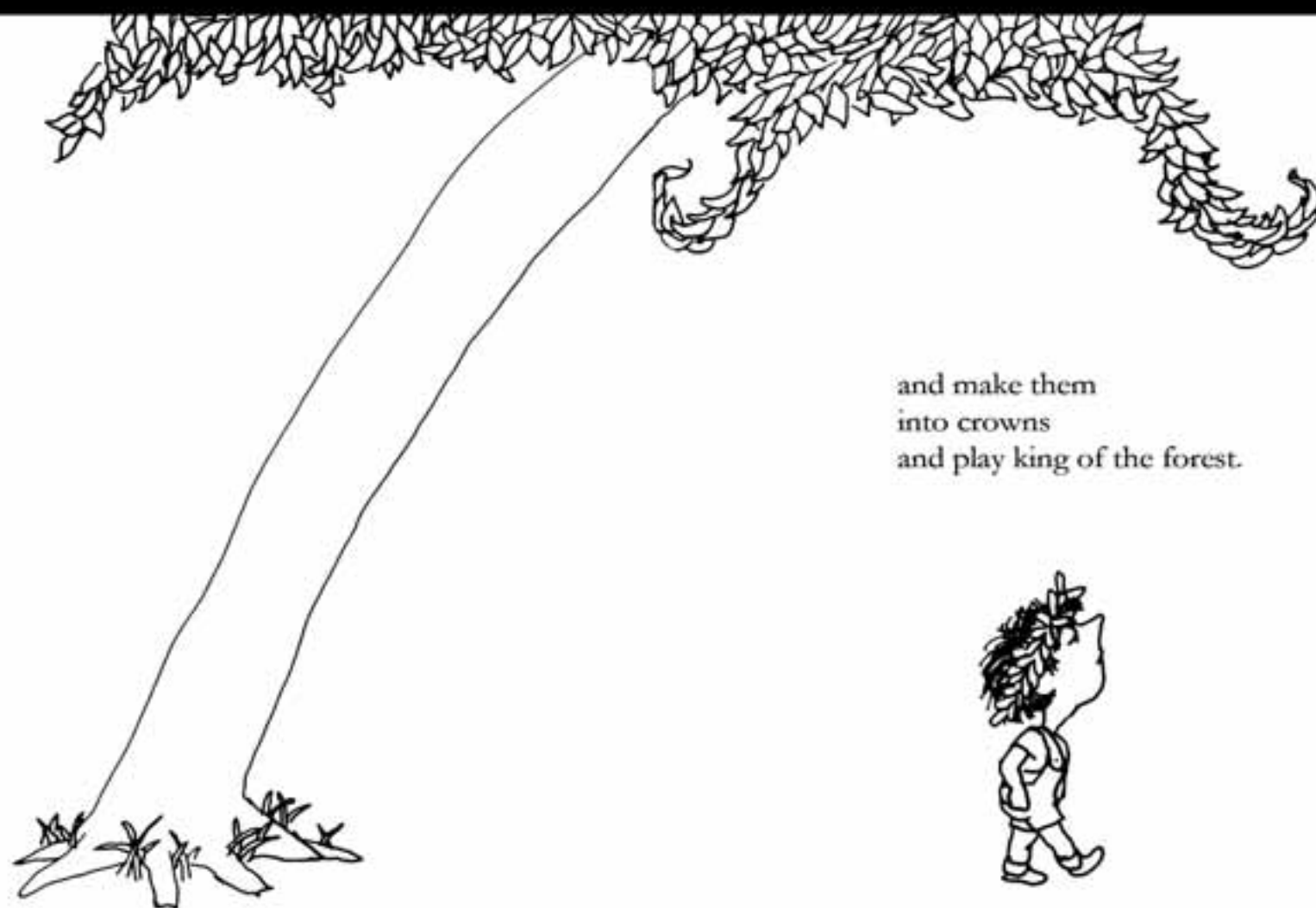
and
he
would
gather
her
leaves



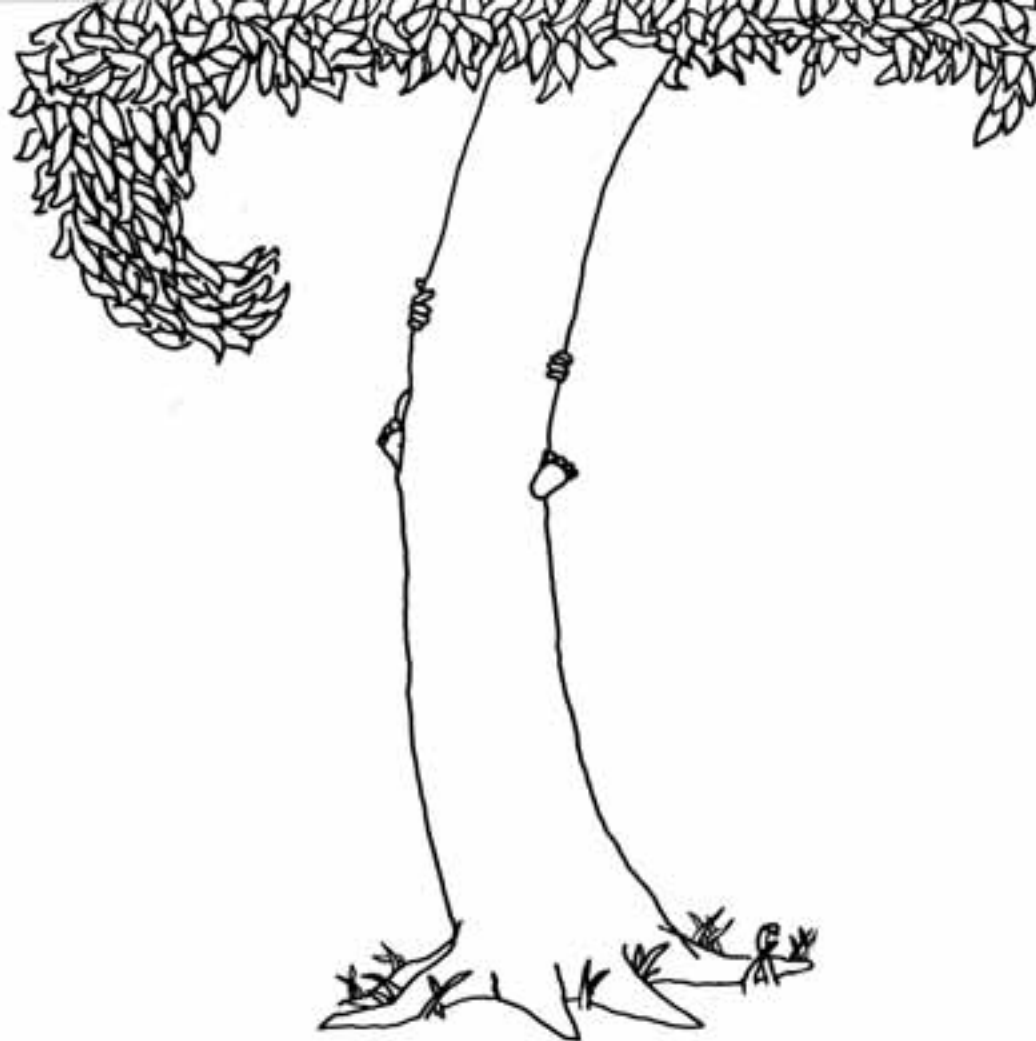
and
he
would
gather
her
leaves



and make them
into crowns
and play king of the forest.

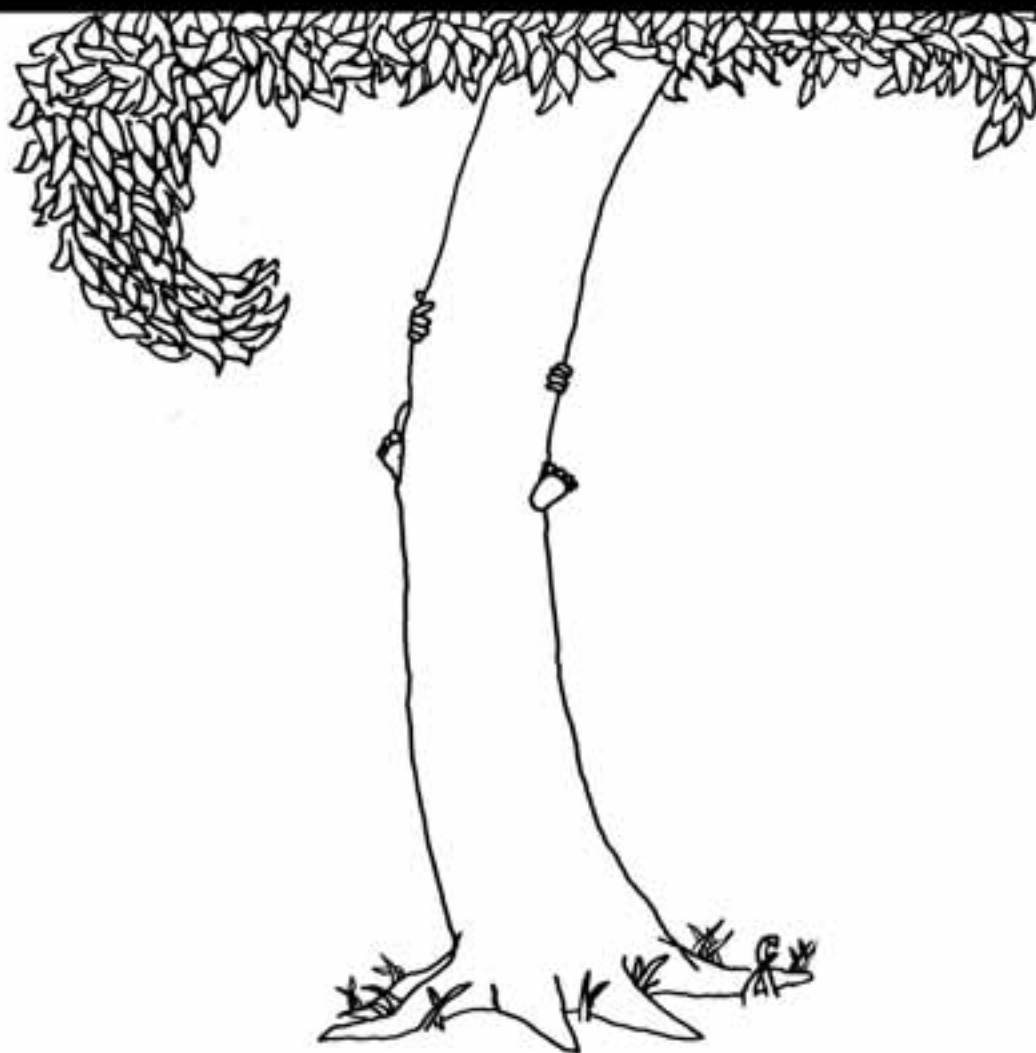


and make them
into crowns
and play king of the forest.



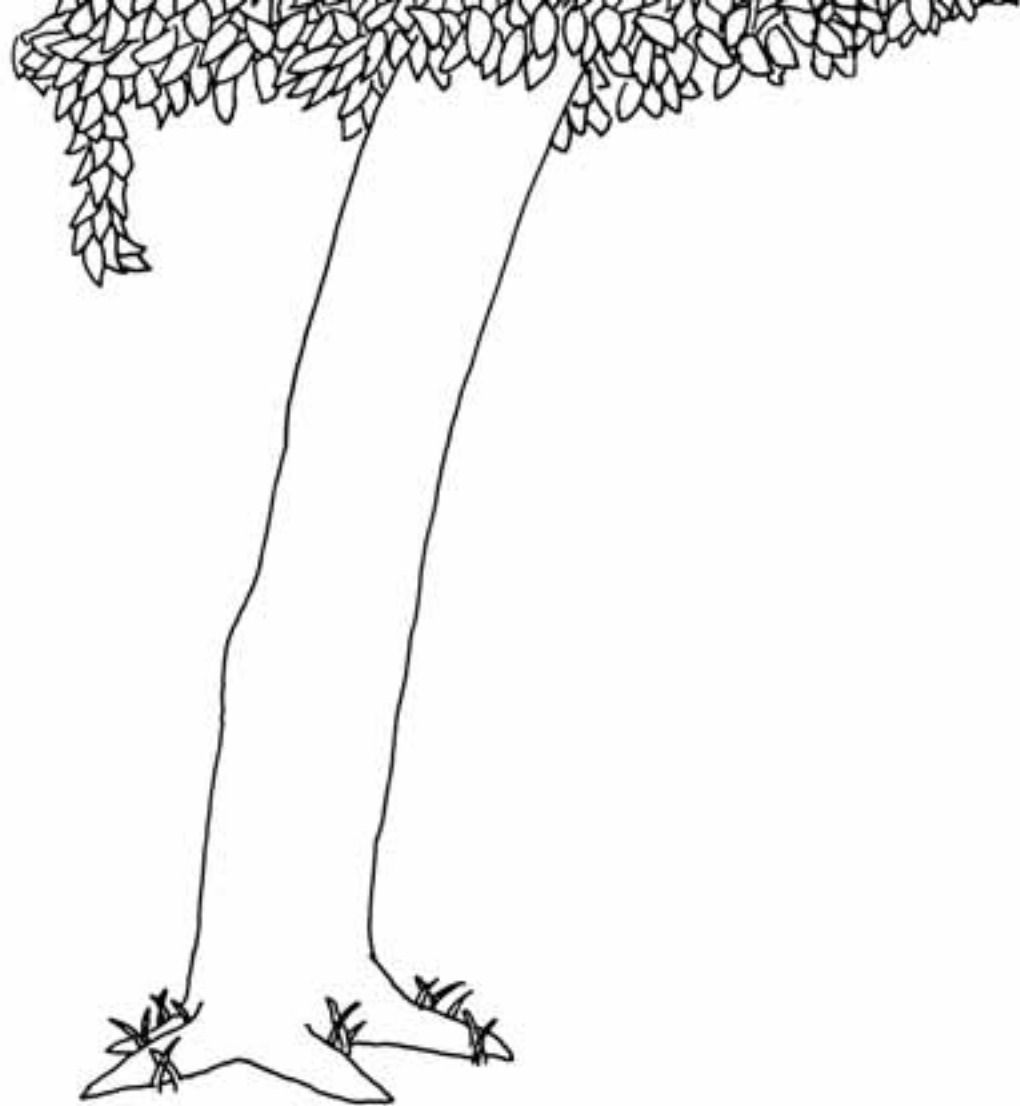
He would climb up her trunk

88

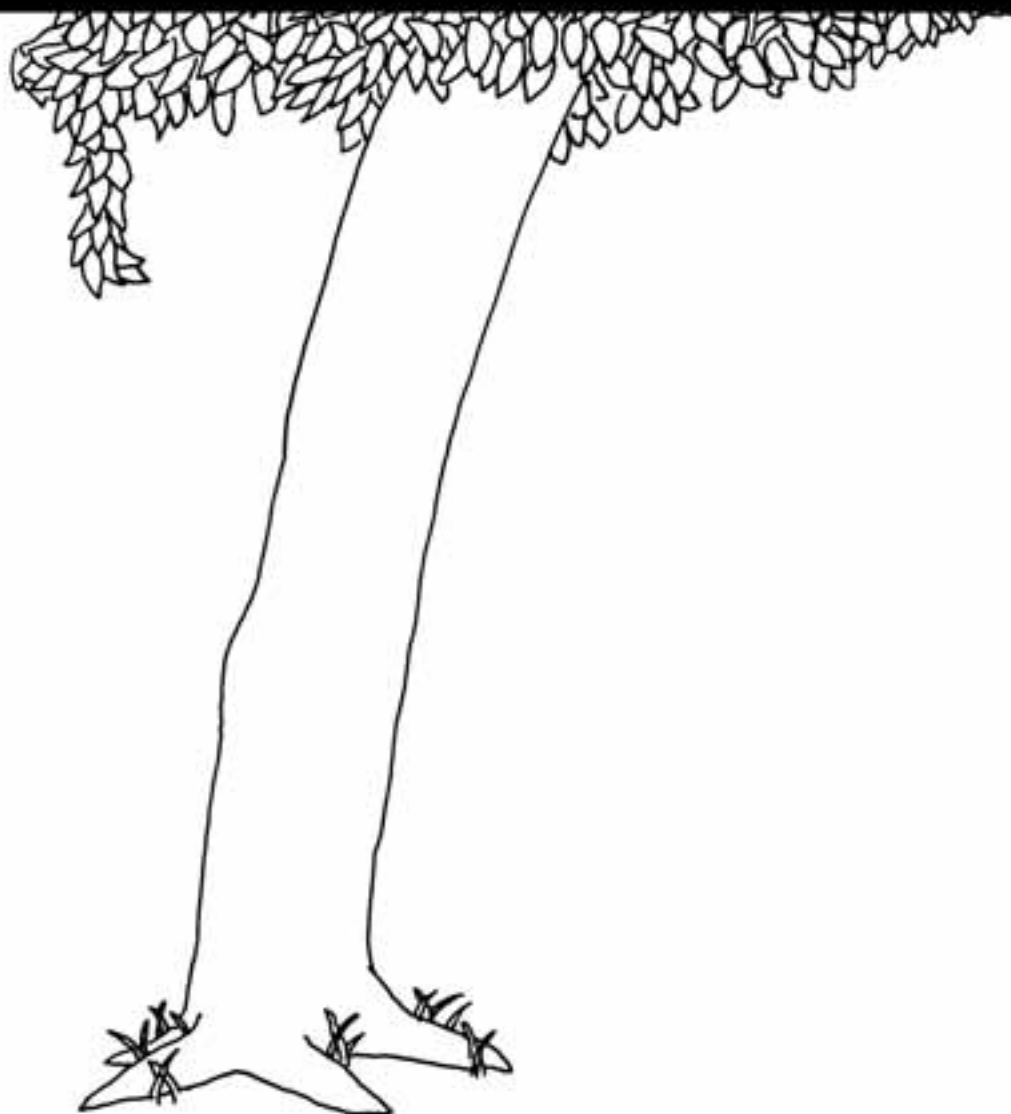


He would climb up her trunk

88

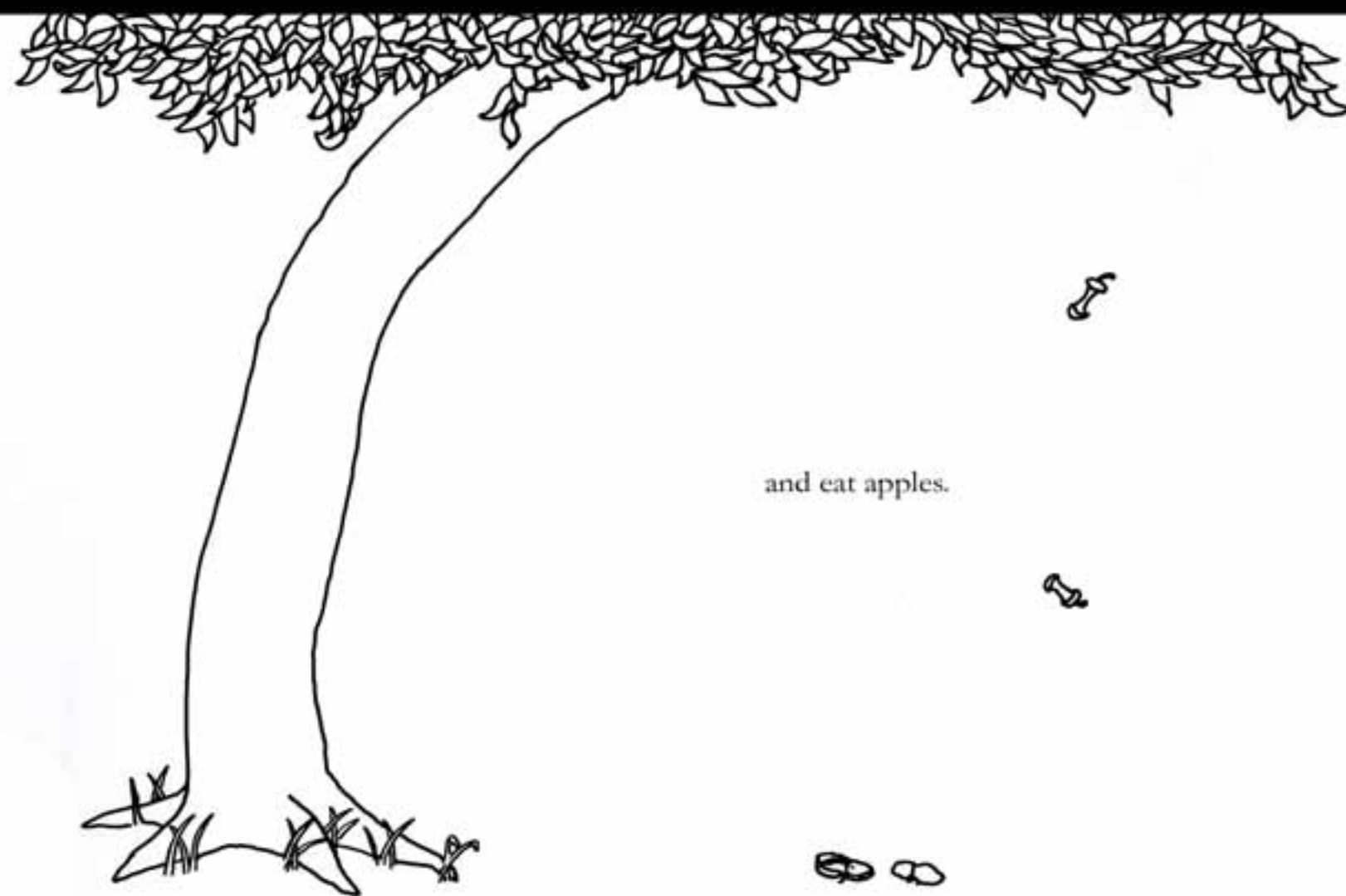
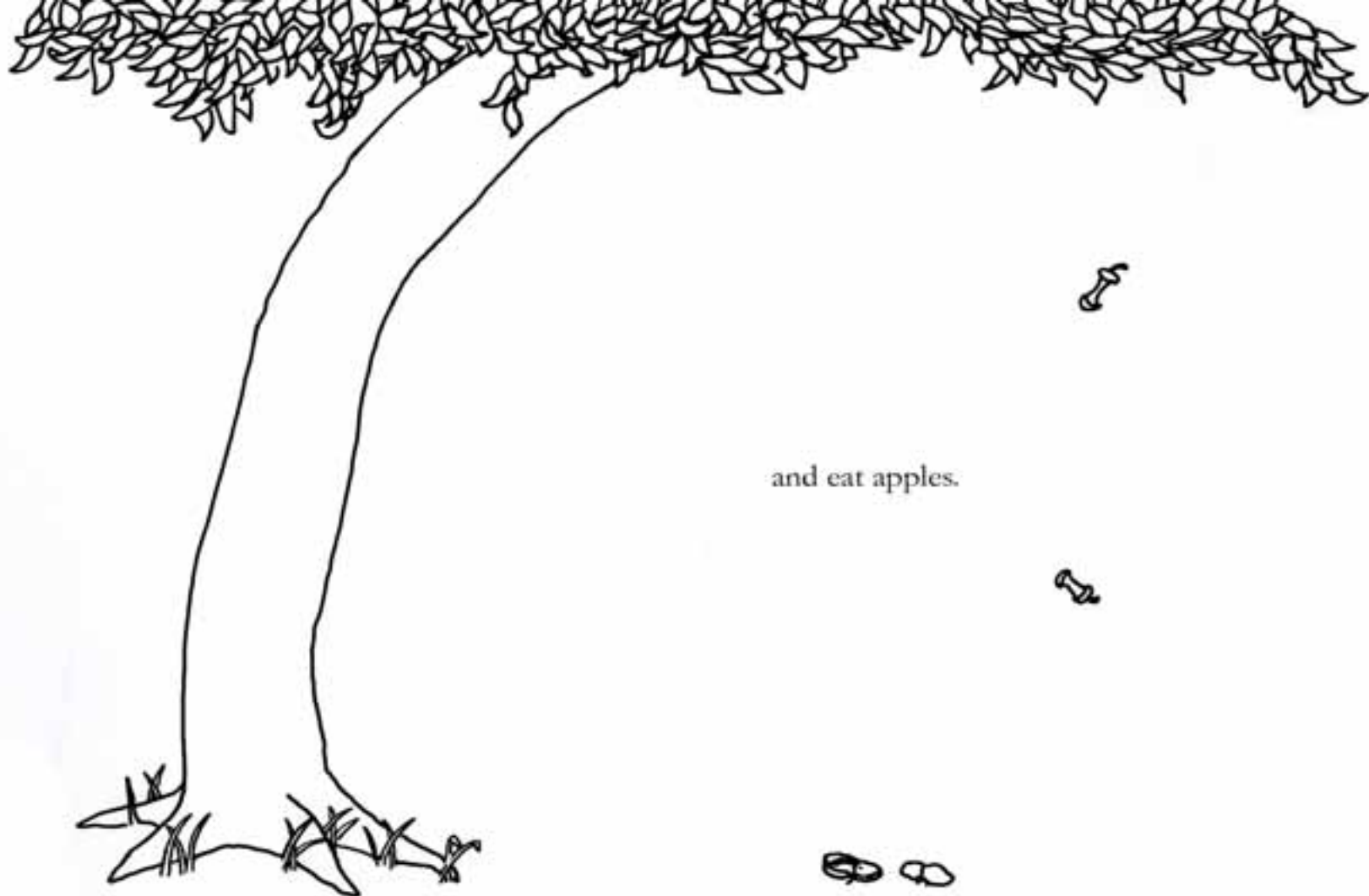


and swing from her branches



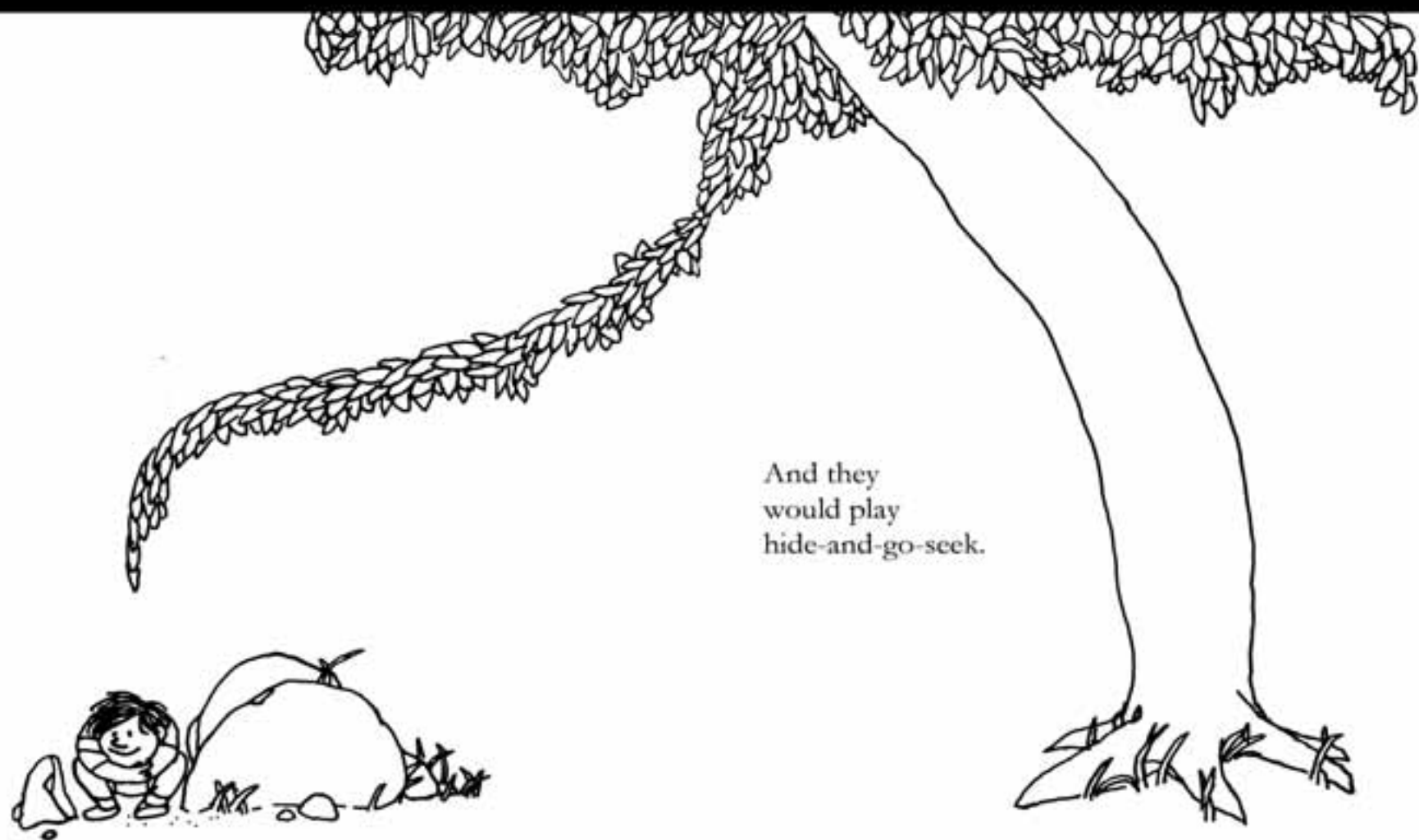
and swing from her branches







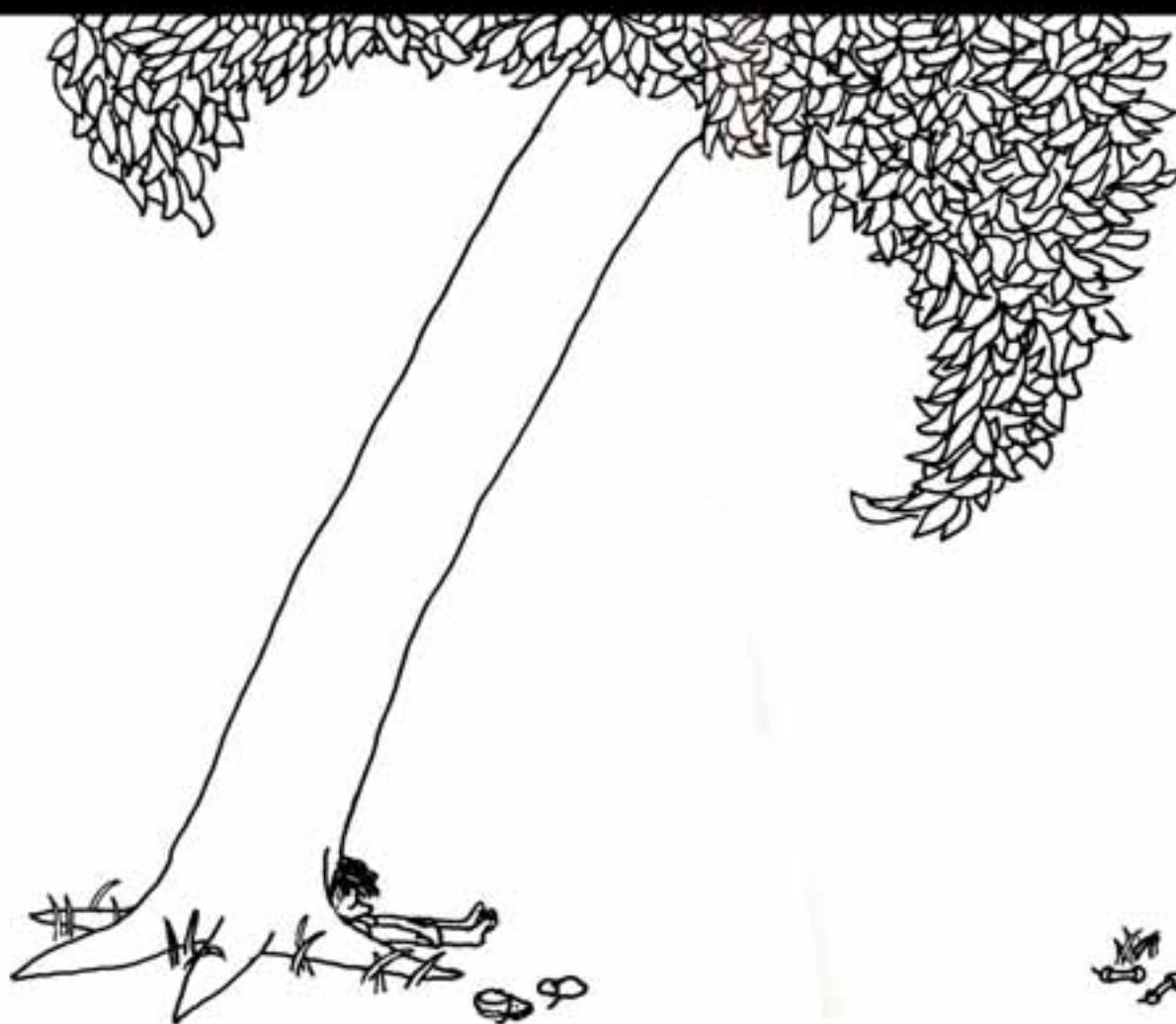
And they
would play
hide-and-go-seek.



And they
would play
hide-and-go-seek.



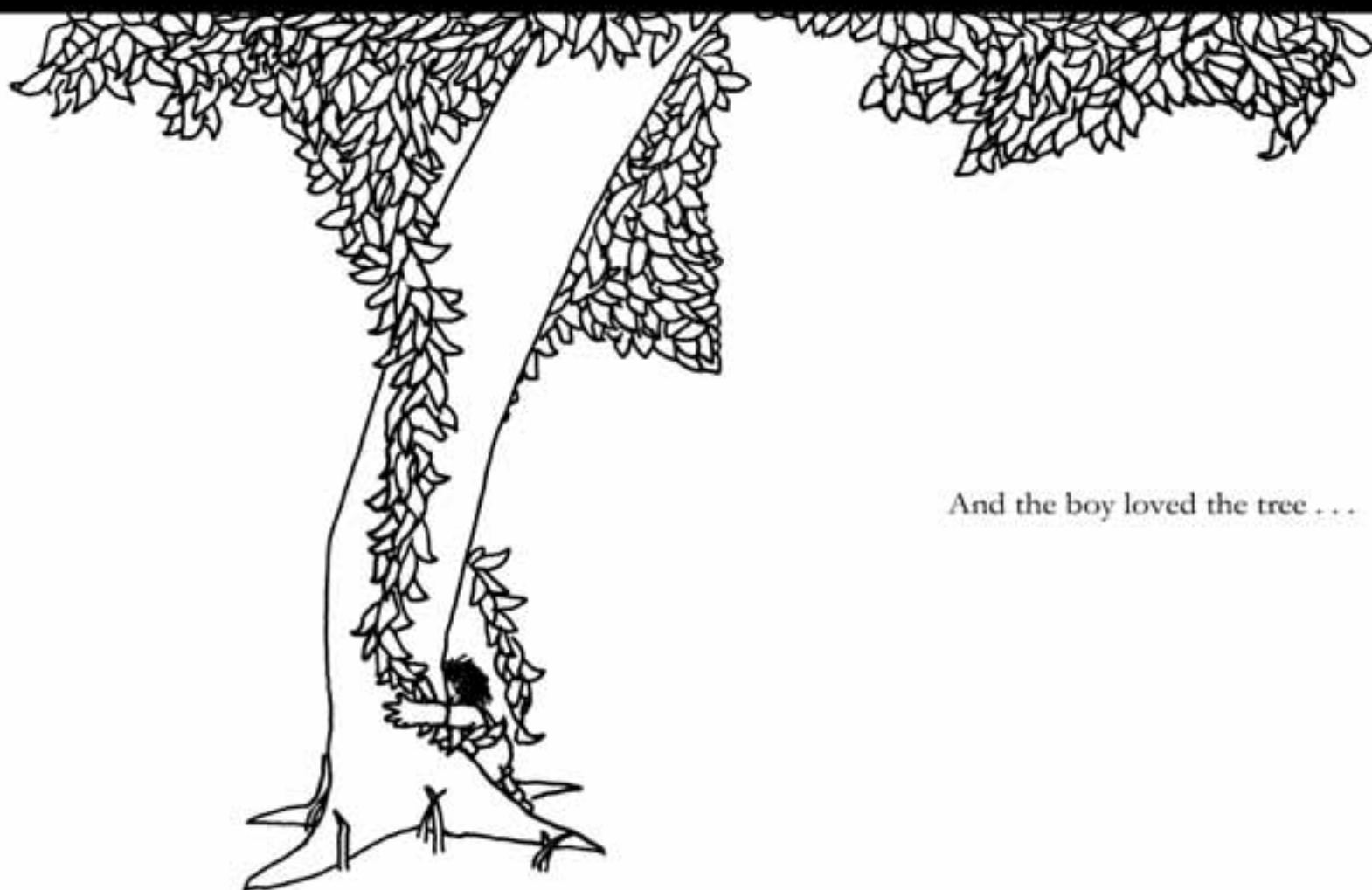
And when
he was tired,
he would sleep
in her shade.




And when
he was tired,
he would sleep
in her shade.



And the boy loved the tree . . .




And the boy loved the tree . . .



very much.

And the tree was happy.

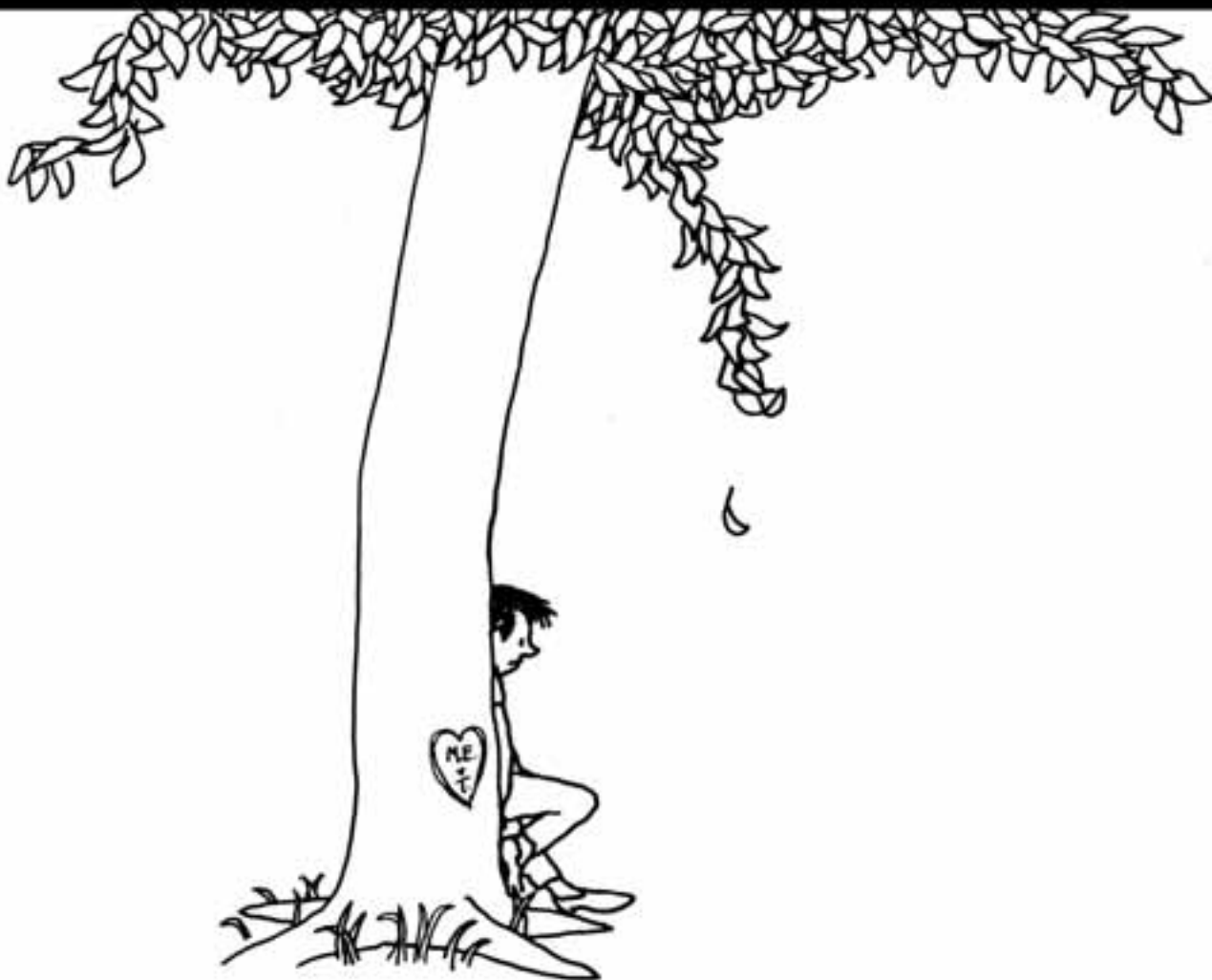


very much.

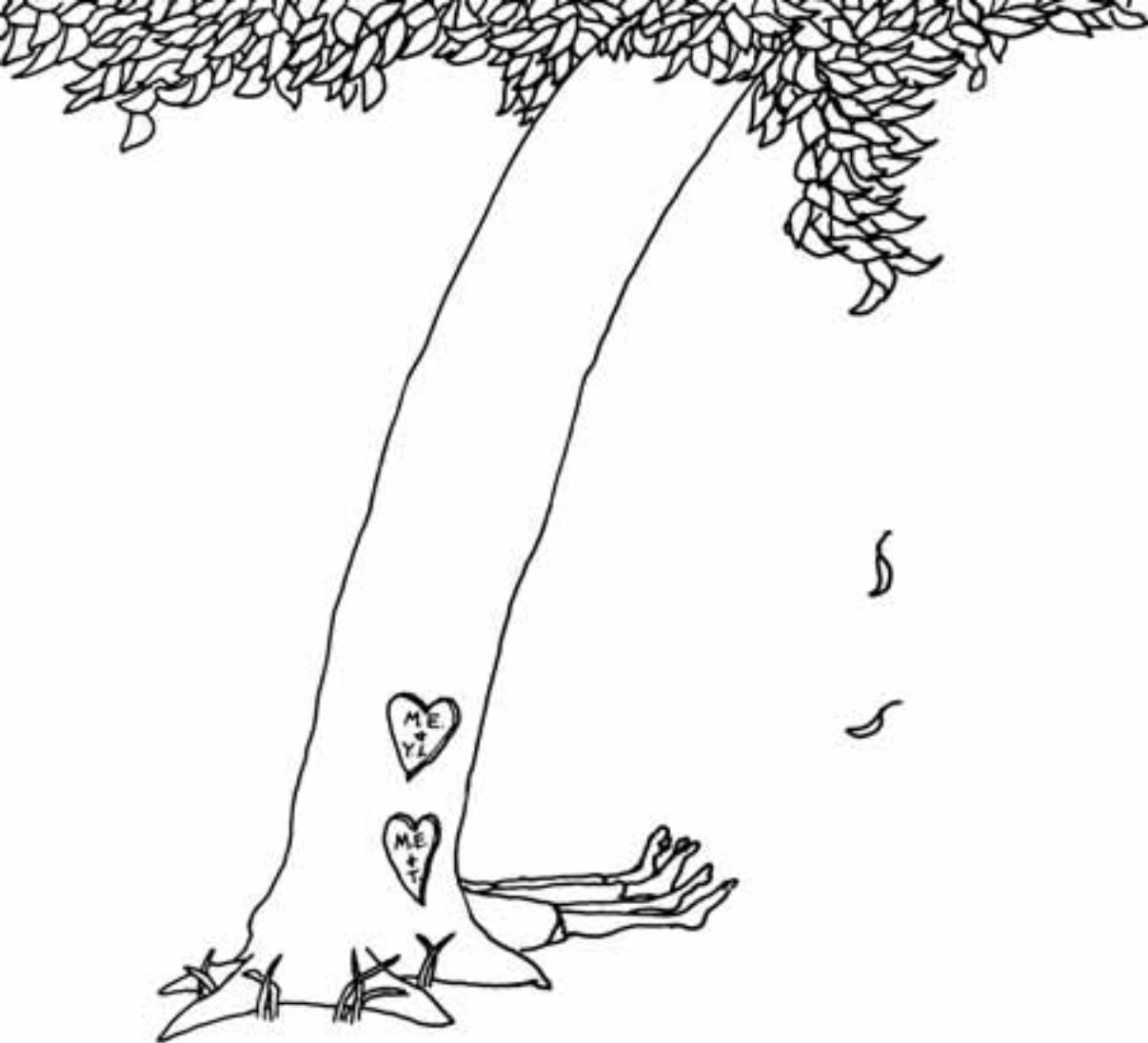
And the tree was happy.



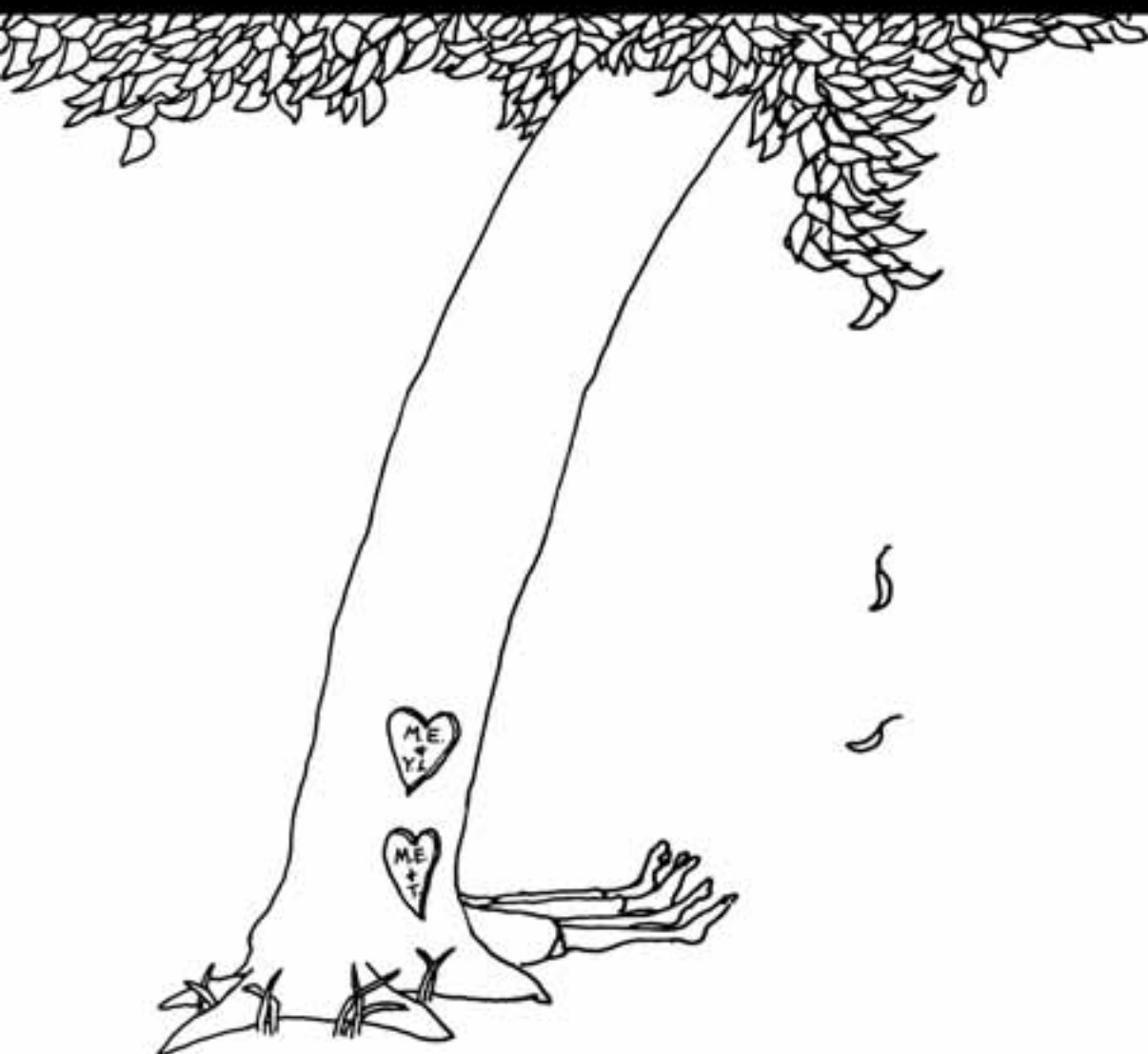
But time went by.



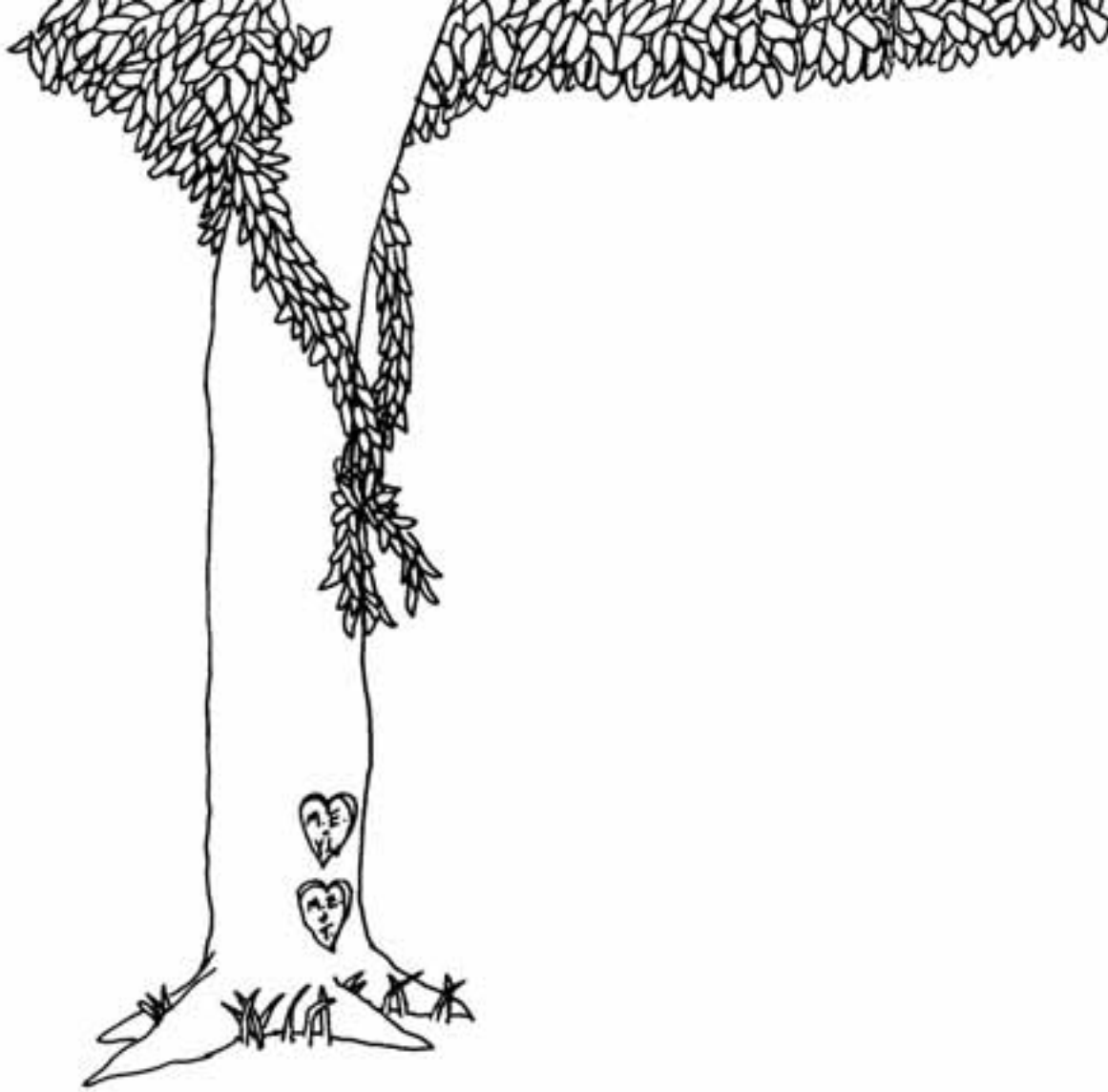
But time went by.



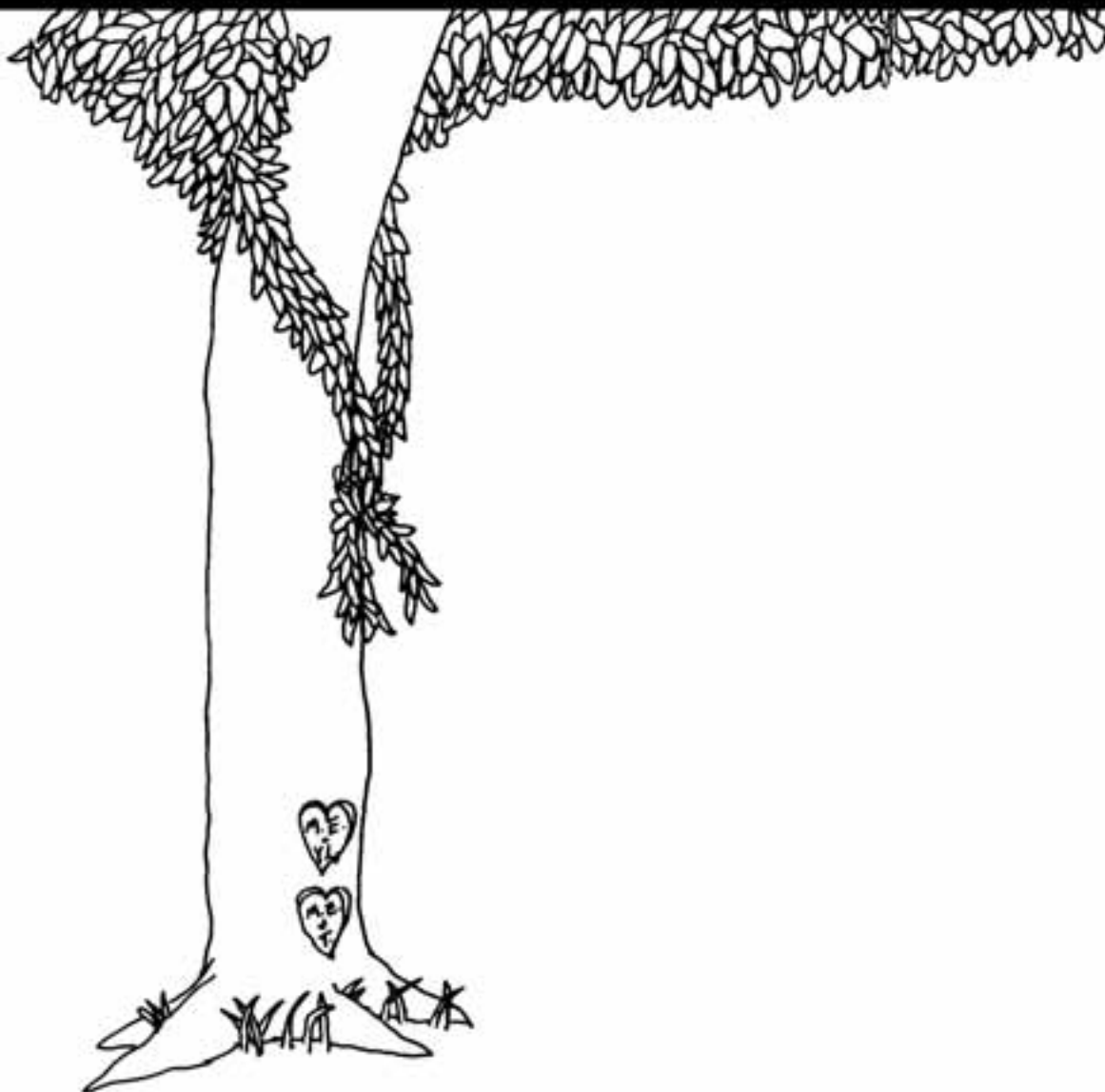
And the boy grew older.



And the boy grew older.

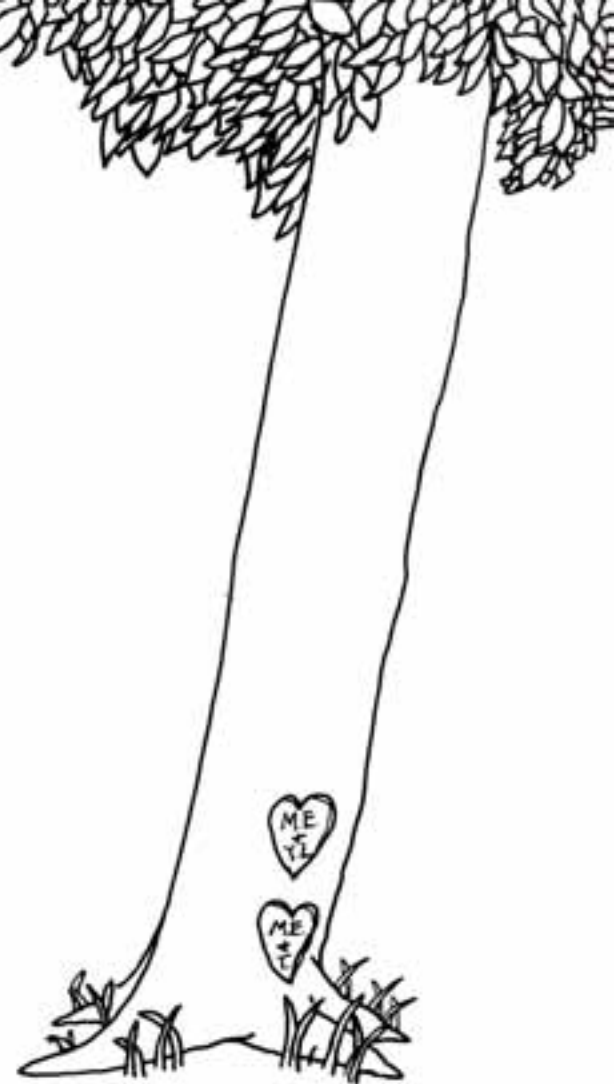
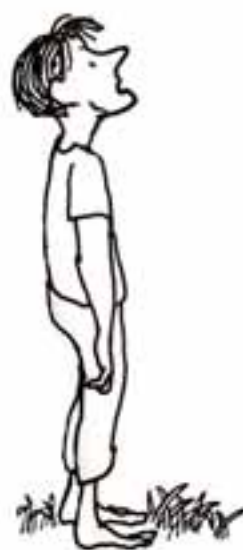


And the tree was often alone.

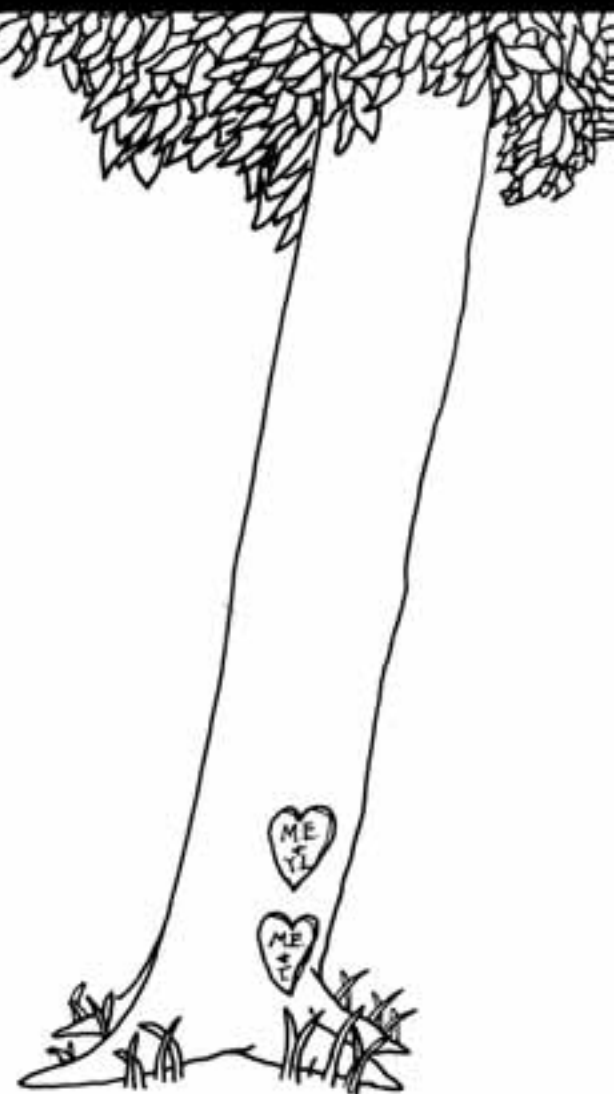


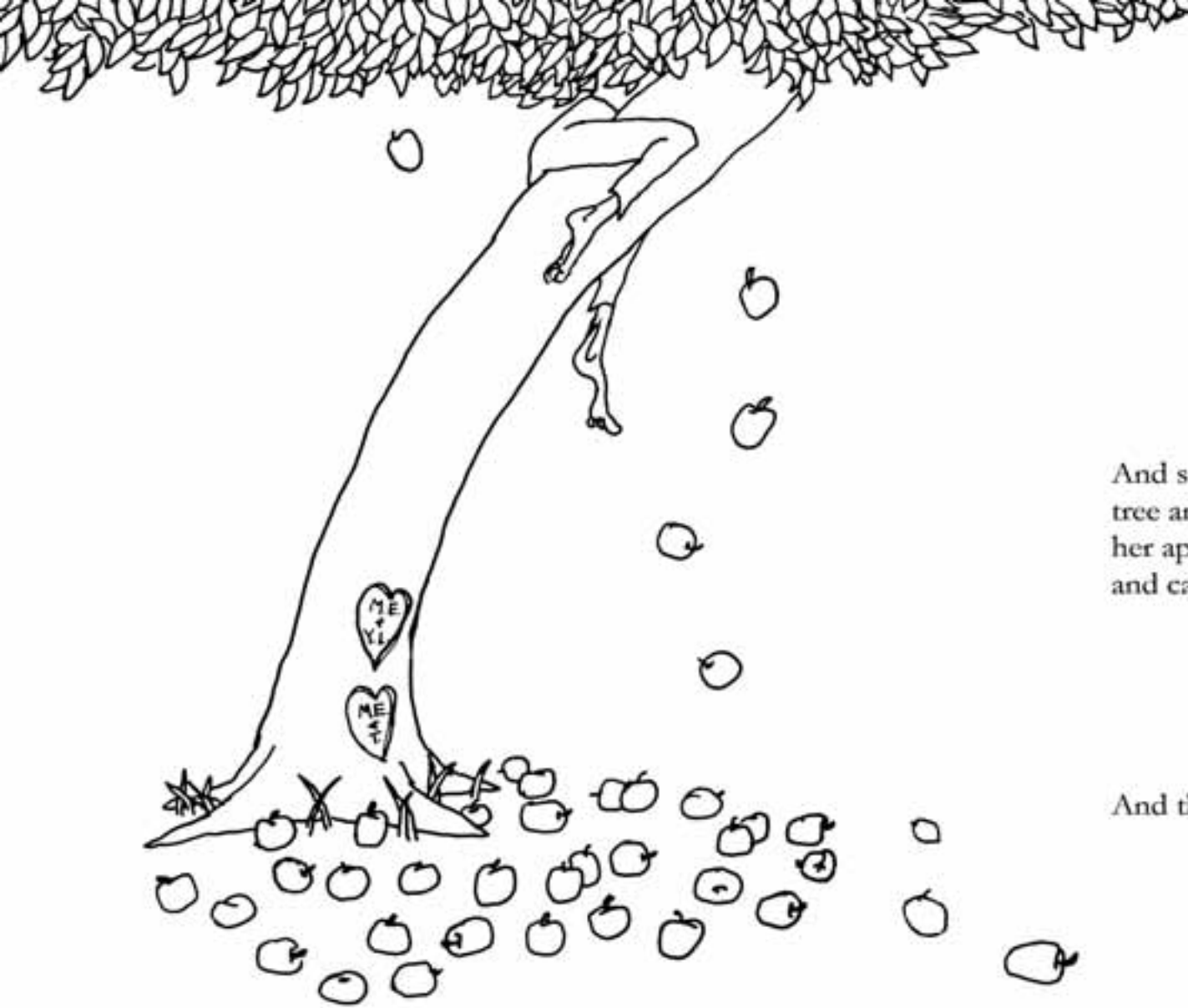
And the tree was often alone.

Then one day the boy came to the tree
and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb
up my trunk and swing from my branches
and eat apples and play in my shade
and be happy."
"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy.
"I want to buy things and have fun.
I want some money.
Can you give me some money?"
"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money.
I have only leaves and apples.
Take my apples, Boy, and sell them
in the city. Then you will have money
and you will be happy."



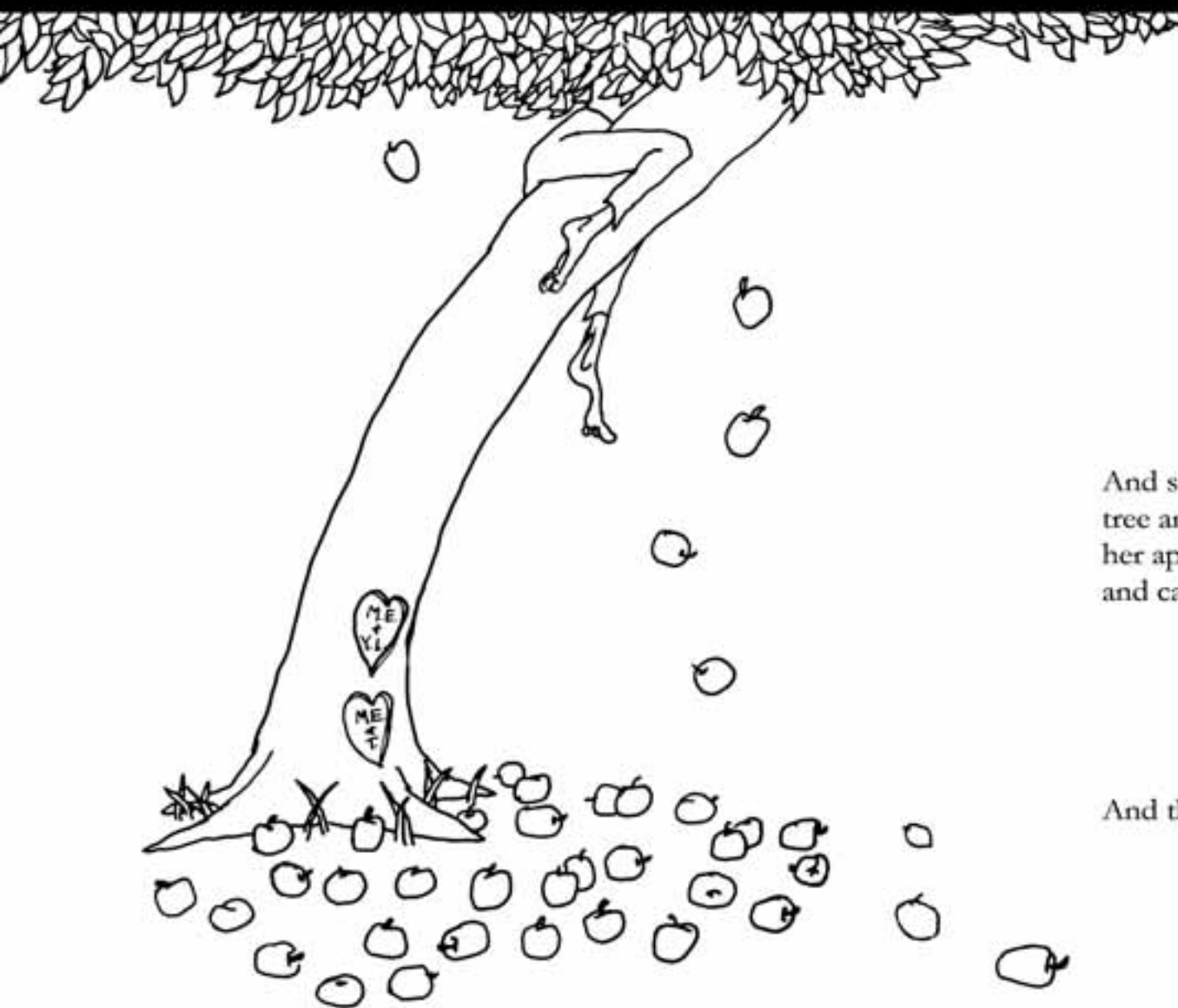
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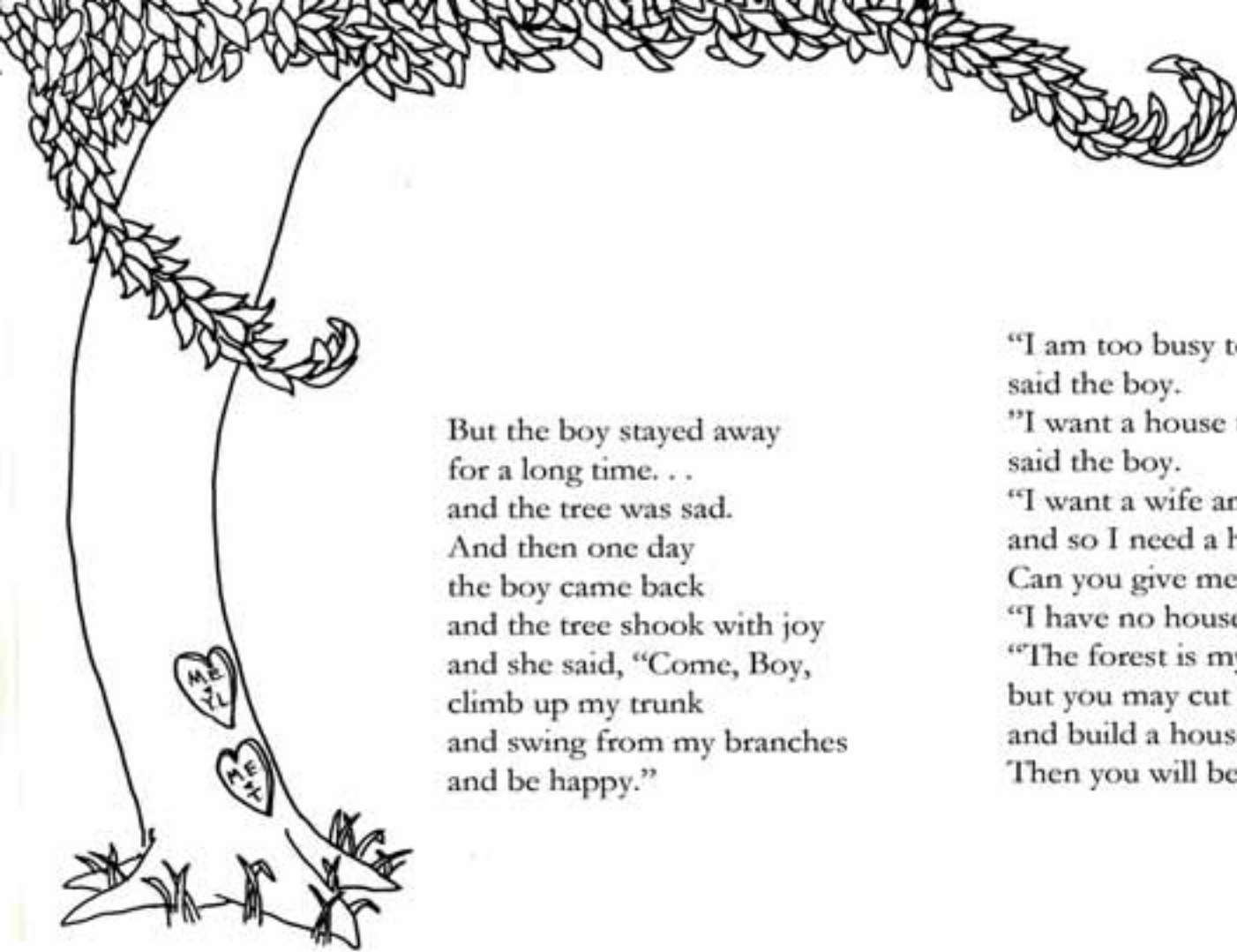
And so the boy climbed up the
tree and gathered
her apples
and carried them away.

And the tree was happy.



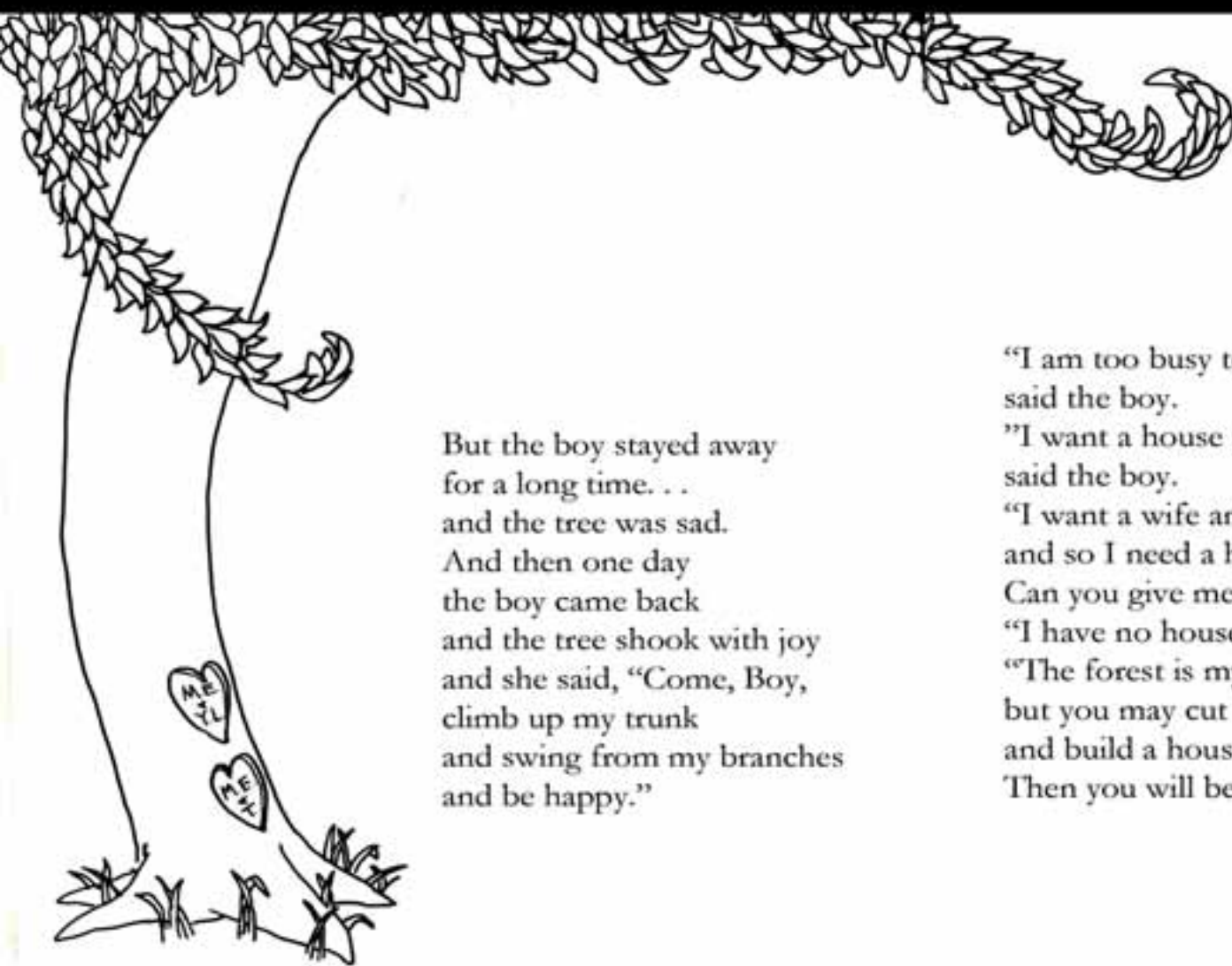
And so the boy climbed up the
tree and gathered
her apples
and carried them away.

And the tree was happy.



But the boy stayed away
for a long time. . .
and the tree was sad.
And then one day
the boy came back
and the tree shook with joy
and she said, "Come, Boy,
climb up my trunk
and swing from my branches
and be happy."

"I am too busy to climb trees,
said the boy.
"I want a house to keep me warm,"
said the boy.
"I want a wife and I want children,
and so I need a house.
Can you give me a house/"
"I have no house," said the tree.
"The forest is my house,
but you may cut off my branches
and build a house.
Then you will be happy."

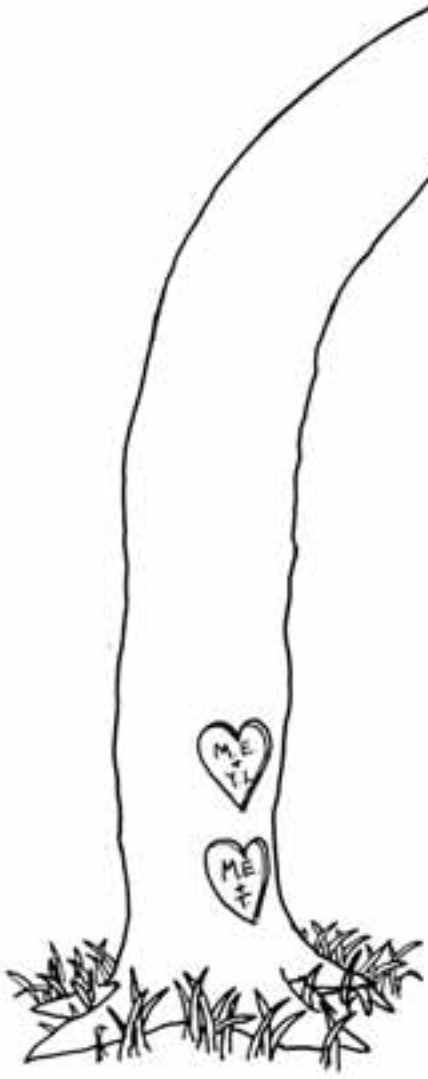


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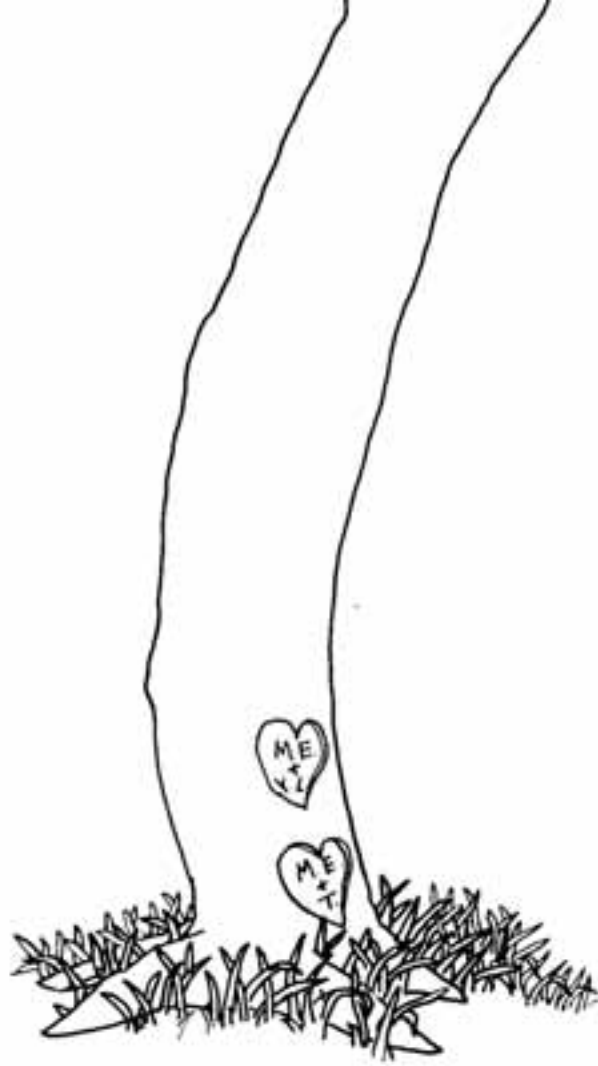


And so the boy cut off
her branches
and carried them away
to build his house.



"No!" exclaimed the boy.
"I would never think of cutting
your limbs!"
"Then what can I give you?"
asked the tree.
"People in the city enjoy
organic food. If you could give
me more apples and help me
with a garden then I could sell
the food. That would allow me
to spend time with you and
allow me to save for a house
and to start a family," said the boy.





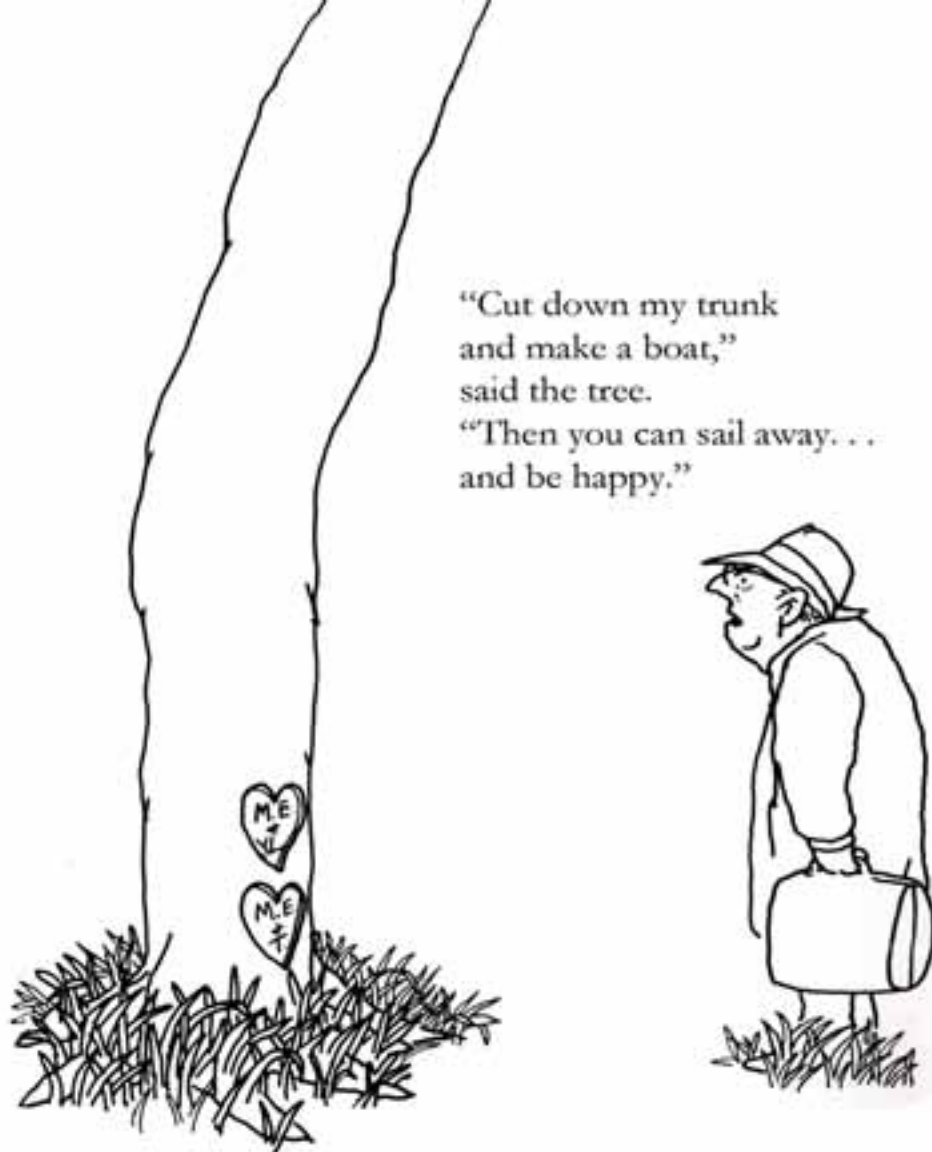
And the tree was happy.



"That sounds so wonderful! It would make me so happy to help you," said the tree as she swayed in delight as the boy climbed her trunk.

But the boy stayed away
for a long time.
And when he came back,
the tree was so happy
she could hardly speak.
“Come, Boy,” she whispered,
“come and play.”
“I am too old and sad to play,”
said the boy.
“I want a boat that will
take me far away
from here.
Can you give me a boat?”

“Cut down my trunk
and make a boat,”
said the tree.
“Then you can sail away. . .
and be happy.”



And the tree was happy.



And so the boy cut down her trunk



and make a boat and sailed away.

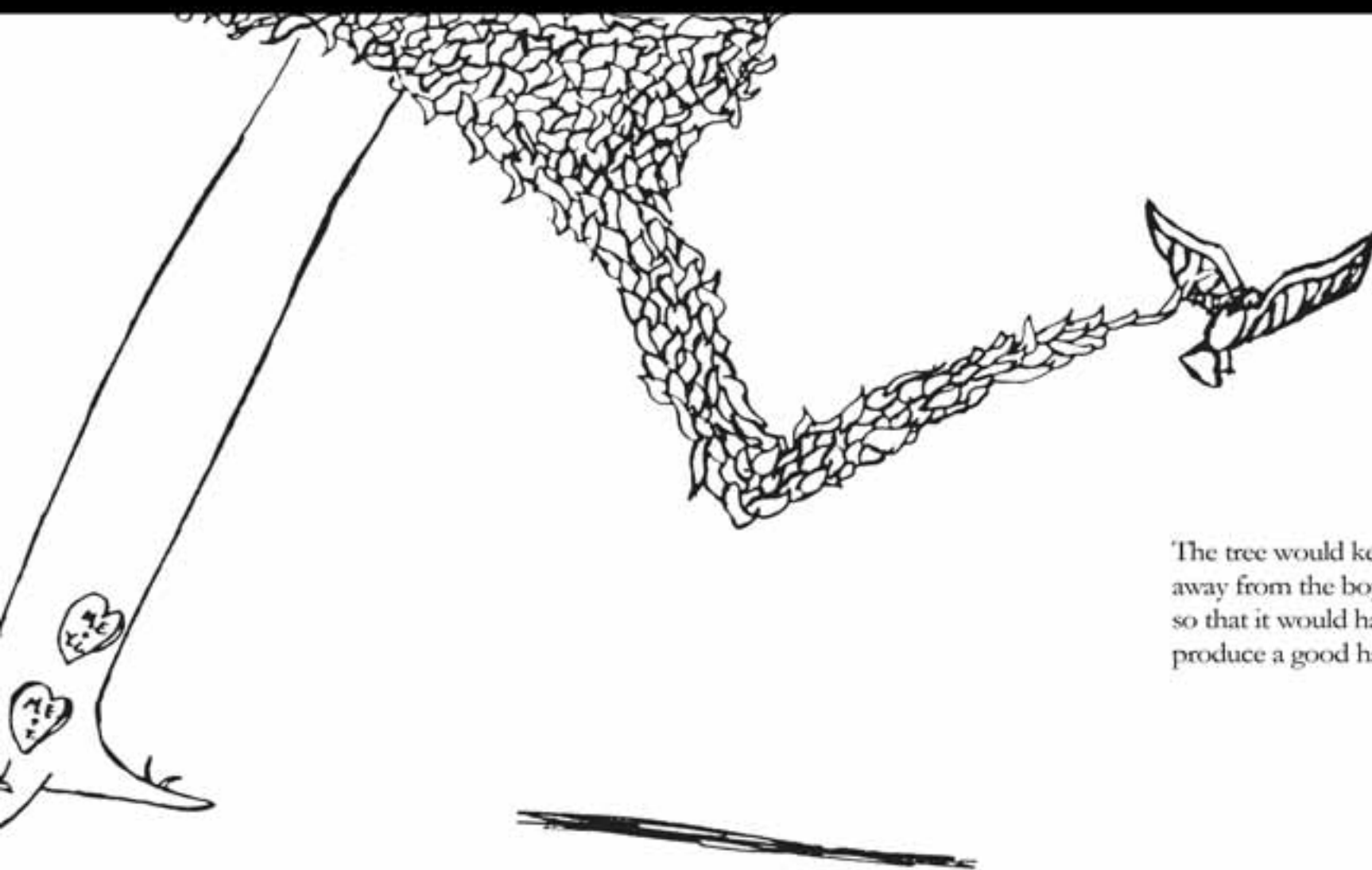


Early every morning the
boy would leave the tree
and his new garden to go
sell apples in the city.



And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



The tree would keep any animals away from the boy's garden so that it would have a chance to produce a good harvest.

And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.

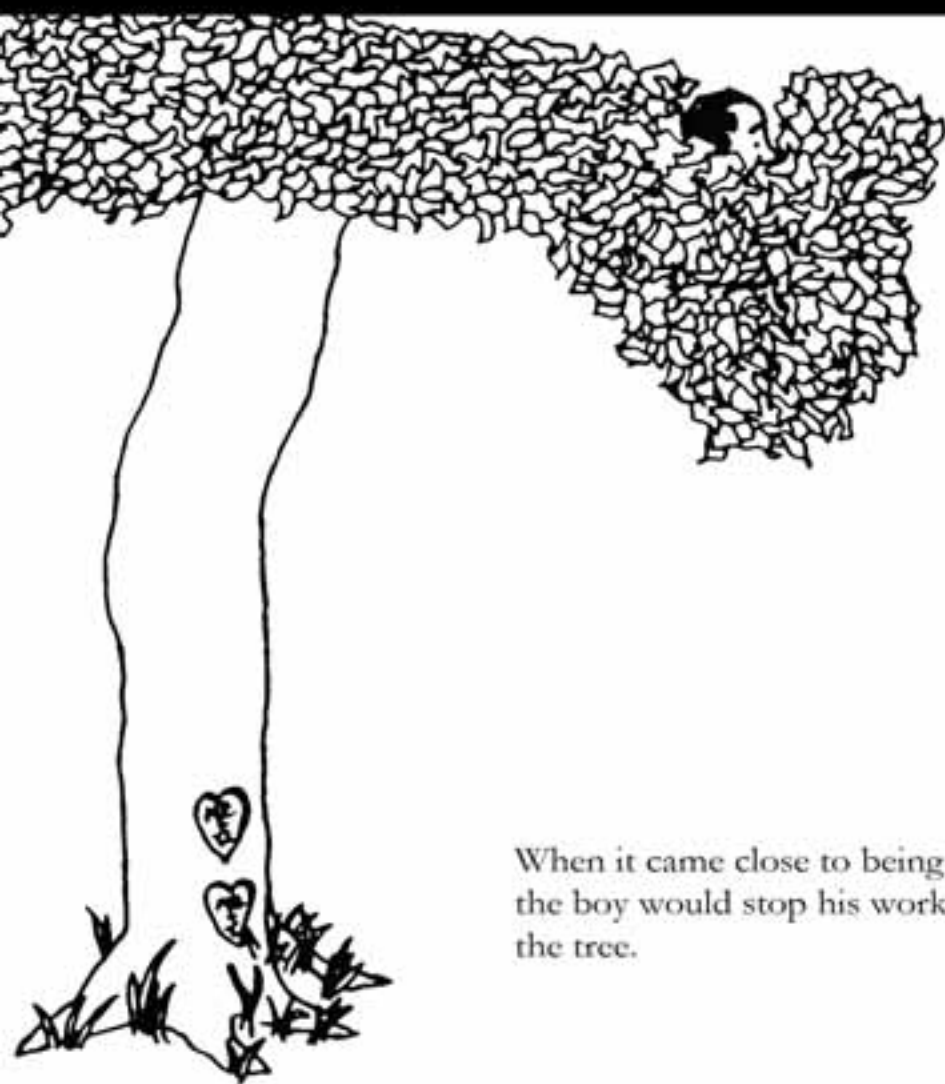


After he sold all of the apples,
the boy would come back
and tell the tree all about
the people he met that day
while working on the garden.



And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



When it came close to being sunset,
the boy would stop his work and climb
the tree.



He would stay up there until
the sunlight no longer touched
anything.

And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



Then he would climb down,
hug the tree and they would
wish each other goodnight.



And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



After a while the boy's garden became quite plentiful and he began bringing other fruits and vegetables along with the apples the tree gave him.

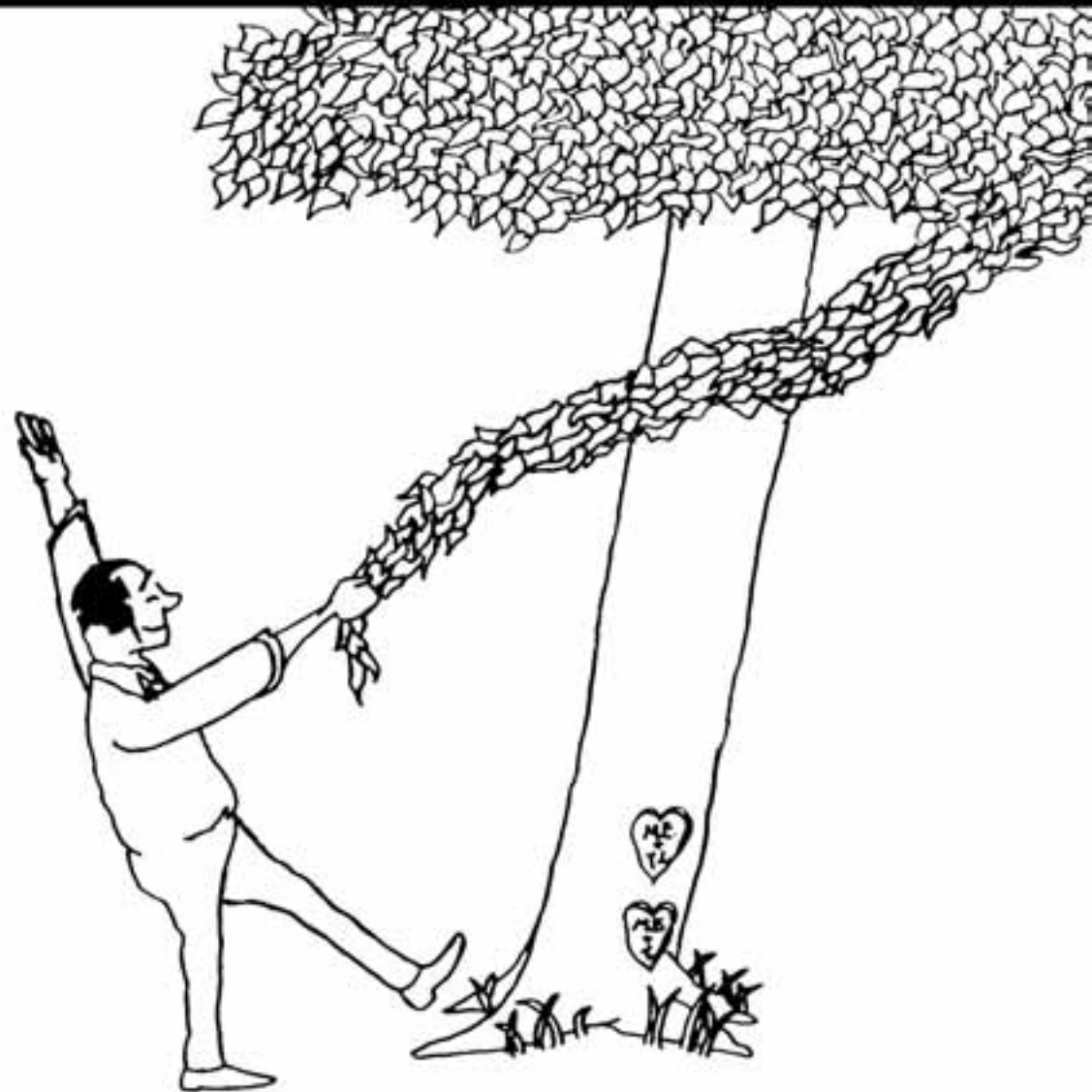


And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



One day the boy came back from the city earlier than usual. He was very happy and he started dancing around the tree. "What put you in this marvelous mood?" asked the tree. "You know the girl that I've told you about who comes everyday to buy your apples?" asked the boy. "Yes!" exclaimed the tree. "The girl that I like very much," said the boy. "Yes, yes!" shook the tree. "She too wants a house and children and likes me very much and so we are going to get married!" exclaimed the boy.

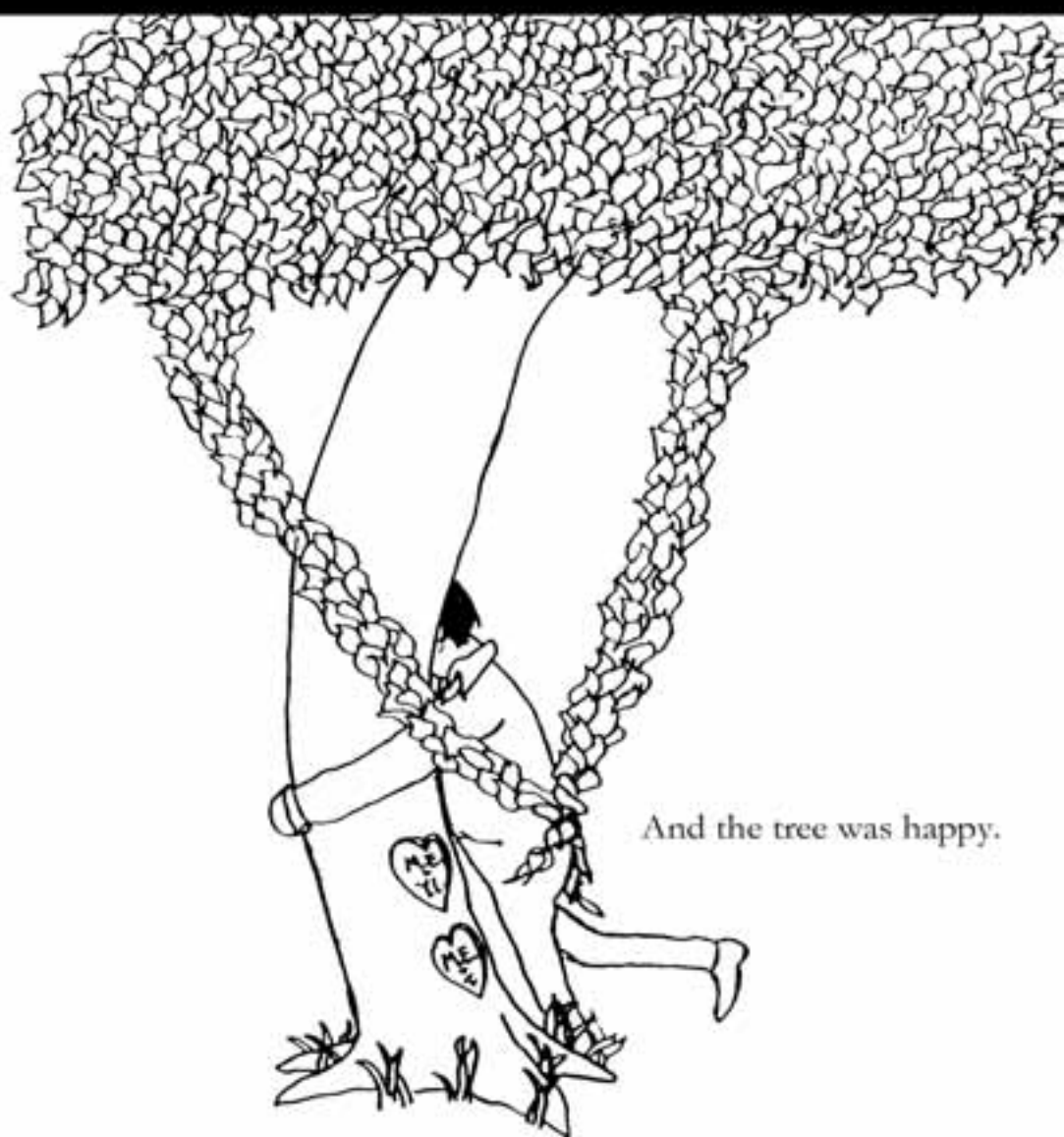


And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



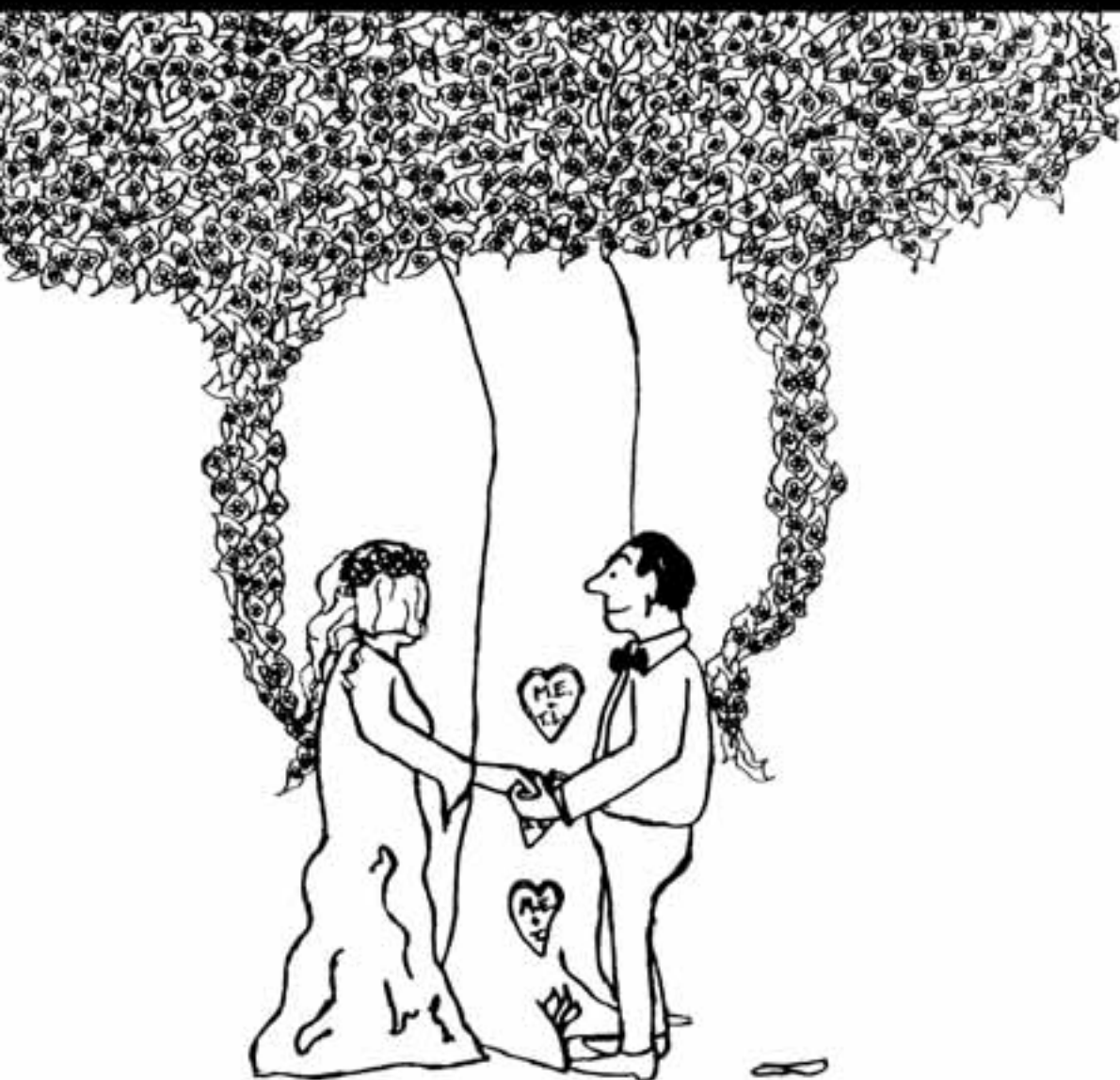
"How lovely!" said the tree.
"I so wish I could be there."
"You will be," said the boy.
"There is no other place
that I would like to be
married than under your shade."



And the tree was happy.

And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



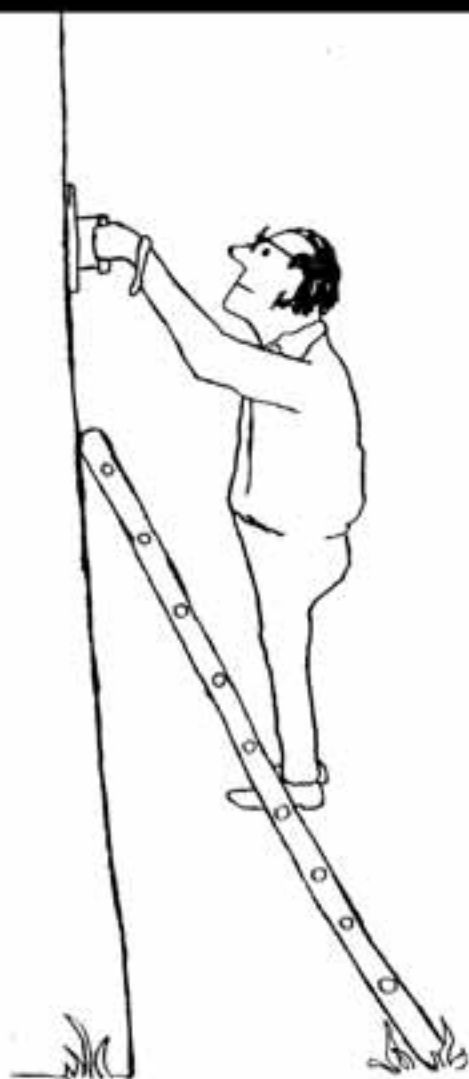
The tree grew the most beautiful and fragrant apple blossoms for the wedding. As the sun started to set, the boy and the girl gave each other their vows of love.



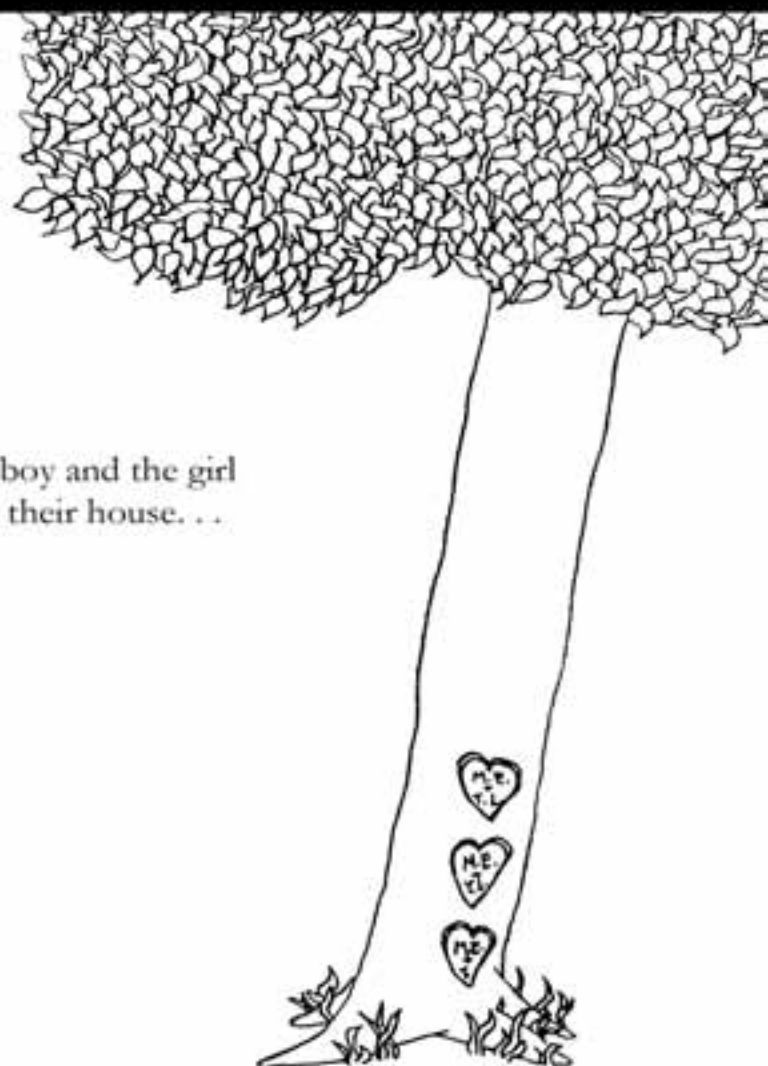
And the tree was happy.

And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



The boy and the girl
built their house. . .



And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



and expanded the garden. . .



And the tree was happy. . .

but not really.



and had many children
who loved the tree very
much.



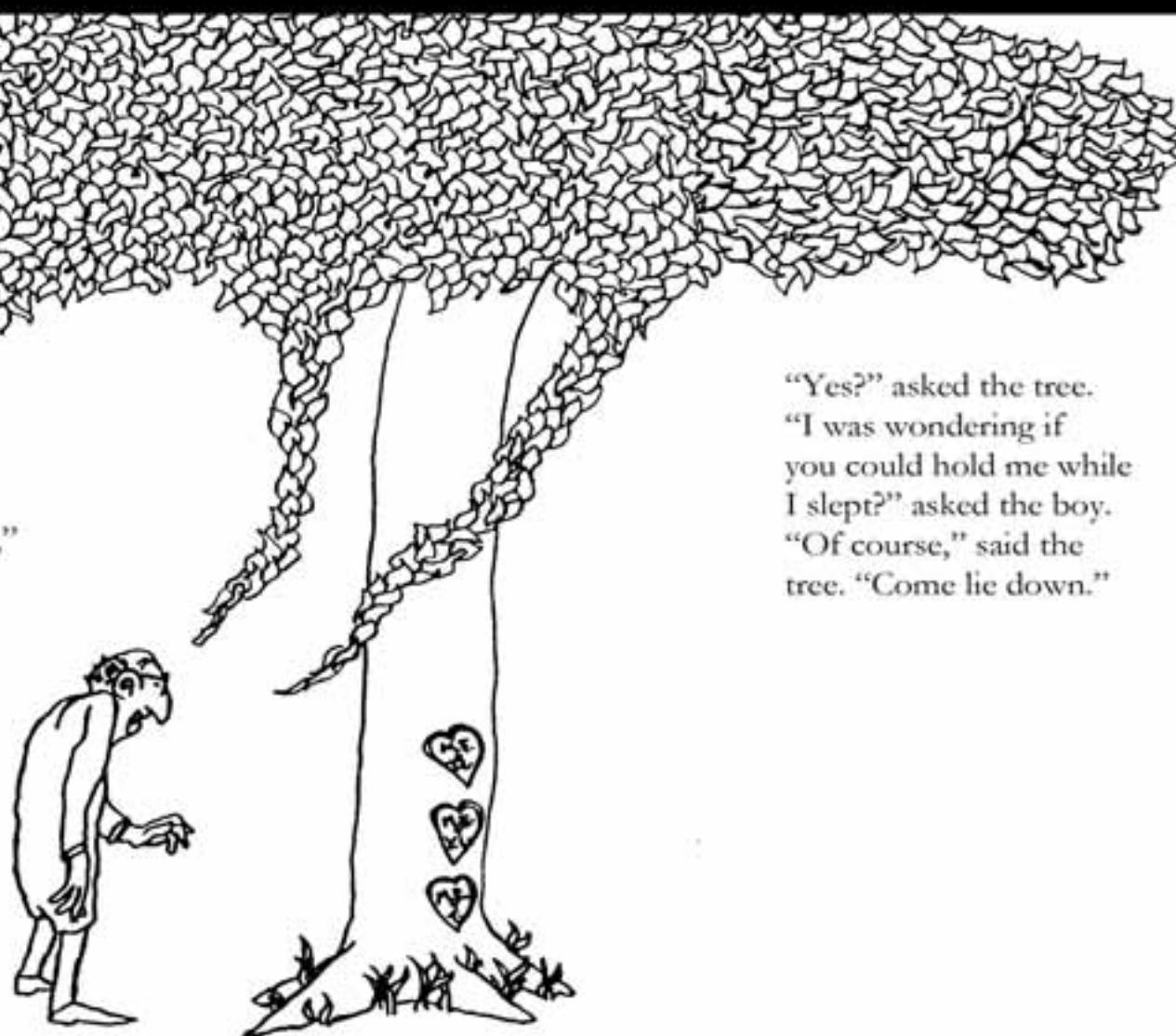
And the tree was happy.

And after a long time
the boy came back again
"I am sorry, Boy,"
said the tree, "but I have nothing
left to give you-



My apples are gone,"
"My teeth are too weak
for apples, said the boy.
"My branches are gone,"
said the tree. "You
cannot swing on them-"
"I am too old to swing
on branches," said the boy.
"My trunk is gone," said the tree.
"You cannot climb-"
"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.
"I am sorry," sighed the tree.
"I wish that I could
give you something...
but I have nothing left. I am just
an old stump. I am sorry...."

After a long time the boy
went up to the tree
"Would you like an apple?" asked
the tree.
"My teeth are too weak for apples,"
said the boy.
"Would you like to swing on my
branches?" asked the tree.
"I am too old to swing on
branches," said the boy.
"Would you like to climb
my trunk?" said the tree.
"I am too tired to climb,"
whispered the boy. "In fact,
I am very tired. So tired that
I think I am going to sleep
for a very long time. I was
wondering..."

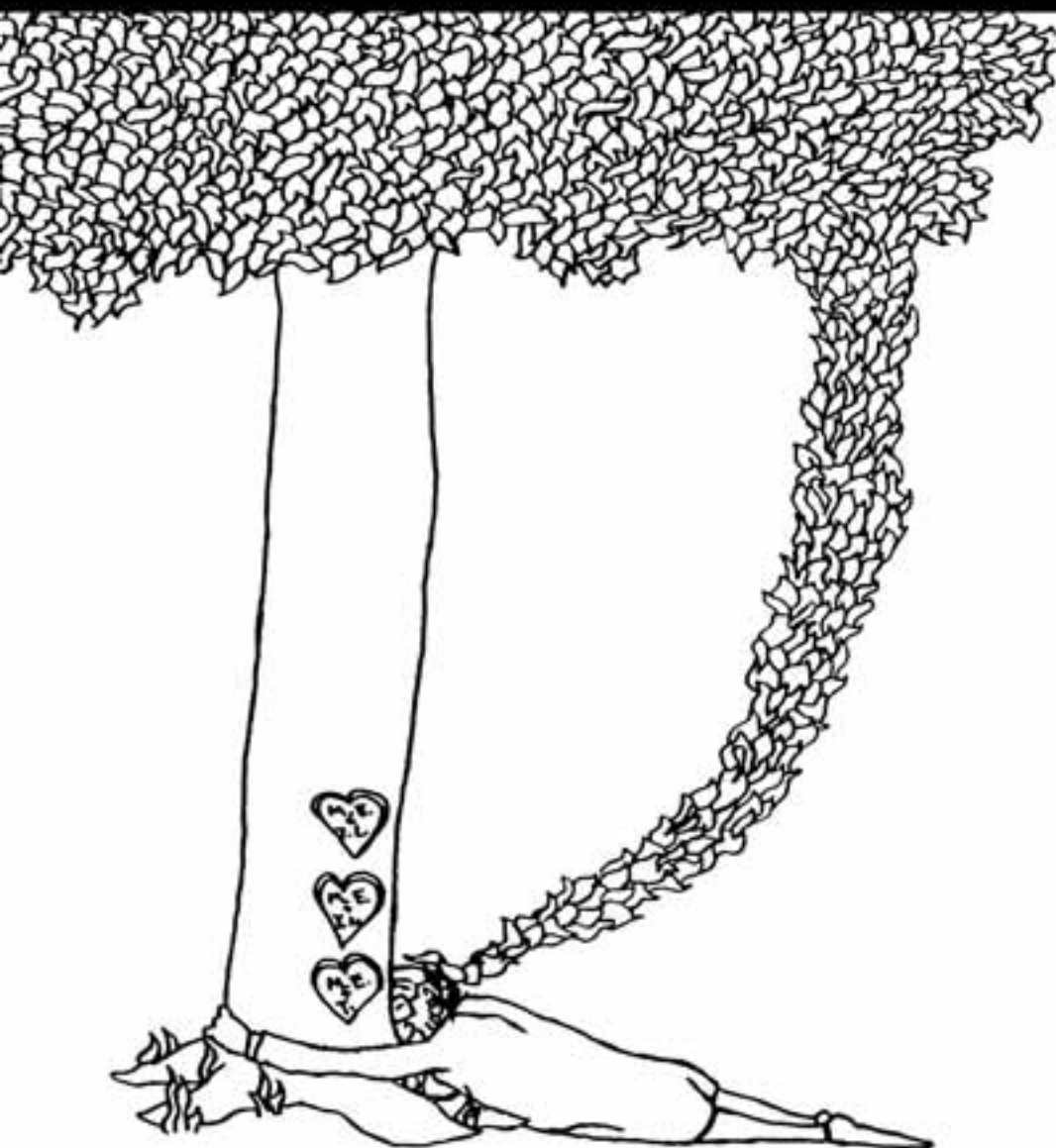


"Yes?" asked the tree.
"I was wondering if
you could hold me while
I slept?" asked the boy.
"Of course," said the
tree. "Come lie down."

"I don't need very much now,"
said the boy,
"just a quiet place to sit and rest.
I am very tired."
"Well," said the tree,
straightening herself up
as much as she could,
"well, an old stump *is* good
for sitting and resting.
Come, Boy, sit down.
Sit down and rest."



And the boy did.



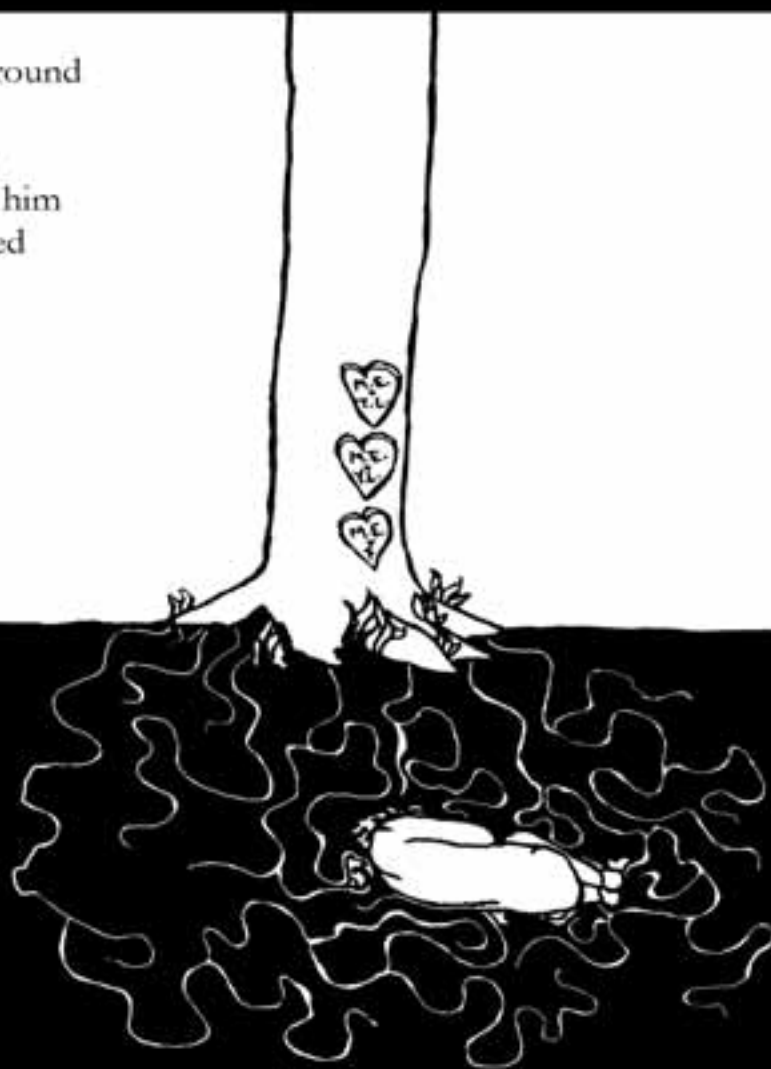
So the boy nestled down in his favorite spot...

And the tree was happy.



The End

and the tree parted the ground
with her roots. The tree
tenderly brought the boy
underground, blanketing him
with soft earth and cradled
him as he slept.



And the tree
and the boy were
happy.

The End

