



## A Tree Standing on the Hill

Summer. The sky is bright blue with clouds and green grass on the hill, and the water is clean and flowing.

Once **a tree stood alone on a hill** by the river. Through the long days, its leaves fluttered in the soft summer breeze.

But then the days grew shorter and the nights longer. The winds became cold, and the tree began to change.

Autumn came. The leaves of the tree turned gold, orange, and red. Squirrels hurried to store nuts and acorns.

Excerpt from *Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art* by Thomas Locker.

Mother and sons set out together on their daily mid-morning walk on a recent autumn day after their Bible lesson. There was some discussion about the weather as there was a new but familiar briskness in the air. Suddenly, it felt like Autumn. They would need their jackets. The youngest determined he would ride his bike to keep up with the others, while the middle child decided it felt "too cold to ride his bike" and preferred to walk. All settled, off they went.

Up the hill and at the end of the cul-de-sac, there is a house with a beautiful maple tree in the front yard. The leaves were mostly green, but a few had turned color—red and yellow; they noticed the leaves had started to change. The middle boy exclaimed, "Look mama! That looks like the tree that's 'standing on the hill.' Its leaves are beginning to change!" He had made a vital connection. Charlotte Mason noted this as the Science of Relations. And he had done so without his mother's prodding or coaxing but through the idea his mind had captured from his lesson book. It gave him joy. He was excited—excited by that connection. The mother wondered, 'would he have noticed or been so excited if they hadn't read the story?'

There is a great sense of accomplishment in the learning of worthy things and noble ideas. The mother shared, "For a child to read about something new and inspiring in a book and then see it in real life—not just someone's painting or photo of a tree—but something imagined encountered in life is a joy. It is real. There is a mind-to-mind connection with the author, a person. Living books open the world to us. What life is there in *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* for instance?"

God opens the world to us through living books. If we're actively engaged in the world God has given us, we can experience the things we read about when we're out in the world and go about our life. We must also care. The world is opened to us through a book. It makes life richer."

One person's love for a 'sky tree' has transcended time and deposited a lasting impression on the heart and mind of a little boy. And Love has made its way!

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Art by an Ambleside Student