



THE HONEY BEE TREE

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In the midst of those heart-chilling days in slow February, when joy is foreign and happiness is a vacation, I reflect on my journeys to the honey bee tree. When I wasn't a prisoner to a wheelchair and could venture the world beyond my dull, colorless window, I would relish the opportunities the world offered. I'd travel through the local white oak grove, stroll over the small, quaint bridge amid the fragrance of crisp pine cones to roam through the infinite, sunny fields of wavy, ankle-tickling grass. On a far, flat field of golden yellow wheat stood a grand maple tree with leaves of intense, fiery red and roots that dug deep into the ground and surfaced like a prairie dog. This was place was paradise. It was mine.

I'd often sit under the low-bending branches, which protected me like a parent protects a child from the scorching, Georgia sun. Stretching out against the bed of smooth wood, I listened to the hum of honey bees, soothing as a lullaby. Bees floated like clouds, taking their time waltzing around the trees.

The bees and I have a treaty of peace, for we are equally native to the tree. As they sing their song, I rest, while a cool breeze carries the sweet smell of untamed dandelions and violets, springing up in the long grass.

Completing their mission, the bees pilot themselves to each wildflower, collecting nectar, and transport their cargo load to the grand hive situated high in the tree and camouflaged with leaves. Here, I am happy.

My eyes open to see a simple bed, with a plain, white pillow, an old table with harsh scars from the years, and a bleak, gray rug. With a shaky hand, I swipe a tear away and vow I will soon return to the tree, again and again. and forever.

