

# What Trees Teach Us About Community

Community of Care, June 23, 2021

**A tree can be only as strong  
as the forest that surrounds it.**



“Sacred writings are bound in two volumes  
--- that of creation and that of Holy Scriptures”

Thomas Aquinas

*The first act of divine revelation, the Bible of nature, was written at least 13.8 billion years ago.*

“A religion is not the church (one) goes to, but the cosmos (one) lives in.”

G.K. Chesterton



“Ever since God created the world, God’s everlasting power and deity --- however invisible --- have been there for the mind to see in the things that God has made.”

St. Paul’s letter to the Romans

“I think what Paul means here is that whatever we need to know about God can be found in nature. Nature itself is the primary Bible. The world is the locus of the sacred and provides all the metaphors that the soul needs for its growth.”

Richard Rohr

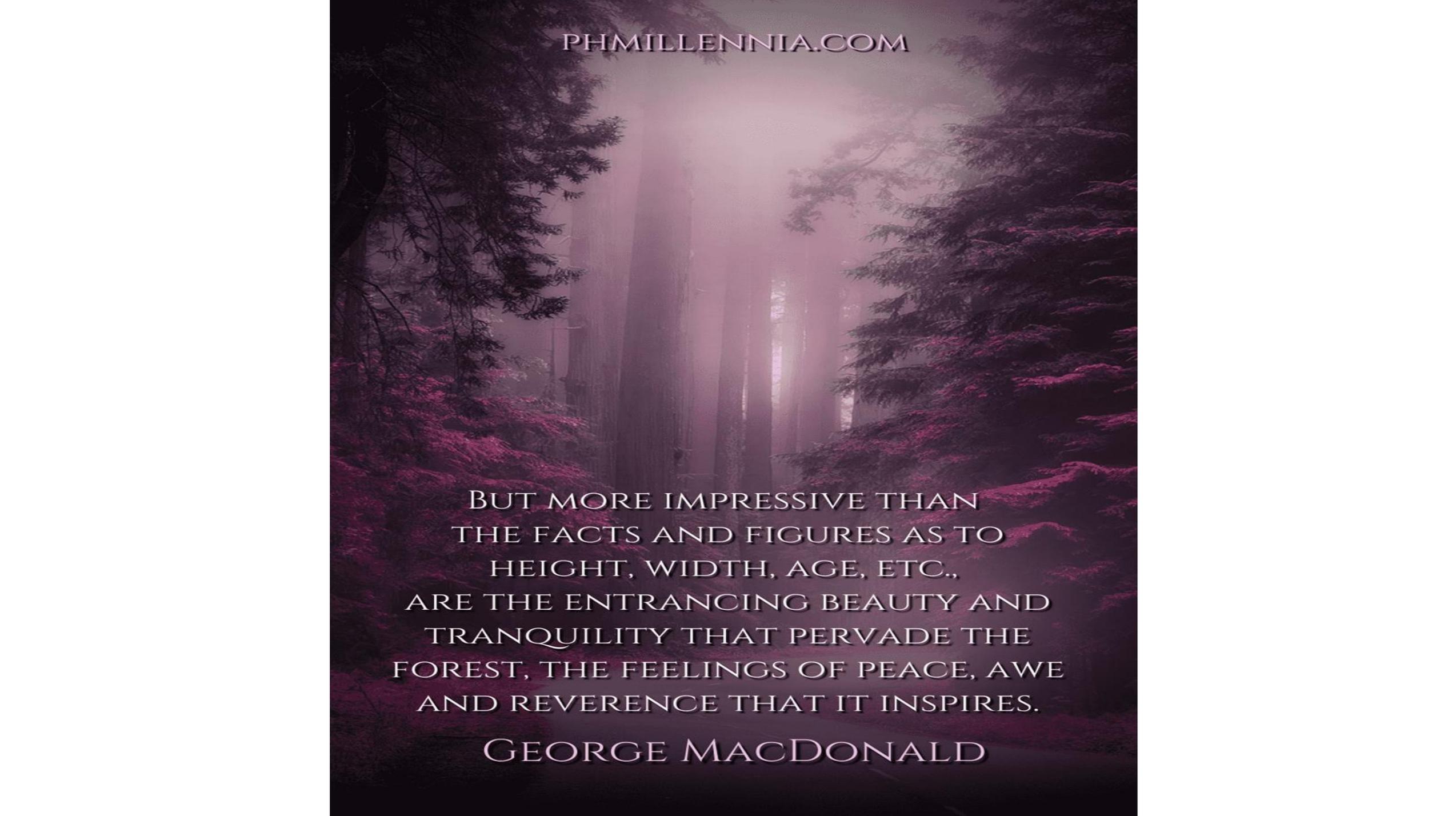


“Words gave us something to argue about, I guess. Nature can only be respected, enjoyed, and looked at with admiration and awe. Don’t dare put the second Bible in the hands of people who have not sat lovingly at the feet of the first Bible. They will invariably manipulate, mangle, and murder the written text.”

Richard Rohr



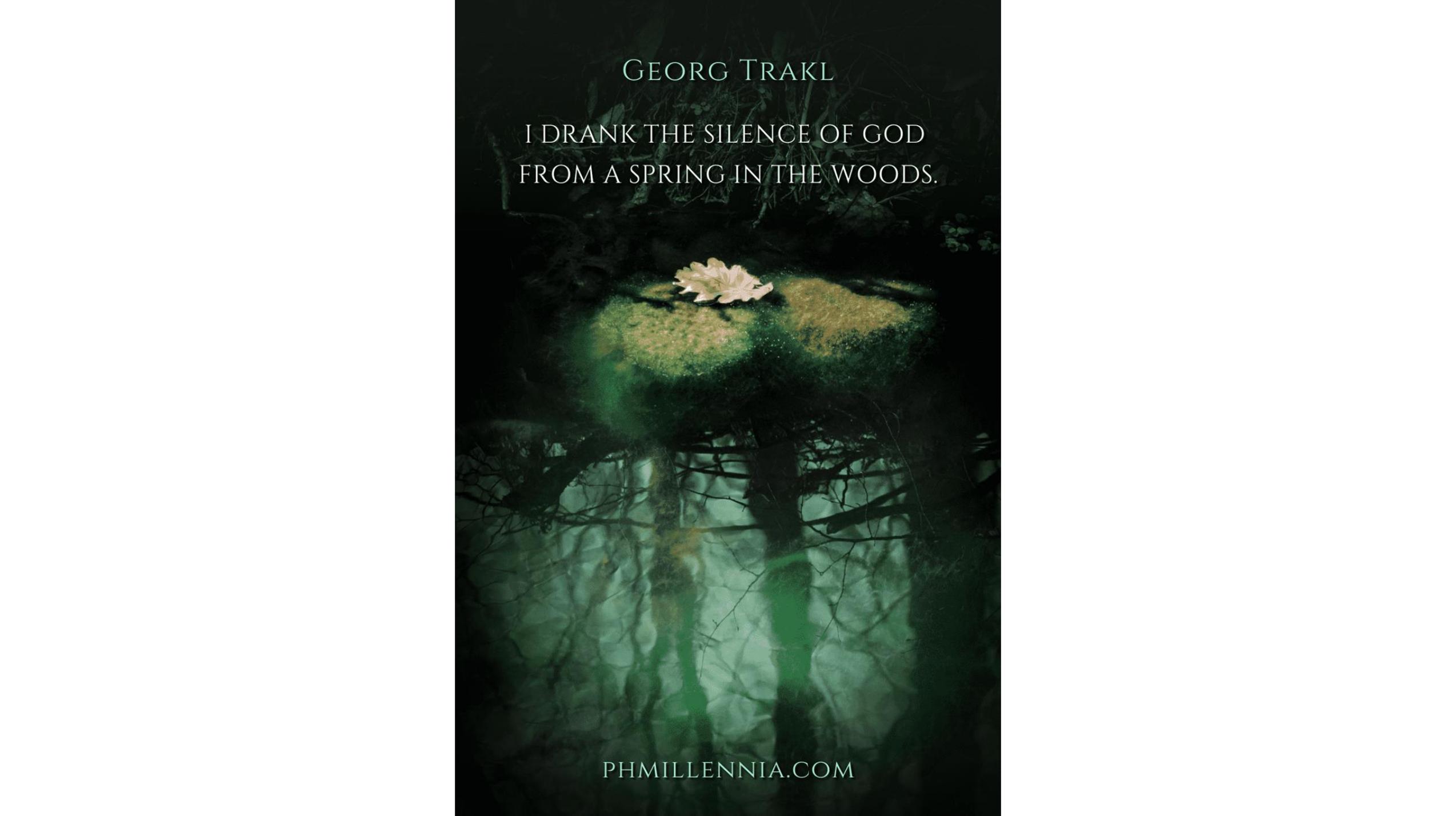




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BUT MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN  
THE FACTS AND FIGURES AS TO  
HEIGHT, WIDTH, AGE, ETC.,  
ARE THE ENTRANCING BEAUTY AND  
TRANQUILITY THAT PERVADE THE  
FOREST, THE FEELINGS OF PEACE, AWE  
AND REVERENCE THAT IT INSPIRES.

GEORGE MACDONALD

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a forest floor. In the center, a single, light-colored leaf lies on a patch of moss. The scene is reflected in a pool of water below, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

GEORG TRAKL

I DRANK THE SILENCE OF GOD  
FROM A SPRING IN THE WOODS.

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I understood at a very  
early age that in nature,  
I felt everything I should  
feel in church but never did.  
Walking in the woods,  
I felt in touch with the  
universe and with the  
spirit of the universe.

ALICE WALKER



In the woods we return  
to reason and faith.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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# When I am Among the Trees by Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,  
They give off hints of gladness.  
I would say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their  
leaves  
and call out, “Stay awhile.”  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, “It’s simple,”  
they say,  
“and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go  
easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine.”

# How Trees talk to each other – Suzanne Simard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBgIAxYs>



## **"Veni Creator Spiritus"**

<https://youtu.be/AEavhAH2z0g>

This music video was created by West Vancouver United Church.

They asked the congregation to create short clips of how they saw God's spirit moving around them. (suggested by Iris Horton)

## Blessing

(Sarah Chapman shared this at the recent ESG Town Hall Meeting)

May you feel grounded in the wisdom of those who have gone before you, mentored you and loved you.

May you notice all the incredible gifts that ESG has grown, from standing up for what we believe in, and leaning into our truth and call. And may you take a moment to just bask in the beauty of the ways God has turned the soil here in this time and this place.

And may you take a moment to lean into the call for what is next and to find the places of the new bloom or the new sprout that is just emerging.

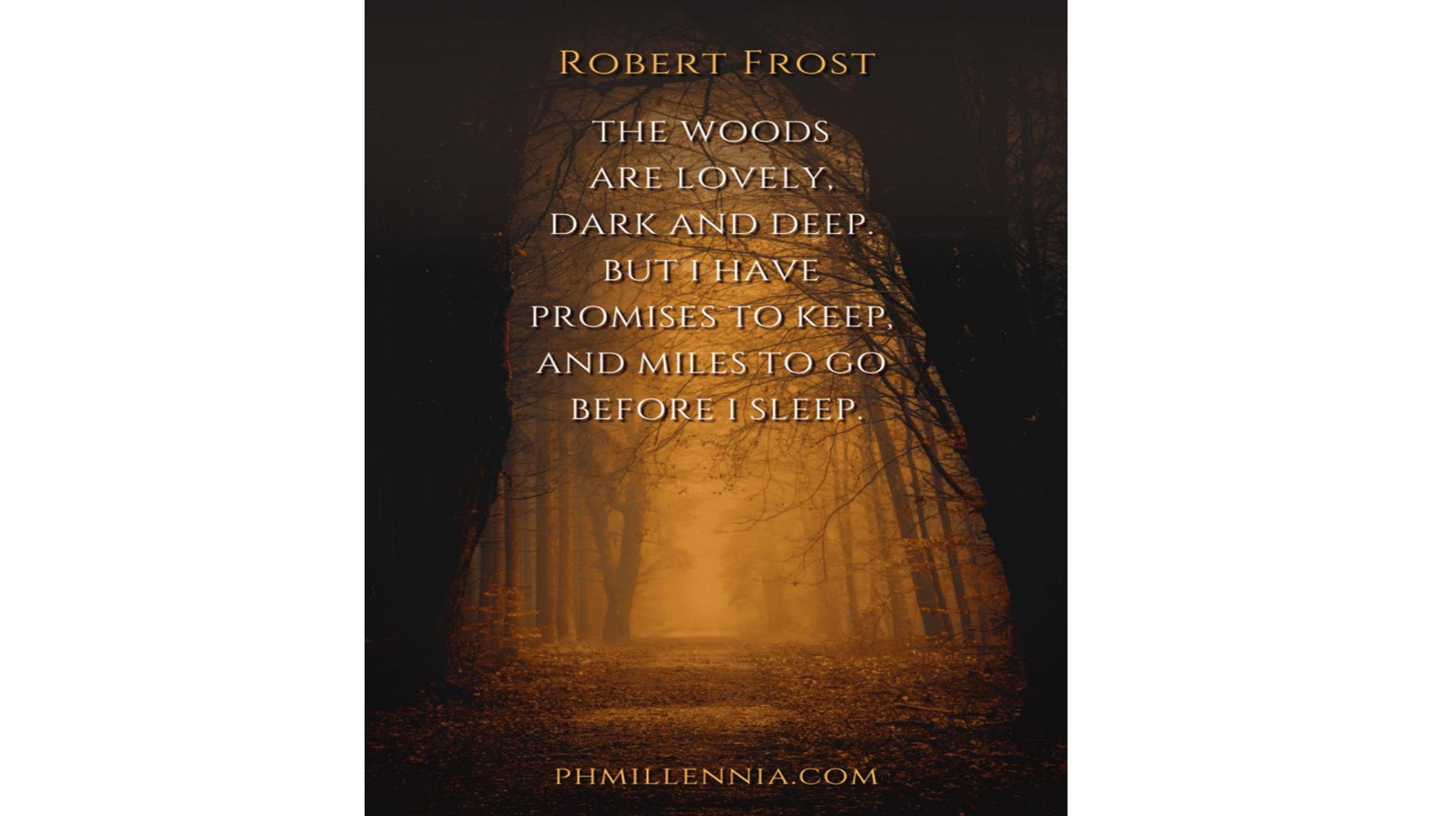
And may you take a moment to note that as you move forward, God moves with you.

Amen.



## Our Circle of Prayer

- This is our opportunity to join together in prayer.
- You're invited to voice your prayer in the circle.
- Or, if you choose, to silently submit your prayerful thoughts.

A photograph of a forest path, likely in autumn, with a large tree trunk in the foreground and a misty background. The text is overlaid on the image.

ROBERT FROST

THE WOODS  
ARE LOVELY,  
DARK AND DEEP.  
BUT I HAVE  
PROMISES TO KEEP,  
AND MILES TO GO  
BEFORE I SLEEP.

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