



## Rededication

*a poem for Tu BiShvat*

Around the midpoint of the globe, banana palms rustle in the humid air, while further north (or south) the gnarled branches of live oak bend low across the centuries. Sugar maples, linden trees stand stately, stretching skyward. Across the tundra, dwarf birch hunker down. Without the olive tree, the *ner tamid* which burned once in Jerusalem, reminder of God's light, could not be lit. Without the wild fig and plum what sweetness would our forebears not have known? Even in war, the Torah says, fruit trees are sacred: our battles are not theirs to fight, our job protection, never sword or flame. Do the trees know they live enmeshed with us, the air we breathe enriched as they breathe out? Do redwoods mourn the bite of angry saws when human greed causes us to forget the earth's not ours to keep? The full moon shines and paints its liquid silver on every leaf and branch. And we, who know that winter's fallow time — even when bitter cold — conceals the rise of sap, upsurge of energy? Let us rededicate ourselves. The trees await the work we need to do. The temple of the earth besmirched by human hands provides our task, to clean and set to rights each holy grove. And then each elm and almond, date, magnolia, laurel tree — each curry, camphor, willow, oil palm — will praise the One with every shiver of their branches as we aspire to offer praise with every breath.

*Rabbi Rachel Barenblat*