

Favorite poems

by [Paul Willis](#) in the [October 19, 2004](#) issue

Jane Hirshfield has made her home in northern California for almost 30 years--plenty of time for a redwood tree to reach for her open window. I like this short poem for the very calmness attributed to the tree itself--and for the wisdom within that calm. The poem has the quality of parable, yet it oddly inverts and recombines familiar parables that we know. It is as if the foolish person builds her house, not on the sand, but right next to the mustard seed. Except she isn't so foolish after all--though she will have to make a choice. Finally, perhaps, it is the calm and relentless choosing of the tree--this vegetable version of the hound of heaven--that matters most.

[Tree](#), by Jane Hirschfield