

Dearest Willow,

I found myself thinking about you earlier today.
I recalled how I would take turns swinging off your limbs.
You must have been so much older and stronger than us.

I never wondered it then, but I am wondering now, were we hurting you?
I don't recall you making noises as we twisted, climbed and gossiped beneath your branches,
But perhaps I wasn't listening, or hear you over our chatter and laughter.
I can't help but think that the stress we induced forced you to grow bigger and faster
than intended.

Do you remember who first strung you up with rope?
Did the rope burn at the touch or when our weight would shift?
Do you still hold the trauma or scars of our actions today?
Do I owe you an apology, perhaps not for then, because I didn't know better,
but for the fact that I write to you on paper and with a pencil in hand?
It pains me to think that you gave me so much joy and did not receive
anything in return.

Yes, I would rub you gently during experimentations with mark making,
but that was not for you.
Yes, I would hug you tightly while having a good cry, but that was not for you.
Yes, I would keep you company and gently stroke your strands of chartreuse leaves during a
rain, but that was not for you.
Yes, I would make myself thin and lean up against you while playing hide and seek, but that
was not for you.

Now older, stronger and wiser, is there anything I can do for you now?
Is there something that you need or others I should call?
And if they do not answer...?
I will speculate on your answers until morn.

With gratitude and admiration, Jill