

The Hugging Tree



A Story About Resilience

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illustrated by
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O n a bleak and lonely rock
by a vast and mighty sea
grew a lonely little tree
where no tree should ever be.

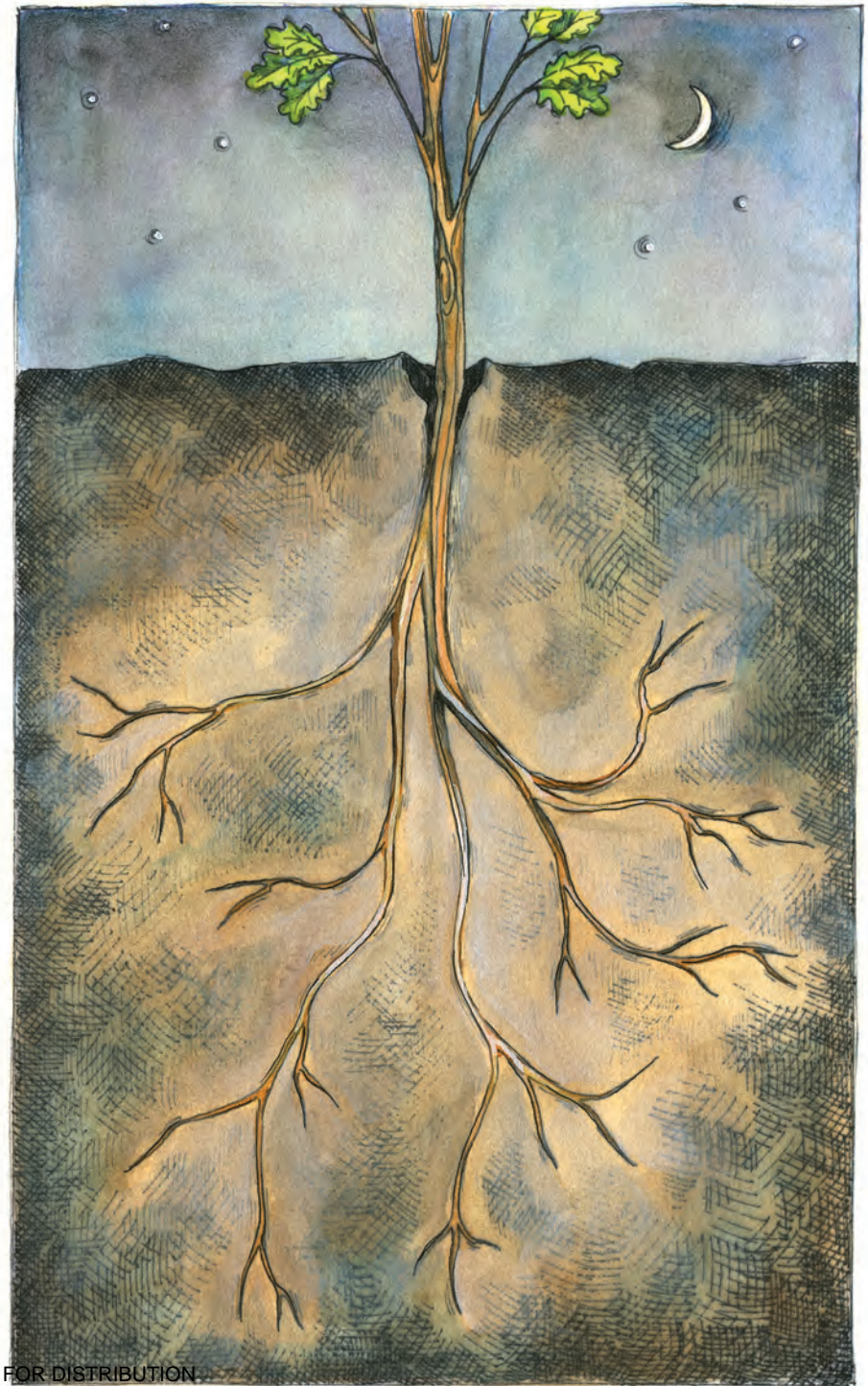
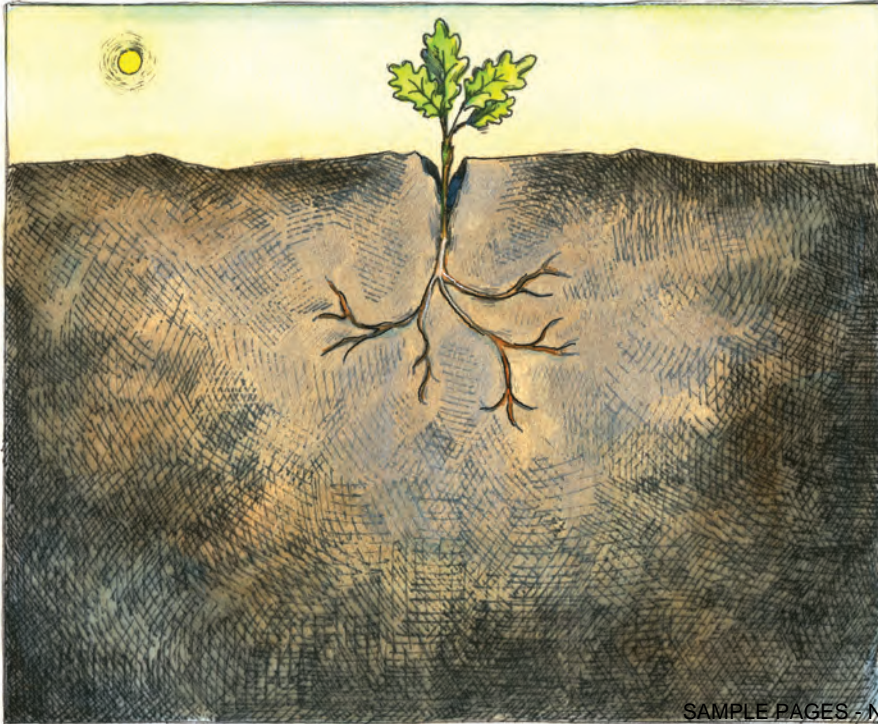
How she got there no one knew.
She sprouted stems and little leaves,
as any tiny seed will do.

“There’s hardly any dirt for me.
No forest breeze, no birds, no bees.
But I will do the best I can
to make this rock my home.”



Her tiny roots pushed night and day,
and bit by bit the rock gave way.
A smidge, an inch, a foot, then two.
She grew and grew and grew and grew.

The ocean hugged the rocky shore.
"I like you near me, little tree.
Let's keep each other company."

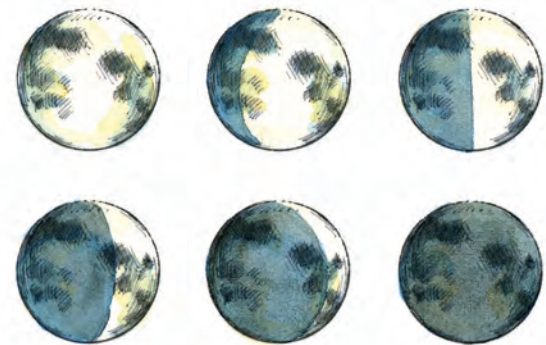




Soft gold sunbeams
kissed her crown,
warm as honey pouring down.

At night she raised her branches high
to greet the moon up in the sky.

“I wax and wane,
I ebb and flow.
I cycle through from full to thin.
And when I’m done,
I start again.
That’s how life is, you know.”





One summer noon a pair of loons
landed on her canopy.

"A pretty tree, a sparkling sea.
Shall we make this place our home
and raise our baby chicks right here?"

The little tree warmed up with pride.
She spread her branches high and wide.
"I'll be your home," she replied.
"And can you tell me if you've seen
the forest where my family grew?"

"We've built our nest in trees like you
quite far from here, and so you blew
many nights and many days.
You flew on wind just like we do!"



The Hugging Tree

The Hugging Tree tells the story of a little tree growing all alone on a cliff, by a vast and mighty sea. Through thundering storms and the cold of winter, the tree holds fast. Sustained by the natural world and the kindness and compassion of one little boy, eventually the tree grows until it can hold and shelter others.

The resilience of the Hugging Tree calls to mind the potential in all of us: to thrive, despite times of struggle and difficulty. To nurture the little spark of hope and resolve. To dream and to grow, just where we are.



A Note to Parents and Caregivers by Elizabeth McCallum, PhD, provides more information about resilience, and guidelines for building resilience in children.

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