

Tree-Wise Sayings

~ arboreal aphorisms for SATB chorus a cappella ~

Music by Christopher J. Hoh

Sayings from Lucy Larcom,
Ralph Waldo Emerson,
and Chinese Proverbs



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Tree-Wise Sayings

He who plants a tree plants a hope.

Lucy Larcom

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

One generation plants the trees, another gets the shade.

Chinese Proverb

Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come.

Chinese Proverb

This piece was written as a gift for my dear friend Dan Elmer, a tree and garden enthusiast and an accomplished singer and organist. It is built of four simple motifs introduced in turn by the four sections of the chorus. The exposition starts, like a tree, simply from below (basses) and finishes high in the branches where songbirds are found (sopranos). As the piece develops, the sections trade off the motifs. Toward the end, the first motif returns more strongly in the lower voices, perhaps like roots. (Also like a cantus firmus in augmentation in the pedal, a time-honored technique for organ music.) Finally, as the music becomes more elaborate — think of new branches reaching out and birds spreading their wings — the text focuses on two core concepts: the planting of hope and the coming of birds.

I must acknowledge the National Wildlife Foundation. It was their website where I found these aphorisms, on t-shirts for sale! After finishing the piece in a hurry by Christmas, I looked up Lucy Larcom, the remarkable 19th-century American poet, only to discover she had actually written, "He who plants a tree plants a hope." Although a simple musical revision could accommodate her original rhythm, I concluded the NWF's adaptation works better here.

For Daniel I. Elmer

Tree-Wise Sayings

Christopher J. Hoh

Lucy Larcom,
Ralph Waldo Emerson,
and Chinese Proverbs

Steady and smooth

Bass *mf* He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

Rehs'l. Steady and smooth ($\text{♩} = 44$)

Acc.

6

hope. He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

11

Tenors: *mf*

The cre - a - tion of a thou - sand for -

mp

tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants hope.

16

ests is in one — a - corn. — The cre - a - tion

He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

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of a thou - sand for - ests is in one a - corn. —
tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

Altos: *mf*

One gen - er - a - tion plants the trees, an -
mp
— The cre - a - tion of a thou - sand for -
hope. He who plants a tree plants hope.

oth - er gets the shade. One gen - er - a - tion
ests is in one a - corn. The cre - a - tion
He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

plants the trees, another gets the shade of a thousand forests is in one acorn. tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

36 Sopranos: *mf*

Keep a green tree in your heart and permit One generation plants the trees, another. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn. He who plants a tree plants hope.

haps a sing-ing bird will come. Keep a green tree
oth-er gets the shade. One gen-er-a-tion
ests is in one a-corn. The cre-a-tion
He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

in your heart and per-haps a sing-ing bird will come.
plants the trees, an-oth-er gets the shade.
of a thou-sand for-ests is in one a-corn.
tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

mp

He who plants a tree plants hope.

The cre - a - tion of a thou - sand for -

Keep a green tree in your heart and per -

hope.

He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

ests is in one a - corn. The cre - a - tion

haps a sing - ing bird will come. Keep a green tree

tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants
of a thou - sand for - ests is in one a - corn.
in your heart and per - haps a sing - ing bird will come.

hope. The cre - a - tion of a thou - sand for -
He who plants a tree plants hope.
One gen - er - a - tion plants the trees, an -
Keep a green tree in your heart and per -

ests is in one a - corn. The cre - a - tion
 He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a
 oth - er gets the shade. One gen - er - a - tion
 haps a sing - ing bird will come. Keep a green tree

of a thou - sand for - ests is in one a - corn.
 tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants hope.
 plants the trees, an - oth - er gets the shade.
 in your heart and per-haps a sing - ing bird will come.

One gen - er - a - tion plants the trees, an-
 Keep a green tree in your heart and per-
 He who plants a tree plants hope.
 The cre - a - tion of a thou - sand for -

oth - er gets the shade. One gen - er - a - tion
 haps a sing - ing bird will come. Keep a green tree
 He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a
 ests is in one a - corn. The cre - a - tion

* Sopranos who need to may drop down to the alto line until meas. 84.

plants the trees, another gets the shade.
 in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come.
 tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants
 of a thousand forests is in one acorn.

Keep a green tree in your heart and permit
 One generation to plant the trees, another
 generation to plant the trees, another
 generation to plant the trees.
 He who plants a tree plants hope.

haps a sing-ing bird will come. Keep a green tree.

oth-er gets the shade. *f* He who plants a

He who plants a tree plants hope. One gen-er-a-tion

He who plants a tree plants hope. He who plants a

in your heart and per-haps a sing-ing bird will

tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

plants the trees, an-oth-er gets the shade.

tree plants hope. He who plants a tree plants

come. ——— Keep a green — tree — in — your
 hope. — One gen - er - a - tion plants the trees (who
 — He who plants a tree
 hope. He who plants a tree

100 *div.*
 heart and per - haps a sing - ing bird, ——— a
 plants — plants hope) — an - oth - er — gets the shade. ——— Who
 plants hope. ——— He who — plants — a *cresc.*
 plants hope. ——— He who plants a *cresc.*

bird will come, a sing - ing
 plants plants hope; a sing - ing
 tree, who plants a tree plants hope; who plants
 tree plants hope; who plants

bird will come.
 bird will come.
 a tree plants hope.
 a tree plants hope.