

The Gathering Tree

Julie Smith

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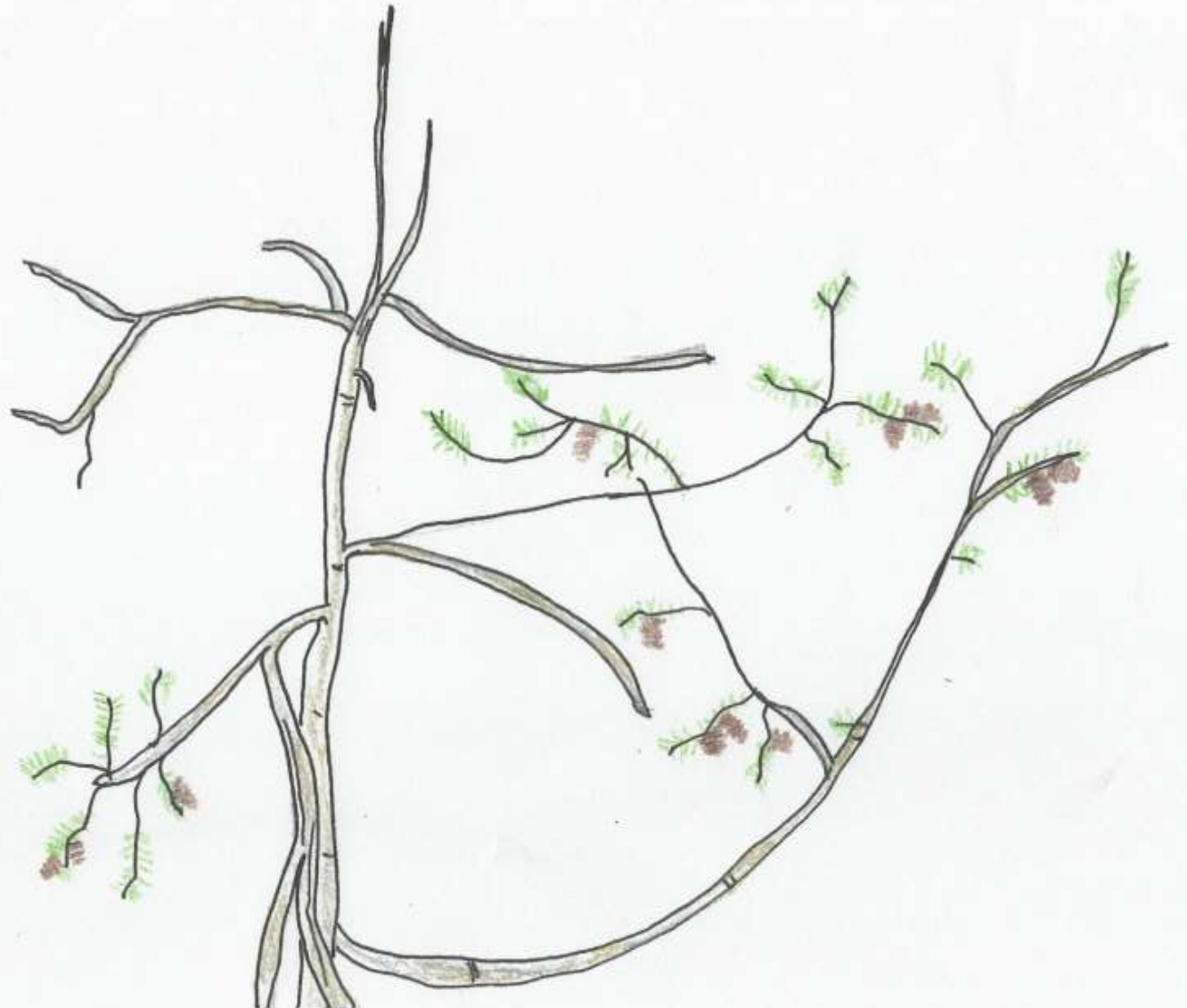
A tall, mature spruce

Planted by an orchardist's family
80 years ago.

Tended with water,

Tended with time.

The tree grows tall,
Reaching for the sky.



The years and decades pass.
Storms, wind, rain, ice, drought,
sun and fires are marked by the
tree.
It survives.

Cones produced, fall to the
ground.

Forgotten.

Time passes.



The gathering tree witnesses change
In the neighborhood.

The orchard dies and is uprooted.
Families come and go.
Fire comes to the neighborhood,
A family loses their home and rebuilds.
With their eyes and hearts looking
Towards the West.
Towards the Gathering Tree.
Towards the Enchantments.

The tree stands tall, stalwart, and strong.



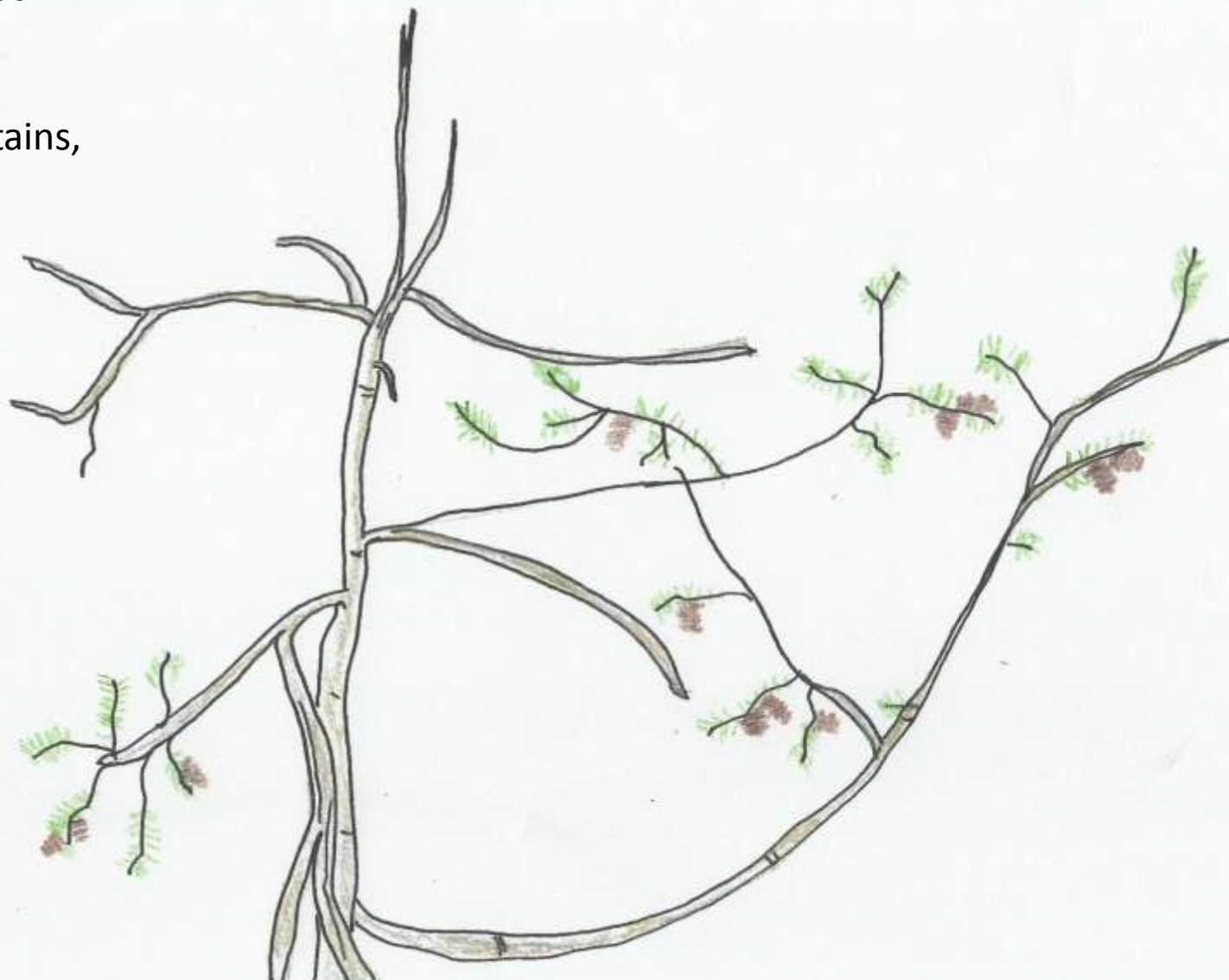
A new family comes to the neighborhood.
They too have seen fire...

They look towards the West, the mountains,
And notice the tree.

At first the tree seems tall, irregular,
With a tattered crown.
Weathered.
Surviving.

The tree reminds them of themselves.
Tall.
Irregular.
Tattered.
Weathered.
Surviving.

They notice the gifts of the tree.
Gathering, shelter, rest, cover, shade.



A living community gathers
Within and on the tree.

Gathering, resting, taking cover.

All are welcome
At the Gathering Tree.



The days start with Starlings in groups,
Shimmering with light from the East
Catching their wings like a thousand stars.

They come and go.
Busy in Community.



European Starling

Eurasian Collared-Doves are next.

Coo, coo, coooooo.

Coo, coo, coooooo.



EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE

The Steller's Jays
And their allies
Arrive next.

The Starlings erupt together
In flight upon their arrival.



Steller's Jay

Crows, plotting a murder,
Whisper amongst themselves..

Then they leave in unison.

Caa, caa, caaaaa.
Caa, caa, caaaaa.



American Crow

Black-billed Magpies
Squawk and talk.

Alerting others of changes
In the wind, the sun, and in
Sound.



Black-billed Magpie

A Northern Flicker
Undulates in flight
With quick glimpses of his
Rust colored tail.

Then he rests, and becomes still.

He has elegant markings.
A black mantle.
A spotted chest.
And firm, sharp eyes.

Mid-morning brings quietness.
The neighborhood rests.



Northern Flicker

Groups of American Robins
Then arrive.
Busy,
Chirping,
Moving about.

Resting at times in the boughs
Of the Gathering Tree.



American Robin

20-30 Finches pass by.

Colors flash.....

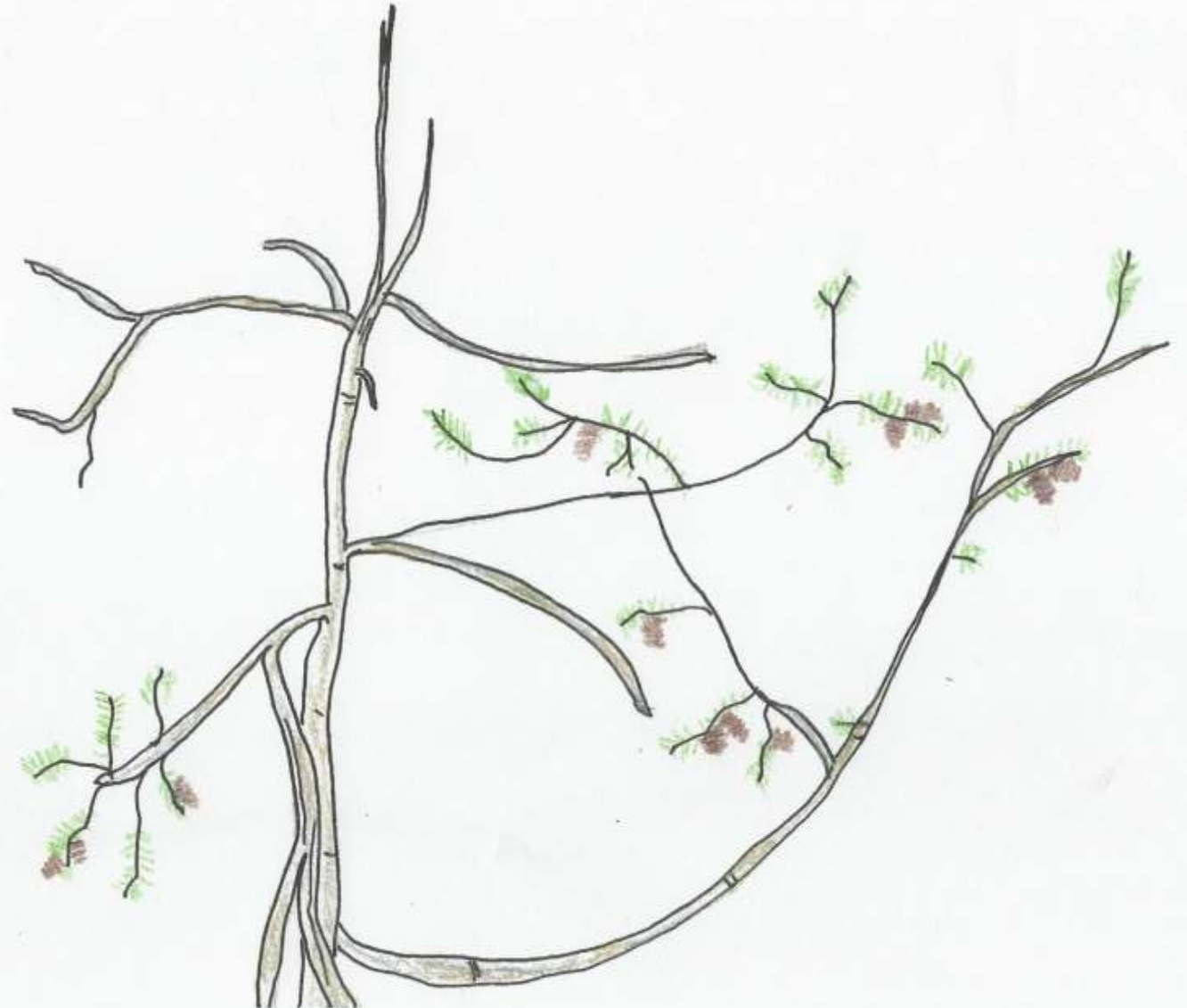
Yellow, grey brown, pink, and red.

Juncos, chickadees, and sparrows.

Swallows fly high overhead,

Gathering insects,

And riding the warm rising air.



Then immediate silence...
Not a sound.

A Cooper's Hawk sits quietly on the upper branches
Of the Gathering Tree.
When did he arrive?
He watches patiently.



Cooper's Hawk

Our perennial friend,
The Red-Tailed Hawk.

Raising their brood nearby.

Uses the tree to rest.

To watch.

To wait.



Red Tailed Hawk

The following day brings a different hawk.
Small in size.
With square tail feathers.
Flying quickly through branches.
Downward.

An immediate dispersal of all around...

Sharp-shinned is this predator.



Sharp Shinned Hawk

The afternoon sun
Warms the branches
Of the Gathering Tree once more.

An American Kestrel basks in the warmth.
Then, in 15-20 minutes is gone.

Did you see him?



AMERICAN KESTREL

A neighbor calls..”Did you see the new bird in town??”
“Yes, indeed...we’ve been watching!”

She’s big, elegant, beautiful.
With sharp eyes, a strong curved beak.
A long tail and long wings.
Her distinctive facial markings...mask-like.

Not a hawk,
Not an owl,
Not an Osprey.

She’s a Northern Harrier,
Seen only for several days.
Using the crown of the tree as a perch.

Then she’s gone just as quickly.



Northern Harrier

At night comes the sound of darkness.

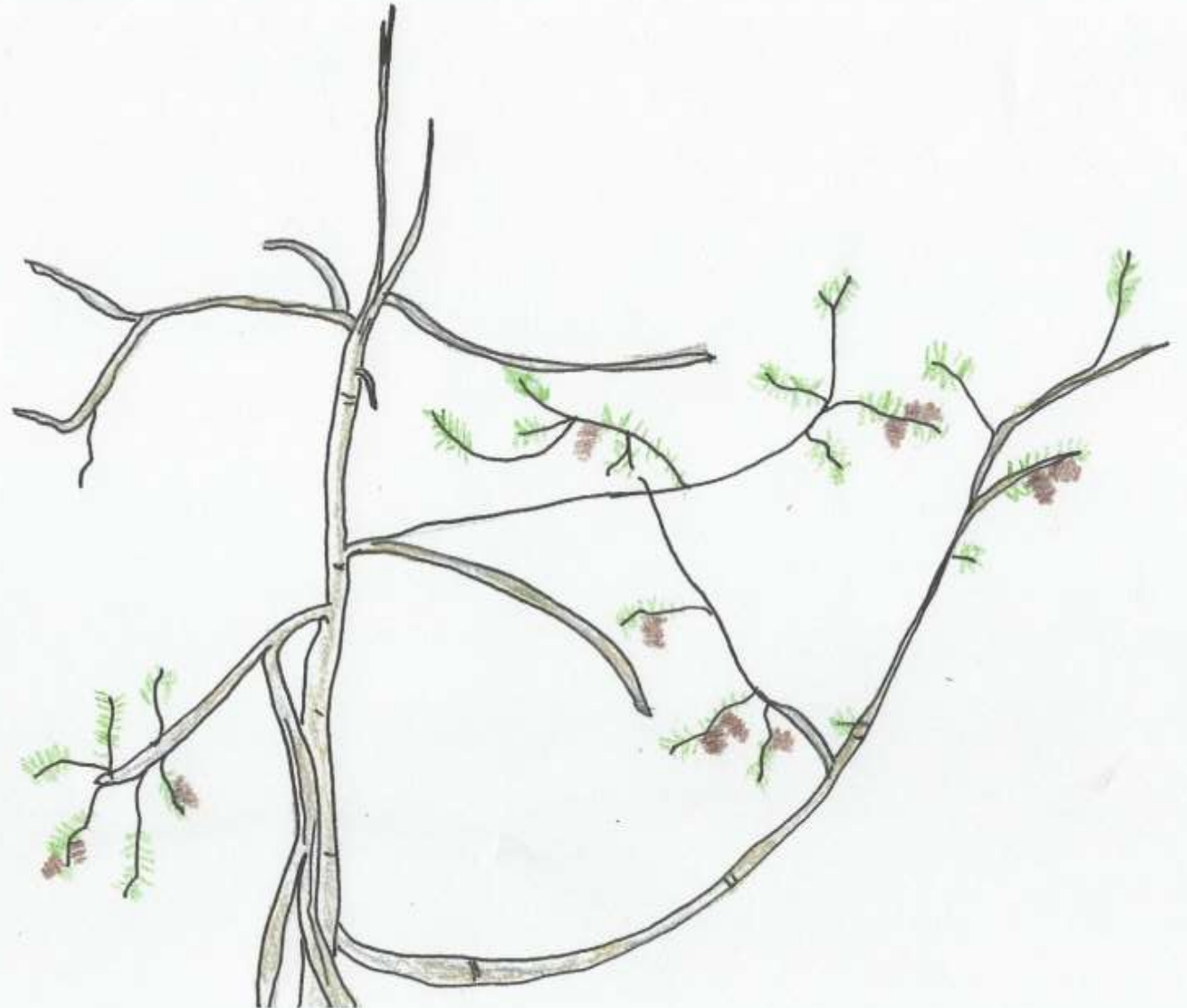
An owl is heard.

Hoo, hoo.....hooooo.

Hoo, hoo.....hooooo.

Then stillness.

Did you hear/



The family gathers
Each morning and each evening.

The Gathering Tree is now part of them.
The Gathering Tree is a Giving Tree.
A Sanctuary.

Giving shelter, perch, shade, community, peace.

Tall.
Tattered.
Irregular.
Weathered...
Surviving.

Nature is Place.
Place is community.
All are welcome here.

