

## *This iBelieve Essays*

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### **That Tree Had Hopes and Dreams**

**By Tsedale Forbes**

I believe in a little girl's love for a tree.

I used to be the most clueless, yet curious child ever. I believed so many things about the world before I even knew what the word “world” was. I was the child that loved the swings at the park, but was too afraid to go too high. While all the other kids swung high and kissed the sky, I was afraid I'd get sucked into it, being lost forever and never seeing my mommy again.

It wasn't until my mommy and I finally moved out of my grandpa's house that I began to become more in touch with the part of me that is somewhat in sync with nature. But we only moved up the block from where I originally lived, into a two-bedroom apartment with a backyard and beautiful trees. The backyard had lots of vegetation, but most of it was either dead or untamed.

The kids from the building next door would come over to play in my backyard. I'd let them in and we'd play for hours. Going through all four of the buildings, gathering all the kids from the building to play. Even the super's daughter. We'd run around, play hide and seek, and climb this one tree that was low enough for all of us to reach.

I was so afraid to climb the tree, but all the kids were encouraging me to do it and cheering me on. Once I finally did it, I felt so empowered like I owned the tree, and everything else. The tree became a big part of my everyday life.

I'd take a bag of snacks and a water bottle, tie it to a rope that was already knotted onto the tree, and read. I'd be out there for hours on end, just reading away in that tree. My mommy would come looking for me because I'd lose track of time. I admired the simplicity, company and comfort of the tree. It became my safe haven.

There was a day where I had been down on 42nd street with my family, to see if I'd qualify to participate in a beauty pageant. I had dressed to impress the judges. A long shirt with a skirt underneath, making it appear like a dress. We had found out the week of pageant training was the same week I'd be out of the country visiting family. It was decided I wouldn't participate, and the second we came home (skirt and all) I climbed right into that tree. I always relied on the tree being there for me. All that changed after Thanksgiving one year.

We'd been driven home from Middletown, upstate. I noticed the back yard looked different. It looked naked. Like something was missing. The moment I realized why it had looked different,

it was like my heart stopped. A piece of me was gone. Chopped away like nothing, like it didn't even matter. Without any warning or consultation. Gone.

I always told myself that that tree deserved better. It had goals and possibly wanted to live a long, prosperous life providing nutrients for the grass and doing what trees do. I bet it enjoyed my company and all the attention I gave it. I wish I could've said goodbye. I wish it had a say in what happened to it. I wish I had a chance to tell it I loved it, how much I appreciated it, and how much it meant to me. I promise you, just like you and me, that tree had hopes and dreams.