



Planting Twin Trees, by Robin Wall Kimmerer

There was a custom in the mid-eighteen hundreds of planting twin trees to celebrate a marriage and the starting of a home. The stance of these two, just ten feet apart, recalls a couple standing together on the porch steps, holding hands. The reach of their shade links the front porch with the barn across the road, creating a shady path of back and forth for that young family.

I realize that those first homesteaders were not the beneficiaries of that shade, at least not as a young couple. They must have meant for their people to stay here. Surely those two were sleeping up on Cemetery Road long before the shade arched across the road. I am living today in the shady future they imagined, drinking sap from trees planted with their wedding vows. They could not have imagined me, many generations later, and yet I live in the gift of their care. Could they have imagined that when my daughter Linden was married, she would choose leaves of maple sugar for the wedding giveaway?

Such a responsibility I have to these people and these trees, left to me, an unknown come to live under the guardianship of the twins, with a bond physical, emotional, and spiritual. I have no way to pay them back. Their gift to me is far greater than I have ability to reciprocate. They're so huge as to be nearly beyond my care, although I could scatter granules of fertilizer at their feet and turn the hose on them in summer drought. Perhaps all I can do is love them. All I know to do is to leave another gift, for them and for the future, those next unknowns who will live here.