

If I Were a Tree

Dar Hosta

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For millions of years life has depended on the wonderful gifts that trees provide, but how often does one reflect on the value of trees? Hosta pays homage to this important aspect of nature by highlighting its riches.

Colorful mixed media illustrations of different kinds of trees, flowers, and other living things accompany text that reads like a melodious song with a simple refrain—"Oh, how would it be if you were a tree?" In poetic language the speaker answers thoughtfully: "I would be a city tree and remind you of the whispers of leaves." A book shop, toy store, and sidewalk are shown beneath the glow of a street light.

The gem of the book rests in its final pages where facts about trees and a detailed diagram indicating the characteristics, purposes, and parts of a tree are found. Hosta's love for and knowledge of nature is apparent, making this an excellent read-aloud selection for a unit in science.

The author/illustrator earned a bachelor's in Creative Writing from the University of Missouri-Columbia and a teaching certificate in Language Arts from Cleveland State University. She has written two Teachers' Choice Award winners, *I Love the Alphabet* and *I Love the Night*, while a third book, a contemporary folktale titled *Mavis and Her Marvelous Mooncakes*, was published last year.

From food ("I would be an apple tree so that you could make a pie.") and flowers ("I would bring you a burst of blossoms in the springtime.") to shelter ("I would cradle a nest for you to come home to."), trees bless all living things with their presence. This book encourages readers ages three to six to ponder the numerous ways they'd make life better on earth if they were trees.

KAAVONIA HINTON (June 7, 2007)

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