

GLIMPSE

Out on a Limb

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As I sit down to compose this, it is thundering, raining and blowing. Limbs are down and a wonderful old tree near the Law School went down and the roots came up. I am okay so far, thanks for asking.

Here's a strange thing. Trees grow tall, because of the wind blowing through them, except when the wind knocks them over. The wind would knock over the tree except for the root system which both reaches out under ground to obtain nourishment, but also for stability.

If there were no breeze, there would be no tall trees, because there would not be any stress on the roots to reach out. They would just gain the nutrition the tree needed for its little unshakability. So stress is required for a deepening and an ultiming. (I made that word up and from now on it means higher-upping.)

Physically, we might lift weights to gain strength and then we put five pounds more on the bar, putting more stress for more body-beautifulness. In literature, the main characters are put into forms of tension and they either heroically rise or tragically collapse depending on their personal depth. Willy Lowman, the tragic salesman underwent personality pressure and "who could blame this man" as his wife stated. Harry Potter moves through pages after pages of terrifying tension and always triumphs.

Our Theology does not hold that God creates the breezes, or weights or stresses in our lives. The winds of living our humanity blow and bend and stress us and we are given something, we call grace, to hold on and hold out. Spiritual stress is how our personalities and our spirits grow deeper. We reach out for God's help, but not as if God might assist us or not. God is the Ground of our Being and the winds that blow through our branches do assist in our growing up and deep. Yes, there are definitely trees that get blown over. There are things which can tip us downside up. There are tragedies which blow us away for sure, because they cannot be

explained. Our branches reach out for life and life can hurt. We can also retreat from life's winds and frightenly just not really live.

The trees which do grow tall give shade, rest, fruit and encouragement to the wind-blown us. Each single leaf gives off freshness to the air as a consequence of the wind-stressed tree.

It is only a glimpse and a gentle passing breeze.