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Higher Up

Dennis Smith

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Higher Up*

Dennis Smith

To get up here
is quite a climb,
because the branches
on the way
are often far apart
and big around.
So big around, in fact,
that I can't grip them
but must almost
hug them up in places.
However,
bigger limbs
mean bigger trees,
and once past all the bigger limbs,
the smaller limbs feel better,
even though you're higher up.

And higher up
is better too,
because
it gives more view.

*From Dennis Smith's *Star-Counter* (Trilogy Art Publications, 1970), reprinted by permission of the author.

It's funny
how the people
all down there
don't know
that I'm up here.
That makes me feel
like I know something
they don't know——
that I'm up here, that is.

There's George McDaniel
driving through his orchard
with a trailer
full of ladders
on behind his tractor
in the orchard grass.

I wonder
if he realizes
that the neighbor boy
is in his tallest poplar?

I doubt it or he'd look.

Why, even if
he put his ladder
to the tallest apple tree
he'd be
so far below
that I'd be looking down
to watch him pick.
And all the while I think,
the wind slides
through the leaves
in rustles
and the limb
to which I cling
sways from back
to forth again.

He'd never see.

And Billy Devey's wife
just stepped outside
to cuss her kid.
She doesn't know
that I'm up here,
for if she did
she wouldn't have to worry
what her kid was doing.
I've been watching
since her kid came out
a while ago,
and even though
he looked up once or twice,
he never saw.

And Maud Beck,
Owen's widow,
on her way home
from the store,
walked past
and little dreamt
a boy clung grinning
in the poplar
by the road she walked along.

I even coughed
as she went by
and wasn't heard.

I may be
awfully high
here in my poplar tree.
Still I wonder
if there isn't someone
higher up than I am
in another poplar
looking down at me.