

The Night Life of
TREES



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Bhajju Shyam , Ram Singh Urveti , Durga Bai

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In the belief of the Gond tribe, the lives of humans and trees are closely entwined. Trees contain the cosmos; when night falls, the spirits they nurture glimmer into life.

A visual ode to trees rendered by tribal artists from India, this handcrafted edition showcases three of the finest living Gond masters. This collection of their distinctive styles is enchanting—an excellent gift for those fascinated by trees, art or folk traditions.

The Night Life of Trees Details

Date : Published June 1st 2006 by Tara Books (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9788186211922

Author : Bhajju Shyam , Ram Singh Urveti , Durga Bai

Format : Hardcover 48 pages

Genre : Art, Childrens, Picture Books, Fiction, Environment, Nature, Fantasy, Mythology, Cultural, India

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From Reader Review The Night Life of Trees for online ebook

Nannah says

Oh, wow. This book is more of an experience than a read, to be honest. It's also definitely an art/picture book. I remember adding this to my list and thinking, "ah, this'll probably be something wordy and technical, hard to understand". Oops.

Book content warnings:

eye horror (visual)

body horror (visual)

The Night Life of Trees is a collection of screen prints from three of the most celebrated artists from the Gond tribe of central India: Bhajju Shyam, Ram Singh Urveti, and Durga Bai. Each print (set on black paper) is accompanied by a tiny folk tale/myth about each tree in the print. The book is huge and stunning, and it's nothing like I've ever seen before. The tales themselves aren't very involving themselves, and would be pale on their own, so I'm very glad this isn't just a collection of tales. But with the pictures, as a whole this book is gorgeous.

Judith Huang says

What a gorgeous object! Each silk screened illustration is a work of art, evocative and mesmerizing. Stunning numbered edition that I couldn't pass up for my collection. Text is spare but full of the suggestive depth of folklore.

Nash Tysmans says

The publishing company that produced this book wasn't lying when, in a blurb, they wrote that owning one of their books offered the reader a rare chance to own something that is "unique in concept, art, design, production and - most importantly - created by hand." Buying this off my friend who had just arrived from a conference in Hawaii seemed a bit impulsive at first but after flipping through these pages, I realized that I wasn't just buying a book but one so handsomely made it could have passed for art in a gallery.

There are a total of 19 trees featured in this book. All text appears on the lower left page of every spread while on the opposite page sits dazzling images of trees in full color against what was once black pulp. The book is nearly the size of a long manila envelope. It's hardbound with a dark blue colored cover, beige text with yet another image of a tree printed on it.

This post should have come with pictures but in their absence I hope your interest gets piqued by the description anyway. But that's not the best part. The images are best appreciated alongside the texts that describe these trees in a way that mixes the mythic with the natural world creating unforgettable characters out of these individual trees.

It's all very beautiful.

Nanditha Sankar says

The Night Life of Trees is a visual delight. A testimony of the brilliant talent that lies within the Godha tribe, each page of the book, carefully crafted on handmade paper carries stellar images of trees, birds and animals. Each tree has a story behind its existence, its own set of inhabitants. Some of the trees carry the Earth on their trunks, while others grant wishes in a jiffy. The book is a collector's treasure.

Inês Beato says

Lindíssimo!!

karen says

let's be honest. with this one, you're not reading it for the articles.

the text of the book is fine - it's just spare fragments of folklore from the gond tribe of central india about trees. but the book itself, as *objet*, well, that's another matter entirely. it is a from a limited print-run, of which each book has been individually silk-screened onto thick handmade paper by this publisher: <http://www.tarabooks.com/>, and all of their books are gorgeous gorgeous gorgeous.

here:

so beautiful. love.

Nefertari says

Absolutely beautiful artwork!

Aleta says

This is one of the most gorgeous books I've ever seen. Pictures of trees by three artists of the Gond people of India are individually silk-screened onto hand-made paper. They are captioned with bits of folklore from that region of India. I can't recommend this book highly enough - the artwork is beautiful, and the tales that are told are just enough to make the work complete. Even if your reading time is limited, get hold of a copy of this book; it won't take you but a few minutes to look at the whole thing and smile.

Vivek Tejuja says

Trees are strange. Trees are comforting. Trees have histories and tales spun around them. Trees also have a life of their own which cannot be gauged by humans.

Keeping this in mind and all the tradition and myths behind trees of India, tribal artists in conjunction with Tara Books have published a beautiful limited edition hand-made book called "The Night Life of Trees" and I cannot begin to praise and admire it.

I am not the one for trees and their stories and what they are all about, but after reading this book and soaking in all the illustrations, I want to know more about them, in fact, everything about them. This book is testimony to the living masters of the Gond art form.

There are a total of 19 trees featured in this book and each one is with a story from mythology or seems to be a fairy tale or just is, which is what you will love and cherish as a reader.

The images are alongside the description and make for some beautiful viewing. Moreover, the handmade paper is to die for – quite literally. You will fall in love with it.

The trees in our country are exotically named like the Khirsali, Nagphani, Sembar and so many more after Gods, Goddesses, Serpents and also Birds and Humans.

"The Night Life of Trees" is a treat for everyone to own and keep going back to it. The art will for sure make you.

Marina Ponomaryova says

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Julia says

First of all I chose to read this particular book around early morning when it is still considered night for who can truly enjoy such a title during the day? It gives the reader time to pause to think about the world around them when they are confronted with the idea that trees need a break and that it is rightly so they do so at the time when magic is supposed to abound. This seems to be an agreed upon time for great things to happen.

Unfortunately there isn't much to be said about the writing. There were times when the reader was presented with something beautiful such as the first story about the cowherd and the calf. In that example the reader was taken into a lovely story that conveyed them into an exotic world but one that still seems reachable to even us who don't live in the Gond homeland. At other times the trees were mentioned only slightly and not even a name was given them so the reader was left needing more but without a way of getting it.

Instead the book's true magic is within the illustrations that are presented to the reader. Although not seemingly realistic to the reader in either the presentation of the actual tree, humans or animals there is still a folkloric beauty when you look at these stylized trees. The colors, their simplicity, the attempt to give the reader a chance to ponder the beauty of the importance of the tree and the presentation in which one feels like they are in a forest since of the shadow of the last tree on the page before.

All in all this was a gorgeous book although one's whose size was awkward to the convenience of the reader can be overlooked by its beauty. And I would truly recommend it to those who like mythoi/folklore, plants in general and/or are interested in art, especially as the book breaks down which of the three artists was responsible for the individual painting seen.

Jessica Pesic says

Gorgeous illustrations, moving content, a completely magical book. Though its hard to pick a favourite piece of folklore, a few that really stood out for me were; The Squirrel's Dream; Snakes and Earth; and The Tree of Twelve Horns. But the one that moved me the most by far was, The Home of the Creator.

"... The Peepul tree is so perfect, that seen against the sky, it seems to have the same shape as its own leaf. The detail is the same as the whole."

Now that is a tree I would like to see one day...

(Fun little fact: if you look at the back of your book, they write down what number copy you received. For example, I have the 1847th copy out of a total of 2000.)

Miriam says

Three Gond artists create dramatic images of trees to accompany folklore concerning trees.

Francesca Watkins&George says

According to the Gond tribe of central India, good fortune befalls those whose eyes meet a good image. Good fortune to those who are lucky enough to read this book, then. Silk-screened by hand on black, thick paper, every page of this book is an original numbered art print - and a pure delight to look at, to savour and to touch.

Trees with names as exotic and mysterious as Khirsali, Nagphani, Sembar, serpent goddesses, chameleons, birds and people, life and death... This book is a window on a world of forests and heavy rains, the perfect antidote to a dark, cold winter night, a spell cast on the reader.

Marcy says

One of the most gorgeous books I've ever seen. To start with, there are three Gond artists who have made all the fabulous illustrations in the book. Although it's a story book about Indian forest trees and what happens in relation between themselves and all the creatures that inhabit them, the beauty of the book makes it very much an adult art book as well. In sum, it's a children's book for humans of all ages.
