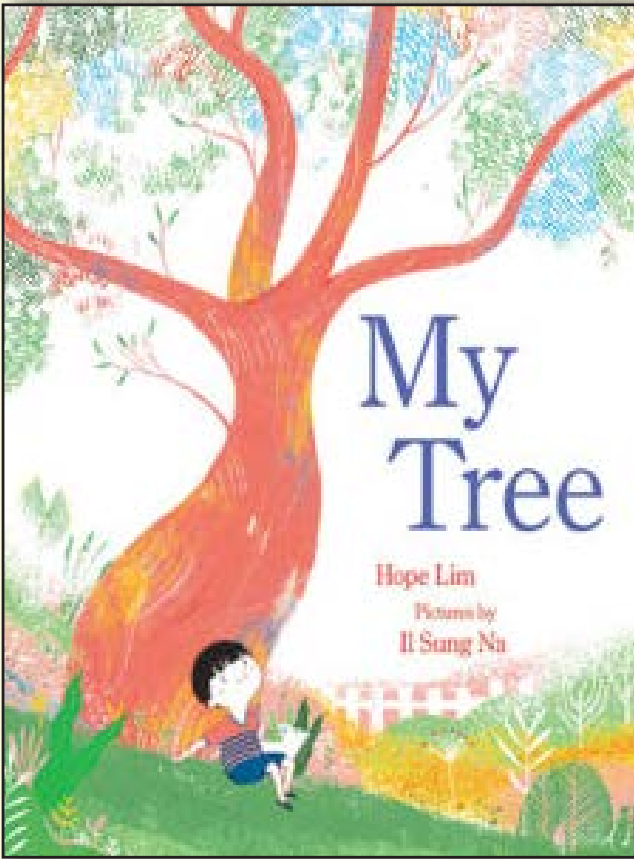


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Neal Porter Books
HC: 9780823443383 · e-book: 9780823450558

My Tree

by Hope Lim

illustrated by Il Sung Na

★“Transcending time and place, this gentle book will take root in many hearts.”

—Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

★“A reassuring homage.”

—Shelf Awareness, Starred Review

ABOUT THE BOOK

When a young boy's beloved plum tree falls in a storm, he feels like he's lost both a friend and a connection to his old home.

A young boy, recently arrived from Korea, finds a glorious plum tree in his new backyard. It reminds him of a tree his family had back home.

Whenever the boy is homesick, he knows he can take shelter in its tall branches. When a storm brings the old tree down, he and his friends have all kinds of adventures on its branches. But soon it's time to say goodbye when the remains of the tree are taken away. Before long, a new plum tree is planted, new blossoms bloom, and a new friendship takes root.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Study the art on the cover and the title page. What do you think the story is about? Who is the main character? Discuss whether the tree might also be a character in the story. Make note of the dog and the birdhouse on the title page. How might they be important to the story? Point them out as the story is read.
- Define homesickness. What is the first hint that the boy is homesick for Korea? How does Plumee help the boy deal with homesickness?
- Take a close look at the first double-page spread (the copyright page and the first page of the story). Note the adults in the illustration. What are they doing? The boy is peering out the door. What does he see? What is he thinking? Explain the significance of the name the boy gives the tree.
- How does the boy care for Plumee? Why does he need a ladder to climb the tree? What do you think the boy is spying when he is high in the tree? Describe the faces of his parents when they are looking for him. Which parent seems the most frightened by what they see?



- Text tells a story, and illustrations show a story. How do the illustrations reveal the four seasons? What does the author relate about the tree throughout the year? How many different colors and shades of a color do you see? Describe changes in Plumee throughout the year. Which season might the boy think is the most beautiful? In which season does he pick the plums?
- Study the double-page illustration of the storm. Explain how the illustrator makes the storm look scary and fierce. Note the direction the trees are falling. How do you know that the boy and his family are safe? The boy is looking out the window. What do you think is on his mind?
- Personification is a form of figurative language that gives human-like qualities to an object. Point out the personification in the following sentence: “Her roots were pulled out of the earth, worn out and sad.” Explain what the boy’s grandmother in Korea means by “An old tree knows how to lie down when it’s time.”
- Discuss how the boy continues to enjoy Plumee after the storm. Look closely at the illustrations where the boy is playing on the tree. How does the illustrator let the reader know what the boy is imagining? The neighborhood kids join in the fun. What is significant about the way they are dressed when they are on a ship? Who is the character at the top of the ship? How does their clothing change when they are forced to quit their imaginary game?
- Look closely at the four small illustrations when Plumee is being taken away. What does each picture reveal about the process of removing the tree? How does the boy’s yard look sad and empty after Plumee is gone? Explain the illustration where the boy is remembering his tree. Why is the tree a white shadow against a dark background? What words might the boy say about Plumee? How does the boy’s father help him deal with the loss of his tree?
- Note the drawings that the boy makes of Plumee. Make a connection between his drawings and the illustrations in the story. How do these illustrations contribute to the happy and hopeful ending?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Hope Lim is a children’s book author from South Korea who now lives in San Francisco with her family. She majored in English Literature and earned a Master’s degree in Conference Interpretation. *My Tree*, illustrated by Il Sung Na, is her first book published by Neal Porter Books/Holiday House.

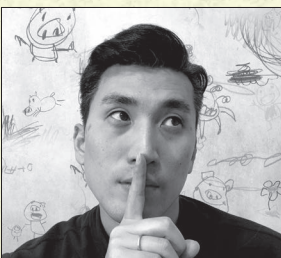


Photo credit: @WHKim

Il Sung Na, a children’s picture book artist, also grew up in Korea and now lives in Kansas City, where he teaches illustration. In 2001, he moved to London to pursue a BFA in illustration and animation at Kingston University, where he discovered a passion for children’s books.