

Three Photographs

Korbyan Chavez

Artist's Statement

I love trees. I know, how original. But I really do. Something deep in my soul draws me to them. The fascinating, towering beings that reach up towards the sun and drink her light. They provide shade, fruit and flowers, varying scents, material for crafting and building. They're old as hell, too. Which is just so amazing to me. They've seen the earth around them change, evolve. There are so many stories they could tell, but they don't speak. Instead, their stories are left in the rings within their trunk, the rugged bark, the ever-changing foliage. They are magical. Fantastical. They are a gift to us from Mother Nature herself.

On walks during walkable seasons (so not winter), I tend to gaze upon the beauty of the trees. I've started getting into photography to capture these moments, when my heart skips a beat when beheld with a gorgeous scene. Sometimes, it's simply because I just like the way the tree looks, how it's formed. Isn't it just fascinating how trees grow? These crazy tendrils that we call branches just warping themselves closer and closer to the sky, while their massive roots sink deeper into the earth to gather nutrients for its survival. Other times, I get that artist in me that

sees the frame, sees the image before it's even taken. Maybe the sun is just in the right spot, or perhaps the leaves are just a little greener that day, and the beauty of this tree is enhanced because of it. So here are some of my favorite tree photographs I have taken!

Light through the Birch



Light through the Birch. September 8, 2024.

This was taken during one of my mid-day strolls near my apartment in Grand Forks, ND. While under the shade of this young birch, the sun flashed before my eye. I turned and was stricken by this beautiful shot. I knew I couldn't leave until I had replicated what I had seen while walking past the birch. It felt like the universe was telling me light was at the end of the tunnel, I just had to wait for a little while longer.

Tree with Fruit. September 8, 2024.

Same walk, on the side stretch of sidewalk. A different species of tree not too far away from the birch, these brilliant red fruits hanging from the branches. After some research, I learned the name of this tree: *Malus Prunifolia*, a "plumleaf crab apple tree". The fruits are edible, and I could have easily picked a large bushel of these bitter apples. I don't know what I would have done with them, but this tree had borne these fruits for consumption by the ecosystem around it, and I could have benefited from this gift. I chose not to partake in the *prunifolia*'s fruits though, as the various creatures of Grand Forks would do much more with these apples than I. Instead, I snapped this picture, hopefully highlighting the bright red crab apples that adorned this tree.

Tree with Fruit



Birch in Wheat



Birch in Wheat. October 21, 2024

I have to say, birch trees are probably in my top five list. The pale bark, the eye-like carvings in the trunk; there's something unsettling but comforting about the way a birch looks. Like it's always watching, but it's got your back at the end of the day. I saw this birch peeking through this line of wheat on campus, and I knew I needed to capture the moment. I love the contrast of its darker green leaves against the reds, oranges, and yellows of every other tree surrounding it. This birch just has to stand out, I suppose. And I respect it.

Korbyan Chavez graduated from UND with her bachelor's in accountancy in May of 2024. However, her little heart decided that she wanted her creative writing certificate, as numbers are not enough to bring joy into life. Words and phrases? Pretty epic. She hopes to one day own a corgi named Ein and perhaps even publish a little book of her works.