

Holding On to a Tree of Life

Max Chaiken

She is a Tree of Life
To all who grasp her tight,¹

and my mind wanders to all those whose fingers
frail and brittle
have a bit of trouble grasping,
or maybe they've grasped for too long, and now they've grown weary
of reaching out for the next branch
and, hey, do you want to sit in the shade and catch your breath for a
minute?

and what of those who never wanted to grasp in the first place?
who would rather see her bruised and beaten beyond recognition
her leaves withering and dry, her trunk better suited
for hardwood floors, priced on sale at \$3.99 per square foot!

And somehow all her paths are peace²,
even though we can't quite be sure how far those paths
reach on into the future,
whether there will be enough people to grasp her tight,
to flash her brights into the darkest corners
of this world and scare away the bruisers
or whether we can be
enough to find all those who'd like to grasp for a little while longer and
let them know that their lives and their memory help feed that Tree.

¹ Prov. 3:18.

² Prov. 3:17