

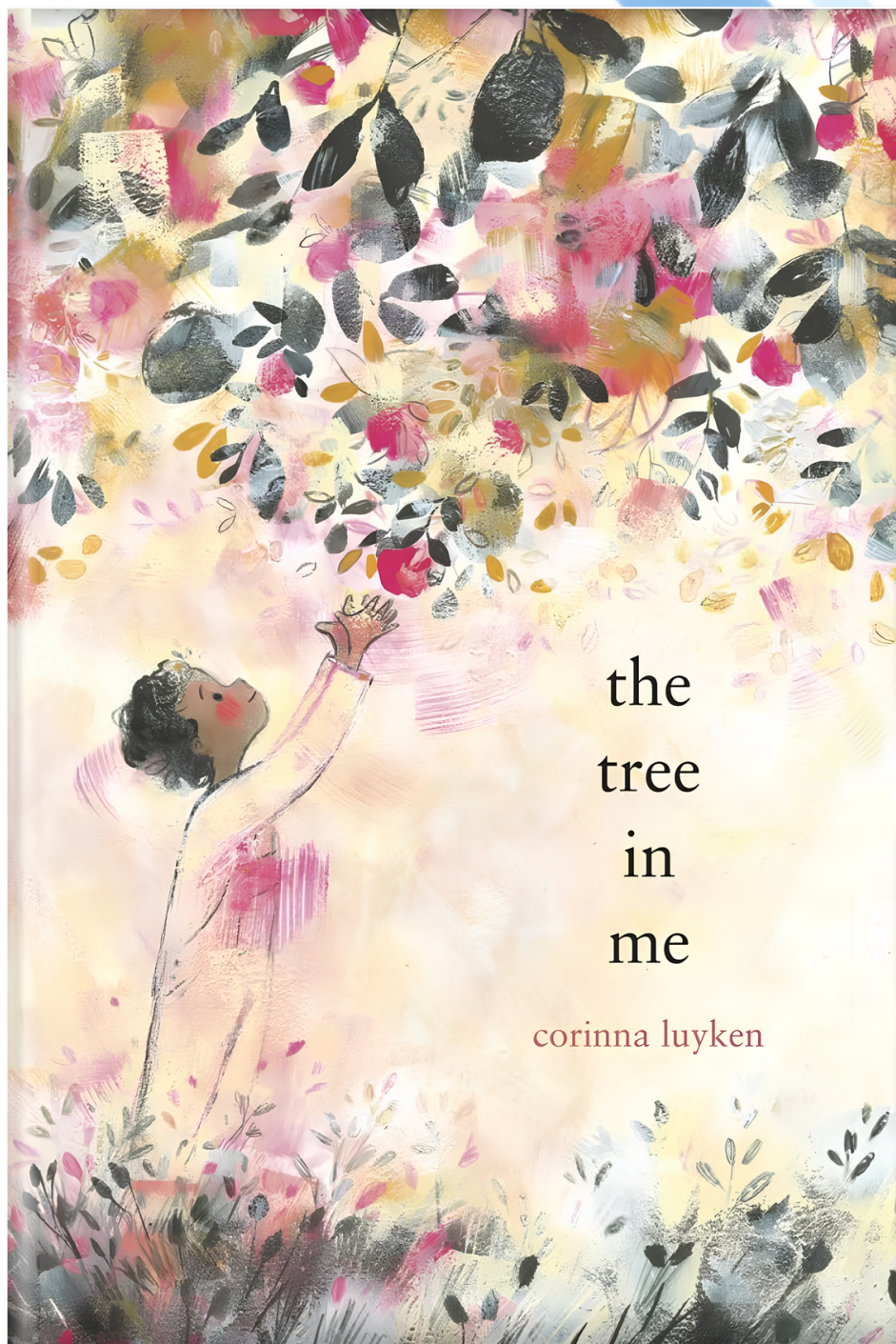
FAMILY BOOK CONNECTIONS

BOOK BRIDGES

the tree in me

Author and Illustrator: Corinna Luyken

Activities Created by
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Summary of the tree in me

the tree in me is a beautiful story that describes knowing that we all have something growing inside us—like a tree—that shapes who we are. It shows how our feelings, experiences, and dreams are like different parts of nature—fragile, yet strong. Through poems, the book reminds us that even when life feels unknown or uncertain, our inner tree continues to grow, helping us understand ourselves better and find sunshine from within. This book is a peaceful celebration of the power inside each and every person, and the magnificent unity within our world.

Read Alouds



[English Youtube
Read-Aloud](#)

About the Author and Illustrator

Corrina Luyken is a New York Times bestselling author and artist, both writing and illustrating the tree in me. She has produced multiple picture books, and several have been translated into 13 different languages, promoting inclusion and representation within many cultures. Her newest book, Hello, Ocean!, released on June 2, 2026, continues Luyken's themes of connection and celebration.

Learn More



Corina Luyken



Questions to Ask Before, During, and After Reading

Talking before, during, and after reading helps children think deeply, notice clues, and connect the book to their own lives.



Before Reading

- What do you think the title “the tree in me” might mean?
- Can you think of a time when you were growing or changing inside?



During Reading

- What feelings does the tree seem to have?
- What parts of the tree change?
- What parts stay the same?

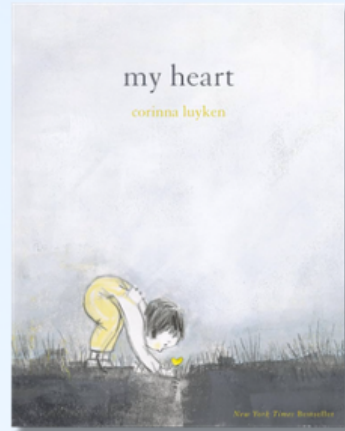


After Reading

- How are people like trees?
- How can we care for our own inner tree?

Extending the Book with Additional Reading

These books go well with *the tree in me* and explore feelings, growth, nature, and the ways we are connected to ourselves and the world around us.



my heart

by Corinna Luyken

A gentle story about feelings, change, and connection.

 **Read-Aloud Available**



Listen to the Language of the Trees

by Tera Kelley

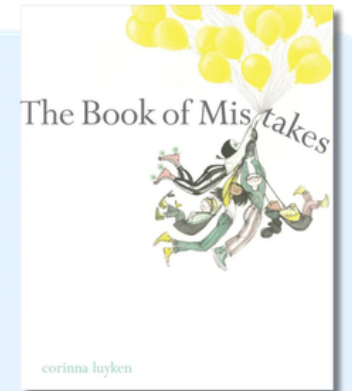
A nonfiction-inspired story about how trees grow and support a forest.

 **Read-Aloud Available**

Also Explore



The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken
A story about how mistakes can become part of something meaningful.



Talk About These Questions

-  How do these books connect feelings and nature?
-  What do they show about growth or change?
-  How can mistakes help us learn?





Extending the Book with Writing

Use poetic language to describe the feelings, memories, and hopes growing inside you.

Steps

- 1 Brainstorm words that describe you.
- 2 Think about feelings, experiences, and dreams.
- 3 Compare one idea to a part of a tree.
- 4 Write a short poem alone or with an adult.
- 5 Give the poem a title and share it if you choose.

Sentence Starters

- My roots are _____.
- My branches reach toward _____.
- Inside me, I am growing _____.
- My leaves hold _____.



Extending the Book with Math

Create a growth chart to see how you grow, just like a tree!

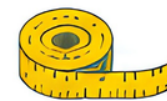
Materials



2-3
poster
boards



markers



measuring
tape
or stick



scissors



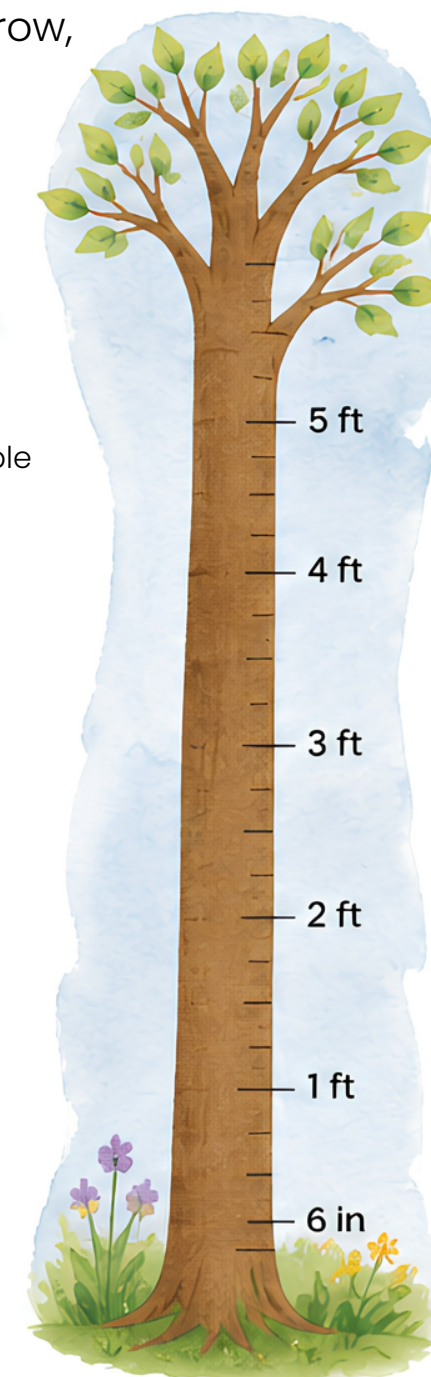
removable
tape

Steps

- 1 Draw a large tree taller than you.
- 2 Mark inches or feet along the trunk.
- 3 Cut out the tree with adult help.
- 4 Attach it to the wall.
- 5 Measure and record your height over time.

Math Prompts

- How many inches have you grown?
- What is the difference between two measurements?
- How many months passed between measurements?





Extending the Book with Social Studies

Trees are an important part of our communities. They provide shade, clean air, homes for animals, and places for people to gather and play.

Steps

- 1 Visit a familiar outdoor space with trees.
- 2 Draw a map of the area.
- 3 Mark trees, paths, benches, buildings, and other features.
- 4 Add people or animals that use the space.
- 5 Talk about how the trees help the community.

Map Ideas



Tree



Bench



Path



Building



People



Animals



Observation Prompts

- Who uses this space?
- Who takes care of it?
- Where do people gather?
- Where do animals find shelter?



Be a Detective!

Look closely at the nature around you. What do you see? Who uses this space?



Let's Discuss

- Why is this place important to the neighborhood?
- What might change if a large tree disappeared?
- How can people care for community trees and green spaces?



Extending the Book with Science

As the book shows, deep roots help trees grow strong and reach toward the light. Watch roots grow right before your eyes!

Materials

- bean seeds (mung beans work well)
- clear plastic cup or glass jar
- paper towels
- water
- sunny windowsill
- (optional) plastic wrap



Steps

1



Dampen the paper towels.

2



Place the towels inside the clear container.

3



Tuck two or three beans between the towel and the side.

4



Place the container near a bright window.

5



Keep the towels damp and observe each day.

6



Draw or record any changes.



Observation Journal



When did the first root appear?



Which direction did the roots grow?



What changed each day?



What does a plant need to grow?



Tip: Keep the paper towels damp (not soaking wet). Roots may begin to sprout within a few days.





Extending the Book with Art

Your inner tree is full of the things that make you who you are! Create a collage that shows your feelings, ideas, and the things you love.

Materials

- construction paper
- pencil or marker
- magazines
- scissors
- glue stick

Steps

- 1 Draw a large tree outline on your construction paper.
- 2 Look through magazines for pictures, colors, and words that represent you.
- 3 Cut out the pieces you choose with adult help.
- 4 Glue the pieces inside your tree to create your collage.



Reflect on Your Inner Tree



Which image represents a feeling?



Which image represents something you enjoy?



Which part of your tree shows how you are growing?

Example



Add Your Name and a Title

Write your name and a title for your inner tree at the top!





LITERACY
BRIDGES