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The Tree Poem

Scientists estimate that the oldest Bristlecone Pine lived over 5000 years

However, despite intensive study, they had still failed to determine if it possessed a heart

5000 years of births and deaths, of hopes and dreams and fallen empires

But before all of them, a seed fell

3000 years before the birth of Rome, a wind gust

Caused, the scientists say, by a sudden change in air pressure

Thoughtlessly knocked a fruit of shocking insignificance

Onto parched desert earth

While mankind etched the first written words into clay by the banks of the Euphrates

The seed, through a fortunate sequence of meteorological occurrences, sprouted in a singularly anticlimactic birth

And began an unassuming journey towards the stars

Iron swords clashed in the Far East, red blood stained the sands of Palestine

A new empire took rook in southern Italy

And far away, due to what scientists say must have been a remarkably wet year,

The tree grew 3 inches

New cities rose from the earth, fed by the shriveled souls of men hungry for profit

London, Paris, Barcelona

Steeped in importance, their names cast a spell when uttered aloud

On another continent, the tree dropped a branch, likely due to an early snow

In London, a playwright told the story of a mad king

A prince rode to reclaim the promised land

The tree survived a fire, which the scientists assure us was caused by a lightning strike of fascinating intensity

The great empires of Europe fought for ownership of a new world

Then, through both the hard work of honest men and effective budgeting

Built new cities hailed as both innovative and efficient

New York and Boston

The tree struggled forward

Did it feel old?

In 1964, a Bristlecone Pine was cut down by scientists for “research purposes”

Only after the stump was examined did they come to the startling conclusion that the tree had been over 500 years old

The accident was deemed regrettable