

Title: A Force of Nature, 2020 – Victoria Elbroch

Image:



Narrative: (Oak tree at work, explain its significance)

This tree means to me the chaos and randomness to life. This piece has a distinct serious and dark mood, which makes me think of a time where I first started high school. High school was a very tumultuous time for me where I learned many new things and met many new people in such a short time, much like how the start of college feels. I can remember the feeling of pure angst whenever I would think I was lost in the hallways or was going to be late to class. In fact, I still feel that way about the slightest chance of being late to class or work. I believe that my irrational fear of being late to something comes from a saying my mom used to tell me. She would say, “make grammie proud” in reference to my grandmother. This makes me feel that any and everything I do makes the people around me feel different towards me. Sometimes when I am bored and quiet, I contemplate with myself about a conversation I had earlier that day or even before where I may have said a word wrong or stuttered. I feel like this vice I have on myself is what holds me back most in life. I would not try to speak up in class many times or even try to talk to the girl I liked in class because if I made any sort of faux pas, I would think they would think of me as an idiot and not worthy of their time.

Not to totally flip from the existentialism, but I also would like to say that I have a sort of fascination with trees. Trees symbolize the passage of time and are depicted in many forms of media as wise and elderly. Many of the trees people see driving along highways can be older than 100 years old. If you take time to stop and enjoy the New Hampshire wilderness, you can find countless bike trails and walking paths through these gorgeous autumn woods. Under many of these timeless trees can be found saplings less than a few seasons old. Sometimes it's hard to even comprehend these trees go through in their lifetimes, how many squirrels scrambled up its branches, how many couples carved their initials into its bark, how many leaves it has shed in its countless autumns it has endured. And if it matters, my favorite species of tree is the American Chestnut. Its journey of once being 25% of the trees in the Appalachians and east coast, to now being critically endangered in the span of less than a century is

nothing less than the start to a wonderful redemption arc like in *Friday Night Lights* or *The Pursuit of Happiness*.