

Is the cottage a “treehouse” or just a house in the trees? A real treehouse is a fantasy place, a construction hardly anchored in earth and built for children, or adults with a fanciful bent. You go there to play without care or responsibility, to a place removed from normal life. A treehouse is a place where you make things up, where you improvise.

On the other hand, sometimes being at Craigville is like walking through a forest where the trees have grown too close together. I know who is sneezing or coughing on the other side of the wall. All too well, I remember my embarrassment in early married days when I came down to breakfast, wondering who had heard Andy’s and my springs creaking in the old cast iron bed in our room. Yet years later, one of the younger generation asked me, “How do you ever have sex in that house?” Andy’s and my room is desirable exactly because it has the only really comfortable double bed.

Then there is the intercourse, so to speak, of getting along with everyone. For many years, Mom was the trunk around and from whom we all branched. Since her death, no one person is in charge of the cottage and we function as a committee—inefficiently but more democratically. Everyone’s branches and twigs rub at times, their roots get kicked and trodden upon. Sometimes I go out on limbs. In this house of family ties and rubs, I revel in being part of the place, and in being a member of the family tree. Craigville is some of all of these things, and at the same time, a homestead. Our house in the trees keeps giving life, a framework for belonging and lasting through good times and bad. And the trees around us, their limbs branching out protectively, bless us as they murmur “There, there .