



The Tree Of Man

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Stan Parker, with only a horse and a dog for company journeys to a remote patch of land he has inherited in the Australian hills. Once the land is cleared and a rudimentary house built, he brings his wife Amy to the wilderness. Together they face lives of joy and sorrow as they struggle against the environment.

The Tree Of Man Details

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Author : Patrick White

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From Reader Review The Tree Of Man for online ebook

James says

A poetic tribute to man and nature. The Tree of Man succeeds in capturing the opening of the frontier in Australia. It is reminiscent of O. E. Rolvaag or Conrad Richter who did the same for the American frontier. The story is a universal one, even so White succeeds in creating individual characters, particularly Stan Parker, for whom you develop feeling. He succeeds in demonstrating basic human values and the inherent drama of life in the raw. That combined with the poetic descriptions of nature gave the characters life. In the case of Stan Parker, who throughout his life span was inarticulate, awkward, and sensitive, his stoicism was impressive. Amy, the orphan girl he took as his wife, was a frustrated lusty woman he has made her, yet I found something appealing in her despite her yearnings and ultimate fall; the neighbors, except for the dissolute Irish O'Dowds, and the Quigleys,- Bub who was a child all his life, and his protective sister Doll, who killed him to save him the danger of being left, alone,- provide a convincing background -- a sort of Greek chorus.

The events move slowly across the stage, against flood and fire and drought, against poverty, relative security and disintegration. The outside world intrudes with war, but the center of the community is underscored by the strength of nature. Here is an example of the author's poetic limning of nature's rainstorm:

"The lightning, which could have struck open basalt, had, it seemed, the power to open souls. . . As the rain sluiced his lands, and the fork of the lightning entered the crests of his trees. The darkness was full of wonder. . . Soon a new gentleness had crept into the rain, because the storm was passing. Sound become indistinguishable from sound. The drops were separate on the iron roof, the last cold gusts rubbed leaf on leaf." (p 151)

With the next generation growing up, the focus is on the Parker children who emerge as individuals:- Thelma, who marries above her station, and returns at intervals, to hover over her parents, but never really to share; Ray, whose story is not one of success. It is a beautiful saga of man and nature. A man, redeemed by compassion, living in the stark simplicity of the world around him, the only world that he knows. But, in the end the book returns again to nature, to the trees.

"In the end there are the trees. They still stand in the gully behind the house, on a piece of poor land that nobody wants to use. . . On still mornings after frost these stand streaming with light and moisture, the white and the ashen, and some the colour of flesh." (p 479)

It is a poem of life and people and their lives that remains in your memory after you close the last page.

Vipin Goyal says

The simplicity of true grandeur found in tree transcends in the human being who live their life in the proximity of nature. The act of adultery by Amy, not only once by twice reflects that it is not impulsive but a deliberate act to overcome the boredom or an act of rebellion against a husband who had become unromantic. Their marriage was not a consequence of a decision, but an outcome of a certainty. They had a highly romantic honeymoon.

The writer says "the whole night had become a poem of moonlight. . . . Flesh is heroic by moonlight. The man took the body of the woman and taught it fearlessness." Mystery and poetry of real life are revealed in an extraordinary within the ordinary. The Author has rationalized Amy's act of adultery by concluding "Sometimes her simplicity would blaze electrically."

Stan also makes a brief encounter with passion when he rescues Madeleine from fire. Flavor of the incident is romantic, but passions are sublimated by conviction and values. Moreover, simple deserves forgiveness.

Madeline once admires the crude furniture in the house of Stan for it had reality.

For anything that is grand and simple, even the end is a new beginning. The grandson of Stan wants to write a poem of life, of what he did not know, but knew. So that in the end there were trees.

Read more at <http://vipinbeharigoyal.blogspot.in/2...>

Judy says

Patrick White was an Australian novelist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. My friend and I of the newly formed Literary Snobs reading group picked this book for our first meeting. Not many people write like this anymore. His prose is highly literary, filled with poetical passages and lyrical descriptions of place, weather, and characters.

The Tree of Man follows the life of one man in almost completely chronological order from childhood to death. All along the way, the author adds in pithy moments of truth about human life delivered both from the main characters' points of view as well as from his close third person narration. The pace is generally as leisurely as a sunrise or sunset in the Australian outback but there are occasional spurts of action which ramp up the reader's speed of turning the pages.

Stan Parker is a loner who had inherited a piece of land in the undeveloped hills outside of Sydney. The book opens as he arrives on the land at about the age of twenty. Sixty years or so later when he dies his humble home is one of the last original structures still standing in what has become the suburbs of Sydney. He had picked up an orphan from the nearest town and married her. Amy is another type of loner but together they evolved a love that brought them through parenthood and plenty of disappointments. They do not come through unscathed yet somehow maintain a tenacious grip on life through stoicism, continuous grueling hard work on their dairy farm, and a rather twitchy sort of loyalty to each other.

In any life, the majority of days and nights comprise a tedious, boring repetitiveness enlivened by the usual momentous events, such as falling in love, births, extreme weather, wars, betrayals, and deaths. Thus, reading this book for me was not unlike living, though I have not experienced a pioneer life of backbreaking labor.

Life also contains periods of emotional and psychological upheaval that bring to the forefront the dark side of any personality. When Stan and particularly Amy experience such periods the writing plumbs that darkness with an unflinching gaze. At those points in the novel, I felt like Joyce Carol Oates had grabbed the pen.

It was a mixed reading experience made up of wonder, tedium, and moments of personal enlightenment. I am fairly eclectic and embrasive in my reading so I let Patrick White determine my reading speed and my emotional balance for the many hours spent with his book. I will say that not once did I not believe him. In the next to last chapter, when Stan dies, I felt Amy's feelings. You expect death, you are powerless before it, and yet life goes on if not much longer in yourself, then in your offspring.

If his other novels are anything like this then he deserved his prize. The banality of human life is everywhere around us and he was able to describe that as well as clothe it with the beautiful and poetic essence that gets us through.

Brendan says

just wrapped up a long haul with this thing. whoah. felt like we went to war together. this was my first patrick white novel (know a few of his plays) and im afraid im going to have to rip in to the rest of the CATALOGUE now. probably VOSS next as thats his most renowned bind. this book is pretty simple in premise. a couple meet, get married and head out to the country to build a life. they make a home, struggle for a couple of kids, and do their best to provide and nourish inside and outside the place. but what white does so beautifully is examine the quiet violence in relationships. the million moments between sips of milky tea, the big dreams that never leave small kitchens, the yearning to connect and stay connected in long love. once or twice a page one has to stop and re-read the wisdom pw can make in a short, simple jabbing sentence about everydayness. this book is dense, depressing (arent all the good ones?) and lyrical. it speaks of good-old australia and its good-old values. but mostly it speaks of men and women and the land between us. 5 starts pat.

Kofo says

This is literally the most perfectly written book I have ever read. The prose is entirely flawless and the imagery is so evocative it's sharp. you could cut yourself on one of Stan's countless axe swings. But when I put it down I felt...very little. The plodding, journeying pace of the prose is intentional, a metaphor for life in australia in the early 20th century, but intentional or not, and no matter how well written a book is (and again I must reiterate, this is perfect) storytelling is not a component that can be forgotten. The characters are far from caricatures, and both the experiences that shape them and the people they eventually become for these experiences are uncomfortably familiar. This is where White excels, especially when it comes to Stan and Amy. Two lives that never seem to touch, both yearning for something, from the very start to the end, lives underpinned by religion and the doomed pursuit of some meaning to their lives. But when it comes down to it, I just didn't care about what happened to them. Through the fires, storms and all of it, the monotonous perfection of the literature couldn't compensate for characters that although were lived in, never felt alive.

Tao ?àn says

Patrick White là m?t tác gi? có ph?n khó ??c, không ch? vì nh?ng ý t??ng và v?n ?? ??c ?áo c?a ông mà có l? còn vì s? k?t h?p khác th??ng gi?a ph?m ch?t s? thi v?i ph?m ch?t th? ca ? ông. Trong ngh? thu?t t? s? l?n lao c?a mình ông s? d?ng m?t ngôn ng? c?c k? súc tích, m?t ngh? thu?t ngôn t? ???c ch?m chút ??n t?ng chi ti?t và th??ng xuyên nh?m t?i hi?u qu? bi?u ??t t?i ?a, ngày càng mãnh li?t không ng?ng ngh? ho?c th?u su?t m?t cách tinh t?. ? ?ây cái ??p và chân lý liên h?p v?i nhau kh?ng khít ho?c hoàn toàn h?p nh?t vào nhau: m?t cái ??p toát ra ánh sáng và s? s?ng, g?i nên ch?t th? v?n có trong v?n v?t, trong thiên nhiên và trong m?i hi?n t??ng, và m?t chân lý hi?n l? và gi?i phóng, m?c dù tho?t ??u cái chân lý ?ó có v? nh? ph?n c?m hay ?áng s?.
trích Tuyên d??ng c?a Vi?n Hàn lâm Th?y ?i?n

Chris says

Unforgettable in its compassionate portrayal of a good man brought to his knees by marriage and fatherhood. Superb writing in a class of its own. why is Patrick White so out of fashion?

Rebecca says

Contains truth, beauty and genius. Off-the-charts great writing lifts unprepossessing subject matter into the realm of pure art. Explores how each of us remains essentially alone, but indelibly connected. Will invigorate the reader and inspire the writer.

Scott says

So. Here's the thing; how do you review the book that you consider may be *the* book? You know, the one that encapsulates your whole philosophical, spiritual, intellectual outlook on life? Whatever you end up saying about it will ruin the experience for anyone else. If you build high expectations then, of course, other people won't share those with you, or you will be overplaying it, or they will have a different outlook on life and all things 'spiritual' and therefore hate everything about it. Conundrum!?

I get Patrick White in a way that confounds me. I don't always know the why and how of it, but I get it. I get HIM. (Is it a shared queer thing?) His language fairly SHOUTS at me from the page. I am overwhelmed by the beauty of his lyrical constructions, his sentences, his wordy juxtapositions, his f@cking with grammar, the beauty, the power of it all. And I don't want to be just 'another one of those Aus Lit majors' with their head so far up their own arse that they fawn over PW because it is seen as 'the right thing to do.' I can't help it. Every novel of his I read, I love him a little bit more. After reading the sensational David Marr biography, I love him a little bit more. I love that PW was a grumpy, bitchy queen. More than that there is something in his spiritual outlook that resonates strongly with me. (And it can be found in the beautiful work of David Malouf and also in Randolph Stowe. Two other brilliant Aussie writers who are/were also gay. Is this a theme? Am I blindsided by my sexuality? I hope not, I don't think so. Is it a specifically Australian thing? A way of relating to land, to the interiority? To landscape, to uncertainty, to rejection, isolation, the unhinging space of the continent?)

This novel is the novel of life. On one hand it tells the story of Stan and Amy Parker, their life in the bush, a bush that, by the end of the novel, becomes an outer Sydney suburb. It is the story of nation building, it is a very white story and there is little in it that addresses other inhabitants of the land, and there is something to be said about that, and about that exact issue in PW's oeuvre, but that is to be said elsewhere. On the other hand it is story about yearning, about trying to find our own truths, about where they may be hidden, about the struggle of life. It has everything. And as the novel reaches the end, as the deaths pile up and the cycle goes on, he closes the novel with the most fitting sentence. Read the work. Get to the end...

Sasha Holden says

Its difficult to write about the simple things in life. That is if you are not Patrick White. White in "The Tree Of Man" leads you on a journey of events that are somewhat ordinary from the outside. Meeting your future wife, taking her home in the bush to commence a new life together, all the time surrounded by a slowly developing community. Surrounded by change.

Yet as is often the case in White's novels it is the change from within that renders his stories outstanding. Stan Parker, an ordinary man from the outside, but a complex character from within.

For mine this novel is about life and change in its purest format. A novel that reflects on our relationships

with ourselves, with those with whom we live, to those with whom we interact. A novel that brings us the story of an ordinary man, in an extraordinary manner. White delivers here in spades. For lovers of Australia, Australian history, indeed the simple things in life, real life that is, this book is a must read.

Nadine says

Although I cannot fault this book I just didn't like it! I mean his writing technique is simple yet elegant I just couldn't find myself getting into the book. I am doing this book as part of an English unit in college and although I can see why it was included I personally didn't like it! This is only purely on the fact that I read books as a form of escapism and I like to be engrossed in a novel and forget about my mundane life! In this book you can't because at the end of the day it is a book about a life just a plain old life where stuff happens. The end. I will say though the last sentence "So that, in the end, there was no end" really struck me and I loved it!!! But as an overall book while I can appreciate the book itself I just can't enjoy it!

Lyndon says

I read this book very slowly. I wanted to take in its environment and atmosphere. I loved Riders in the Chariot and now my Aussie roots have deepened into the soil of 'The Tree of Man'. I will miss my mornings with the Parkers.

Lynne King says

One cannot fault this skillfully executed book. It has all the right ingredients: an excellent writing style that a friend stated "I feel I would only scratch the surface with Patrick White" and I certainly go along with that. He also said, "He sometimes reminds me of Virginia Woolf, when he veers off into a stream of consciousness." Hundred per cent correct. I cannot disagree with that either.

Initially, this work would appear to be the "simple" story of a man called Stan Parker who receives an inheritance and goes to live in the Australian outback, the earlier frontier, "and what has developed into the township of Durilgai transforms into an outer suburb of Sydney"; taking his red dog along for company; a man who marries Amy, lives with the strains and confines that can come with marriage and a long intimate relationship; has children, grandchildren, lives and dies. He's a survivor too regardless of what situation he comes up against; a trait that I've always admired in individuals. And in addition I was "fired with enthusiasm" by having read the best review that I've ever come across on Goodreads.

The book flows with exquisite gems, and I could so easily include pages of the elegantly written, but simple and often poignant passages contained within it. The one thing that did strike me as different though were the odd turns of phrase, such as "read the lines in his face" when Amy was looking at her husband.

Whatever book I've read, there's always a section that stays with me, and in this case it just reminded me of myself:

" 'All those letters we wrote, he said, 'we shall be rid of all that. It's a waste of time. But what can you do?'"

I have them," she said, picking at the cloth. 'I like them'.

‘It doesn’t do to keep old letters, he said. ‘It’s morbid. You start reading back, and forget that you have moved on. Mother was great one for that. She had a drawerful of old letters. They had changed colour.’

I often wondered about Amy. I can see why a man would go and live in the outback but this particular girl, as she was at the time, seemed to be lacking in substance to be able to do that. She didn’t appear to be up for the challenge and yet she seemed to gain more confidence later in the book:

For example, Amy wanted a change of scene; she was bored with her daily existence and wanted a change by going on a picnic:

“So the days swelled, and rose out of each other, and were folded under, and her idea of the picnic became a silly whim, then a cause of resentment, that she hadn’t the will to achieve it, or achieve anything much. Resentment bred.”

And the essence of the book surely has to be in the following?

“In the end there are the trees.....And his poem mounted in him he could not bear it, or rather, what was still his impotence. And after a bit, not knowing what else to do but scribble on the already scribbled trees, he went back to the house in which his grandfather had died, taking with him his greatness, which was still a secret.”

However, after everything I’ve said, it didn’t “touch my heart strings” and will not remain in that hidden area of my mind where I know I can always reach out to search for the special parts of my favourite books. To also know that I can go and browse through them ad infinitum and get the same continuing pleasure. Perhaps I will revisit this book at some future time as I may have come across it at the wrong stage in my life?

I still, however, highly recommend it for its depressing-brilliance.

Sharyn says

My favourite book. I used to read it maybe once a year, to experience the sense of Australian that the reading invokes. It's real linguistic magic, that Patrick White does - he can completely re-create a world, you can see it, smell it, feel it, hear it!, just using his selection and arrangement of words on the page.

Phryne says

The best thing about this book is the amazing way the author can conjure up the feel of the Australian outback in words. Not only that but he takes the reader back in time to when settlers were opening up new areas of the countryside and starting to develop the towns we know today. I enjoyed the way the story progressed slowly and steadily with just the small excitements of a quite normal life. Occasionally I found Amy a little annoying and I was irritated by the authors use of 'the man' and 'the woman' instead of using their names. There is probably some good literary reason why he did this but it escaped me. This is my first book by Patrick White and I can understand now why he is held up as a major writer. I am very glad I read it.

Jeremy says

After many years of good intentions I have finally read a novel by that renowned Australian literary curmudgeon, Patrick White. My 1973 edition of *The Tree of Man* was given to me by a good friend, who once read out a paragraph to me during a visit on a searing hot summers day. I was captivated by White's lyrical phrasing and his portrayal of the Australian experience, all from one paragraph. Patrick White is considered to be one of Australia's great writers and one of the significant writers of twentieth century literature. *The Tree of Man* certainly presents a convincing case for literary genius, however it also caused me to wonder about White's relevance in modern Australia.

The Tree of Man traces the life of Stan Parker who, along with his wife, Amy Parker, settle on a patch of land close to Sydney in the first few years of the twentieth century. One could say that it is a family saga, yet without the melodrama that usually inhabits such narratives, thanks largely to White's modernist style. White's style isn't exactly the stream of consciousness of the modernists, rather he colours the narrative with the characters subjective thoughts and feelings; creating a kind of allusive narrative impressionism that imbues the mundane aspects of Stan and Amy's everyday lives with a very Australian mysticism.

White's dense modernist style makes the novel a reasonable challenge to read, but one that is well worth pursuing. The novel has strong existential themes which are explored through the lives of Stan and Amy, as they tend to their dairy farm, have children and deal with the vicissitudes of life. Their lives are made profound against the background of the elemental Australian landscape, yet White also tears away their certainty, referring to them as "ant man" and "ant woman," reminding us that the control humans have over our destinies is limited; rendering us merely a small part of a far greater capricious whole. Within this existential context Amy and Stan live, like Adam and Eve, in their bush eden and create their own world. The isolation of their lives, with initially few neighbors in the semi wilderness area, gives an impression of what it was like for the first settlers in Australia. There are floods, bush-fires and thunderstorms that threaten their tenuous existence. Yet despite the challenges they preserve and remain together throughout their lives on the land, representing a triumph of will against a backdrop of uncertainty.

The Tree of Man brilliantly portrays the cycles of life, taking Stan and Amy through youth and into middle age. White deals with the psychology of these changes subtly, through their relationships with their son and daughter and the land they live on. Stan and Amy's relationship evolves through the struggle to understand each other, with Amy often pondering whether she'll ever really "see into" Stan. As the novel takes them into old age they struggle to understand death and God. White uses old age as a litmus test for the concept of God, or the Christian God at least. Stan is perplexed, whilst Amy takes to the idea more readily. Stan sees God in a gob of spit he produces whilst he is being harassed by a born again evangelist and suddenly his life makes sense, but not the kind of sense that Christianity so earnestly tries to provide.

The last short chapter, only two pages long, beautifully sums up the themes of *The Tree of Man* and is one of the greatest I've ever read. Stan's grandchild lingers in a wooded gully thinking about his grandfather's life, feeling helpless and unformed. He decides to write a poem "of life", a notion that overwhelms him. After a long intense novel filled with White's allusive, poetic style (poetic realism, I thought to myself over a cup of tea) White is hinting that life itself is poetry; that each person writes their own poetry with their lives and that the essence of a life provides its own meaning, one that is separate to God and religion.

Although White is rightly considered to be one of literature's greats, I realised that his writing is deeply unfashionable, in Australia at least. Looking around online I found that I wasn't the only one to come to this conclusion. I mostly agree with the perception that White's modernist style dates his writing, that it is perhaps too dark for most and that the fact that he was Australian makes him peripheral on the world stage. However the notion that ignoring his work has become a bad habit that persists is the most persuasive, and

this was certainly true in my case. I ignored White for far too long, so I'll end by advising others to not perpetuate this trend, do yourself a literary favour and read Patrick White.

From my blog: <http://excelsiorforever.blogspot.com.au/>

Judy says

The Tree Of Man is the life story of Stan Parker and his wife, Amy, from their isolated beginnings and through fires, storms and floods in their personal lives and the weather.

Patrick White writes beautifully which is why even though this story is slow-paced, long, and without a strong plot, it is worth the read.

Vit Babenco says

“Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?
And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”
Ecclesiastes 4:11-12

This is the law humans abide by since the ancient time...

The Tree of Man is a life story of unrefined, down-to-earth people, a profound tale about the salt of the earth.

The clearing was wide open. The two people and their important activities could not have been more exposed. About that importance there was no doubt, for the one had become two. The one was enriched. Their paths crossed, and diverged, and met, and knotted. Their voices spoke to each other across gulfs. Their mystery of purpose had found the solution to the mystery of silence.

Patrick White is a very subtle psychologist and he knows every little corner of human soul. The world is modern but primordial instincts and fears still rule human being...

There would be thunder later that day. The sweat stood out above her lip. Already leaves moved in a little breeze. Clouds were swelling in the right direction. She pricked her finger in anticipation of some event, sucked it, rolled the socks into a nervous ball. All this time the big clouds, moving and swelling, pushed and shouldered each other. The little and, at first, subtle breeze became moister and more blatantly vicious. It was lifting the corners of things. The woman in the house got up and closed a door, in an attempt to secure for herself an illusion of safety, if only an illusion. Because the black clouds were bursting on her head. And the grey wool of torn clouds that the wind dragged across the sky raced quicker than her blood and began to rouse the terror in her.

And man boldly stands against thunderstorm, flood and fire... And bravely fights elements: earth, water, air and fire... And fights wars...

When the years of mud and metal were over, Stan Parker would seldom talk about them. He would not be coaxed into telling the interminable boys' adventure stories, as some men will after wars, for chaos was not his opportunity. At the height of violence, when even the seasons had been destroyed, his functions appeared to have gone from him, who had been happiest looking at the sky for signs of nature, listening to oats fall, picking up a wet calf that had just dropped from the womb, and showing it that its legs worked.

No one's life is an idyll... But we keep walking down the Avenue of Hope and behind us there is the Memory Lane.

Dolors says

Patrick White's style is a unique blend of roughness and literacy that can become quite absorbing, mesmerizing even, for its timelessness. The minor details of ordinary lives fuse with poetic vision and transform the common experience of man into the absolute essence that holds the power to make tangible the sheer mystery of existence.

The desolation of the Australian bush, with all its mythology and folklore, acquires an abstract dimension seen through the eyes of the Parkers.

Stan and Amy Parker build a farm and a family, not sure of their motivations but with steady hand, as they wonder whether the growing familiarity of their routines might be described as happiness.

The intense relationship between husband and wife, and its constant ebb and flow throughout the years, serves as the common thread to conduct this story full of delicate moments suspended in time.

The sound of tree leaves dancing at the tune of autumnal breeze.

The feeling of burying one's hand in the fertile soil of a prosperous land.

The sweet smell of a room when there is a newborn baby.

The fear of losing a dear child, replaced by an unrecognizable man.

The irresistible pull of two souls meeting amidst the flames in a staircase on fire.

The lush of a hungry body screaming out shamelessly when it should have been contented with chaste affection.

The revelation of clasping a gaunt hand that has lost the warmth of life pulsating in it.

Decades go by, and the Parkers witness landscapes change, eroded by the inclemencies of weather, neighbors come and go, children grow up into strangers who disappoint, while their individualities remain still, intact, anchored to the early memories of fresh expectations, every soul an island afloat in the ocean of time and chance.

In White's world, life is presented as this continuous flow of entangled facts and emotions that defies all plans and expectations, but at the same time he reveals that life's innermost best-kept secret resides in the simplicity of things. The rugged bark of a silver poplar tree, a blank notebook, a silver nutmeg grater, a piece of broken glass. A pale boy.

All of them, traces of infinity. And life... a poem that never ends.

"There, like the wind through woods in riot,

Through him the gale of life blew high;

The tree of man was never quiet:

Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I."

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble by A. E. Housman

Julie Gittus says

I first read this book when I was eighteen and remember being astonished at the final page by the power of fiction. And then a few months ago I found a beautiful first edition in an Op Shop - a bit tatty but gorgeous fifties cover - and dared myself to read it all these years later. This isn't a book you can tear through. It's a bit like eating the very rich fruit cake. It took me three weeks to read - sometimes I made myself put the book down so I could digest the profound and beautiful writing. It's an account of Stan and Amy's lives who were part of the contingent of early white settlers of the Australian bush. To an outsider, their lives would appear small and confined but White insists we share their loneliness, their sufferings and to quote from Alice Munro - 'their radiant, vanishing consolations'. If I had to cull my book collection to the size of ten, The Tree of Man would be included.
