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## Forever Green

by Joshua Commander, MSPE

*For Phaelan*

Pluck a needle from this tree,  
My beloved boy, and hold  
It in your hand. Think of how  
Many needles there are in  
This redwood. Your one needle  
Is just one part of that great  
Multitude. What I'm about  
To tell you is just one part  
Of my endless love for you.

How many trees are there on  
This planet? No one knows, but  
There are a lot. My love for  
You is infinitely more,  
Far more, far greater, than that.

How many days have passed since  
Earth began? How many trees  
Have grown since that time, and how  
Many will grow from now till  
Our world ends? Nobody knows  
That either, but take each of  
Those impossible numbers  
And multiply them by each  
Other, and my love for you  
Makes that number seem tiny.

Now open your hand and look  
Again at your needle and  
Your tree and think about all  
The trees that have ever been  
And all the trees that ever  
Will be, and all the leaves, scales,  
Cones, flowers, nuts, and needles  
—Uncountable septillions—  
Those trees gave and will give birth  
To. Think of that wonderful  
Unthinkable number. Now  
Look at that needle once more.  
That number is smaller than  
That needle when compared to  
My overflowing love for you.

That love—my love, your love, mom's  
Love, our love—is forever  
Growing and forever green,  
Forever with you in each  
And every tree's needle, leaf,  
Scale, cone, flower, and nut and  
Will be even when we are  
Lying under those selfsame  
Trees and helping them grow. Ω