Through the Eyes of the Ancient Oak

I have stood here longer than the field stones that got built , even longer than when the land was first farmed. My roots go deep into the ground, and my branches reach out wide. I have witnessed generations come and go, their laughter and sorrows carried on the wind.

It began with Jane, the first of them. He planted his dreams beneath the dirt in 1904, carving his name into my bark with his trembling hands. He was young then. His wife, Miriam, would rest against my trunk with their little baby in her arms, singing lullabies that floated with the wind and carried on. They built their home within sight of me. I watched it grow, stone by stone.

Their daughter, Lina, grew beneath my branches. She would come to sit beneath my shade here everyday. She tied ropes to my limbs and swung around until dusk. Her laughter echoed through my leaves, filling the air like music. I even missed her when she stayed away for a day, those memories are stuck within me.

Years later, Clara, Lina’s niece, danced in my shade. She brought books and braided wildflowers into my lower branches. She told me stories of distant places from here, her voice curious and bright. When she got married, they held the ceremony beneath me. She whispered her vows while gently resting her hand on my rough bark.

Time, like wind, never stops and takes a break. The old farmhouse grew quieter and quieter as generations passed. Some left. Some stayed back. The walls whispered stories of the past, holding memories like pictures in a dusty frame. William, the son of Clara, grew up hearing tales of the past by the fireside, his eyes wide with wonder as he dreamed of adventures beyond the old farmhouse walls.

Then came Elise, his daughter. She was a wildfire of a girl, brave and clever. She climbed higher than any child before her, reading poetry aloud from the strong branches. “You’re the oldest thing I know,” she once said, pressing her cheek to my trunk. “I think you remember everything.” She wasn’t wrong.

When her father died, she brought her own daughter, Lily, to meet me. “This was his place,” she said, her voice thick. “And now it’s yours too.” Lily toddled forward and laid a dandelion crown on the dirt in front of me.

Now the house is worn, its windows dull and covered in spider webs. The field is smaller. But they still come. Lily-grown up, brang her son, Thomas, who kicks a ball through my shade and laughs with the same as Elias once did.