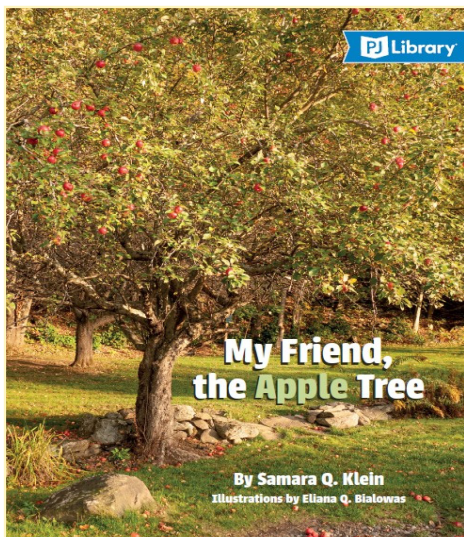


# My Friend the Apple Tree

written by  
**Samara Q. Klein**

illustrated by  
**Eliana Q. Bialowas**



{ **When are trees our friends?** }

## Tree Huggers

Apple trees are beautiful all year round, and Jewish tradition celebrates them along the way. It's traditional to dip fresh apples in honey on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, as a way of ushering in the coming year in the sweetest possible way. We celebrate a different "new year" on Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees, which arrives in winter. There is even a special blessing to say upon seeing the first tree blossoms in the spring! Judaism encourages our connection to nature and especially to trees, who are indeed dear friends. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/myfriendtheappletree](http://pjlibrary.org/myfriendtheappletree).

## HANDS ON!

### Collaborate on a Drawing

This book is a collaboration between a mother and daughter — the daughter drew what she saw outside her window, and her mother wrote the rhymes. Even very young children can collaborate on art with their parents. Give it a go!

Supplies  
Paper  
Drawing supplies  
Conversation!

On a piece of paper, draw a simple window frame. Now take a moment to look out one of your windows together and talk about what you see. How does the world outside your window look in the morning? How about at night? Does it look different at different times of year? As you discuss, think about what colors you'll need to draw what you see. Your child may want to tell you what to draw inside the window frame, or she may want to draw it herself. Either way works. Happy drawing!

## An Eye-Opening Perspective

The interior illustrations in this book were drawn by a young child. That's fitting, for when we look at the world through a child's eyes, we often notice beauty we might otherwise have missed. *Hakarat hatov*, Hebrew for "noticing the good," is an important Jewish value, and children often have a knack for it. When they share their observations with us, that's just one of the many gifts of parenthood.

## Sweetness with a Sting

A tree is the star of this book, but one supporting character is a bee who buzzes . . . and then zooms! The flowers of the apple tree provide nectar to the bee, whose honey will play a big role a few months later at Rosh Hashanah. In Jewish tradition, the Land of Israel is known as "the land of milk and honey," a metaphor for a life of plenty. But you can't have honey without bees, and bees sometimes sting. That's the way life is — there's no sweetness without at least a little bit of sorrow. Rosh Hashanah is a time to embrace it all.

## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**LOOK** at the different photographs in this book. How does the tree change from one photo to the next? What stays the same in each photo?

**IS** there a window that you like to look through to see the world outdoors? What do you see when you look out that window?

**DO** you have any trees that you think of as friends? What do you like about those trees?