

Trees

Honor	Image
1 st Place	Yellowstone Gold
2 nd Place	Enduring Winter
3 rd Place	Pinecone
Honorable Mention	Evening reflections2
Honorable Mention	Fall In Oxbow Bend
Honorable Mention	Foggy Morning Magic
Honorable Mention	Lonely Limber
Honorable Mention	Retained Color

A Tree & a Kid - 12

The angle of your image makes the tree look like it goes on for days – great perspective! Having the child there adds to the drama and creates an interesting story as we wonder how long it took for the kid to get so high in the tree. Though the kid is only a small element of the image, though, that is where the eye travels, making the kid the focal point of the image, not the tree.

After the Fire What Remains - 12

Such vibrant colors here! This is a testament to how the cycle of life continues, even after the devastation of a fire, both in the carpet of wildflowers and the revealed layer of bark revealed by the peeling and charred outer layer. The details and exposure are good. I think the composition would be stronger if your focal point was more prominent rather than the ground cover.

Autumn Glory - 11

Very striking colors here. The yellow leaves against the blue provides strong contrast and the falling leaf captured in its descent, adds interest and story to the scene. I would strongly suggest lowering the luminosity of the sky as it's currently a bit hard on the eyes and pushes the tree trunks into the background. Also, though diagonals are usually desirable, the effect here creates a mild vertigo, which a slight rotation to the left would cure.

Branches - 10

Great perspective in this image, giving the viewer a visual climb into the tree's branches. I find the rather shallow DOF somewhat disappointing as I want to see more detail all the way through to the top branches. This could alternately be handled by selective dodging and burning to bring out more detail and add more depth to the image.

Cedars 2 - 12

Great angle for this shot, starring the sun through the bark of the tree. Unfortunately, that is where the eye goes and that obscures the rest of the scene. I would suggest reducing exposure on the sun slightly and adding contrast and selective dodging and burning to bring out the detail in the scene and add more depth.

Cedars - 12

This is much like the image before and appears to have been captured within the same forest and time frame. In this case, there is less of a focal pull by the sun, but my suggestions for the previous image would likely improve this image tremendously.

Daybreak's Brilliance - 13

Brilliant colors here. One would not see this as being a morning capture, assuming it to be a sunset, especially because of the color palette. The silhouetted trees against those pretty colors is definitely effective. My only suggestion is to rotate this image to the left about 5 degrees so that the lines of clouds, which establishes the image's horizon, is more level.

Emergence - 8

Pretty blossoms, announcing the beginning of spring, which we've all been awaiting. Unfortunately, for me, the exposure of the sky is too high for the subject and is pushing the saturation of the colors too much, while the tree is reading as underexposed. The DOF is very shallow and renders much of the upper branches into distractions. In this case, it would have been better to bracket exposures to properly bring out the highlights and shadows.

Enduring Winter – 14 (2nd)

This is a lovely image. The detail, tonal range and composition are excellent, and the leading line from bottom left to upper right and then to then left through the tree is very effective. My only suggestion is to do some selective burning on the foreground snow so that it doesn't overpower the image.

Evening reflections2 – 14 (HM)

You were in the right place at the right time for this capture. The details, exposure and tonal range are great. To take this to the next level, I would suggest compressing the reflection so that the horizon is no longer along the center line of the image. Doing that would make for a much stronger composition.

Fall in Oxbow Bend – 13 (HM)

Amazing scene! I'm sure you have many great exposures from this trip. I find great details and tonal range and a good composition. Though slightly overexposed, this could be easily compensated for with added contrast. My eye wants this to be a horizontal rather than a vertical image, but this is a nitpick. I would suggest doing some selective dodging and burning, especially in the mountains, to bring out more detail and increase the depth of the image. This a case where the image has trees present, but they're not really the focus.

FavoriteRoad2 - 10

I love streets with a canopy of trees above. Nice Fall colors here, reminding us of warmer days before the grip of winter set in. It appears the camera exposed for the sky at the end of the street, which has underexposed the majority of the image. This can be compensated for by selective dodging and burning to bring out more detail in shadows and balance the tones.

Foggy Mountain Magic – 13 (HM)

Nicely done painterly scene. Lots to see is this lovely composition. There's good detail where it needed and the exposure is right where it needs to be. While trees figure prominently, they are not the focus of the image.

God's Love - 12

Although this is well exposed and loaded with detail, the composition focuses on the sky which is

framed by the trees, rather than the trees themselves. Perhaps reducing the exposure of the sky and cropping to reduce its prominence would improve this image's impact.

Japanese Maple - 9

What a fabulous tree and an interesting angle to capture it from. This makes for a soothing image. I think, to take this image to the next level, you should add contrast, crop out the left side where the brighter building pulls focus, and desaturate the greens so that the colors of the tree can become your focus.

Life on the Edge - 10

Poor tree, so isolated, so alone! You have good detail and exposure. I think, by cropping out the lower half and a little from the right, the composition will be stronger and the lonely tree will become the star of the image it is meant to be.

Lonely Limber – 13 (HM)

This is a lovely scene. The image shows great detail and tonal range, with a strong foreground, middle and background. I would suggest leveling this on the horizon and cropping some from the top to give more focus to the tree.

Love is like a tree - 9

There's no doubt we're looking at a tree! Lots of leading lines that bring the eye up through the image. For me, though, those leading lines are not bringing me to a subject of interest, but rather take me out of the image at the top. Perhaps it would have been better to widen your focus and capture something at the top for those leading lines to point to.

Mother Nature - 13

Fascinating! There's a lot to study here. The eye is immediately drawn to the exposed part of the tree and the twists there are reminiscent of skin. Good detail in that area, with the exposure and tonal range just right. I would suggest to crop out the background on the right and some from the bottom which is out of focus.

Not Much Shade - 13

This image has a lot of wow. The detail, exposure, tonal range and composition are all good. I think what this image needs to take it to the next level is a subtle vignette to keep the eye from wandering away from the tree. Another suggestion would have been to get the camera even lower to contrast the tree against the beautiful sky.

Ole Yoke - 11

First impression is this is something other than a tree, but a longer study verifies it is, in fact, a very twisted and gnarled tree. The bright area of the sky in the center and the snow at the bottom are slightly over-exposed, which is the cause of the initial confusion. If the snow at the bottom is selectively burned, it would likely balance the image better and help the eye land where it's supposed to be.

Perspectives - 9

Amazing gnarled tree – I can see why you wanted to capture it! I find that your focus is off throughout the image, probably because your camera was struggling to pick a focal point – not uncommon with so much going on in the scene. I suspect this was handheld – if so, a tripod and manual focusing would

have helped a lot.

Pinecone – 14 (3rd)

Super capture. Great detail where it's needed and bokeh for the rest. The eye is locked into your subject just as it should be! Only suggestion I would make is to remove the twig in the upper left corner which is a bit distracting.

Retained Color – 13 (HM)

This looks like the result of a session with Topaz Studio and its AI ReMix and, whether or not that's the case, your result is lovely! The stained glass look is quite absorbing and keeps the eye dancing around the image to study all the little details, plus the reds and blues play off each other well.

Rimrock Pine - 13

Cool scene (no pun intended)! Your subject tree is nicely shaped with its reverse s-curve. Details are plentiful and your composition is good. I think some additional contrast would help to bring out some snow detail and perhaps help separate your subject tree from those in the background. It can be a challenge to position yourself so the background complements your subject rather than fight with it. In post, you could also use selective dodging and burning to push the background farther away from your subject.

Roots Are Showing 2 - 12

Striking Fall scene! The colors are really popping! I find that your trees are really part of the background and so do not pull the focus you're intending – my eye is drawn to the stream, then the colorful leaves and finally to the exposed tree roots. If your intent is to feature the exposed roots, you need to frame them as the foreground. You could also use some selective dodging and burning to add more depth to those roots.

Roots - 10

This is well focused and exposed! This image is crying for more contrast and selective dodging and burning to add depth and more interest. My eye is also struggling to determine if this is level or not for it appears to be tilted ever so slightly to the right – leveling to the path along the lower third line would likely alleviate that.

Summer Cotton - 7

I am confused by this image - my mind expects a cotton plant to be pointing upwards, not downwards. In addition, the bright blue of the sky makes it difficult to focus on the subject. I would suggest lowering the luminosity of the sky and adding a subtle vignette to help the eye focus on your subject.

Sunburst and snag - 11

Great tree silhouette! The sunburst, though, appears to be added later, as it's actually closer to the eye than the tree where it intersects on the branch to its left. My mind says there should be some rim lighting on the branches as well and more glow in the sky surrounding the sunburst.

Survivng - 13

Gorgeous scene, well captured! I must admit that the tree is somewhat lost amid the rushing waters, whose brightness pulls a lot of focus. I would suggest some strategic burning to help bring the tree more into the spotlight, so to speak.

The Bark is Louder Than . . . - 10

Now this is up close and personal! The bark is so much smoother than one would expect. I find the shallow DOF causes much of the tree to be out of focus enough to be distracting. I would love to see this captured with a smaller aperture so there's more detail and DOF. It can be a good idea to capture something like this with a large AND small aperture to compare and choose from.

The Stretch - 11

Great focus and tonal range here. The tree pops nicely with the dark clouds behind. I do find that the angle of the shot is disturbing, making it seem like things are tilted to the left quite a bit. Closer study reveals that the background trees and foreground ground cover are oriented properly. However, the mind still wants things tilted to the right to level upon the fence-line which appears to be this image's horizon.

Thirty Years Later - 9

This is a very different image in my opinion. The mind says this is a negative image, because the sky is nearly black, or that it was captured with flash during the dark of night, though that would cause more of a glow in the sky. When considering post-processing techniques, it seems more likely that the blue channel was darkened to blacken the sky. Either way, this image causes some discomfort as the mind struggle to define what it's seeing.

Three Millenials - 12

Cool tree and obviously fun to climb around on. There is good focus and exposure, as well as an effective composition if the 2 people are meant to be the focus of this image, putting the tree into a framing/background status.

Time - 12

This image really pops! All those stars in such a bright blue sky helps the gnarled tree jump into focus. Closer study finds a bit of fringing along the edges of the tree, especially where the sky is its brightest. Cleaning this up would really finish this image well.

To Fight Another Day - 10

Fascinating image. It is difficult to put a scale to this as the tree could actually be a small shrub, but I think this is really a zoom lens capture. Though the tree a quite small in such a large space, it definitely is the focal point of the image. The areas of shadow help frame the tree on 2 sides, which also helps the eye jump to it. I do wish it was better focused, as the details are just soft enough to be troublesome.

Tree Carcas - 9

Very interesting tree, indeed. 2 of the main limbs are so gnarled while the other 2 seem more normal. The straight tree behind seems, at first, to be a part of the foreground tree, which is quite incongruous to my mind until I realized it was a separate tree. This, in fact, works against the effectiveness of the image as it causes confusion. Perhaps considering a different position relative to the tree or a different angle to remove the prominence of this other tree would have improved your result.

Trees Hold Stories - 11

My first thoughts upon seeing this was wondering what one would find if they looked into hollow if this giant stump. In other words, your title is very appropriate! With the surrounding foliage being so dense, this natural "bowl", that once probably dwarfed its surroundings before it suffered a tragic event. I would suggest finishing this by adding contrast and some dodging and burning to bring out more detail and add depth.

Trees-2946 - 12

Lovely scene, captured well. Definitely tells the story of recovery from a devastating forest fire. My main issue here is the trees appear to be framing something in the center, but my eyes find nothing that's actually being framed, leading to a bit of confusion. Better, perhaps, to crop out the tree on the left, add contrast and selective dodging and burning to add some depth to some of the “flatter” areas of the image.

Twists & Turns in Life - 10

Great location to take photos! There's so much to see and take in. Your foreground tree is really interesting and I want to study it, but my attention is pulled by the bridge and the water flowing under it. I would suggest that, when framing your shots, don't just consider your main subject, which is often the foreground item, but also pay attention to what is going on around it and try different positions and angles until your subject is the most prominent thing in view. This image could also use more contrast and strategic dodging and burning to bring out more details and add important depth.

Yellowstone Gold – 15 (1st)

Ooooo! This I like very much! So beautiful and warming to the mind! The gold of the leaves pops so well against the soft blue and white of the sky! This is, by far, my favorite image!