

The Names of Trees
Words and Music by Tom Paxton

He's forgotten the names of trees,
Familiar faces have no names.
He's returned from alien seas
To find our father's house in flames.
He tries to read the signs,
They're in an unfamiliar tongue,
Some half-remembered lines
He read when he was young.
But there are days when he'll recall
The forest in the fall,
When we can walk together, and he's fine.
There are precious days like that,
When he can name them all,
The ash, the elm, the beech, the oak, the pine.
He's forgotten the names of trees,
His thoughts are like the chattering birds,
They flutter as they please,
And build their nests of scattered words.
The children stop and smile,
They offer him their candy bar,
They sometimes stay a while
And remind him of who they are.
But there are days when he'll recall
The forest in the fall,
When we can walk together, and he's fine.
There are precious days like that,
When he can name them all,
The ash, the elm, the beech, the oak, the pine.
He's forgotten the names of trees,
He smells the land to his surprise.
He's lost in the Hebrides,
A stranger to our sunny skies.