

The Larch
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All we see when we look at her are needles and more needles. Obviously another conifer then ? But not so fast ! As Autumn sets in, the deciduous trees around her start to shed their leaves, almost as if death were upon them. And then – is she commiserating ? I won't desert you ! The rest of my kind can winter safely here without me – she too begins to shed. And how suddenly her needles shower down – in festive, glinting sparks of sunlight.

Do we conclude that there is a softness at her very heart ? Wrong again ! The texture of her wood is among the toughest in the world – not every axe can get the better of it, it is too dense to drag and float downstream, and, far from rotting when abandoned in the water, it draws ever closer to the eternal strength of stone.

But when the gentle warmth of spring creeps back, a gift that each year takes us by surprise....it seems another year of life has been bestowed upon us, then why not spread our foliage anew, why not rejoin our kin, arrayed in needles soft as silk.

One could point to people who share those same qualities.

Aleksander Solzhenitsyn