

A colorful illustration of a young boy with brown hair, wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and blue pants, climbing a large, brown tree trunk. He is smiling and looking towards the viewer. The tree has several small black ants on its trunk. The background is white with some green leaves visible at the top.

Every Time I Climb a Tree

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Winner of the National Council
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Poetry for Children

"One is too few
of him and there is,
alas, no second."
— JOHN CIARDI

EVERY TIME I CLIMB A TREE

*Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
I scrape a leg
Or skin a knee
And every time I climb a tree
I find some ants
Or dodge a bee
And get the ants all over me*

*And every time I climb a tree
Where have you been?
They say to me
But don't they know that I am free
Every time I climb a tree?
I like it best
To spot a nest
That has an egg
Or maybe three*

*And then I skin
The other leg
But every time I climb a tree
I see a lot of things to see
Swallows, rooftops and TV
And all the farms and fields there be
Every time I climb a tree
Though climbing may be good for ants
It isn't awfully good for pants
But still it's pretty good for me
Every time I climb a tree*

