

As your tiny hands and feet run over me in the sand, they do not recognise me. I am no longer vertical. Over centuries my living cells absorbed minerals and I am now stone. My petrified branches are still intact. Once they were thin and flexible, spiralling 200 feet above the forest as a sunlit crown. My lower branches hanging downwards are stalactites. I am aware the timeless stream still runs through the gorge into the sea.

Two hundred and seventy million years ago, I grew amongst the sharpest palm leaves and winnowing ferns. Dinosaurs thundered past me but did not crush me. I was camouflage to the archaeopteryx, half reptile, half bird, and its nest of hatchlings. I have seen raptors fight with their prey and shaded herbivores from the sun.

My fan like leaves re-energised me by producing glucose. The ground would shake from time to time as another volcano exploded further north. At the end of the season my golden leaves would cover the forest floor. My yellow fruit would attract morganucodontids, small shrews, which would nest in branches until all the fruit was gone.

One day there was severe heat, and sparks singed my leaves. I was turning into a thermal mass but then I felt an intense cold and dormancy. I am not sure when my spirit awoke perhaps it was during the thaw with the movement of the waves above me. I do know I am here for eternity.