

Composer: Steven Stoehr

**Inspiration & Music: Billy Joel.
(Piano Man)**

The “Tree” of Squirrel Hill

It's nine o'clock on a Saturday
Regular crowd shuffled in
There's an old man sitting next me
Waiting for shul to begin.

The day was alike all others
With greetings of Shabbat Shalom
Where the regulars welcomed the stranger
With the words “welcome home”

The old and young felt like family
For these hours just forget your strife
You could pray and sing and learn from the Rabbi
In this oasis called Tree of Life.

But the day would become like no other
The peace of Shabbat would be lost
As the sound of hatred entered the door
A personal holocaust.

The innocent fell, the brave ran to help
As bullets filled the air.
The sad sounds of this day that came from their
lips
Were cries of “Dear God” as their prayers.

The deafening shots left holes everywhere
In bodies, in walls through the halls
As the gunman's words spewed evil aloud
As the bodies began to fall.

The call for help was answered
Not from heaven but from brave forces of law
And the killing was stopped for the moment
But the reality left us in awe.

Rose, Jerry, Daniel and Joyce
And Cecil and David were gone
Richard, Melvin, Bernice and Sylvan
Along with Irving were discarded like pawns

The Tree had lost many branches
But its roots were so intricately bound
That the world decided to water the tree
And secure its place in the ground.

This Tree would not topple, it wouldn't be lost
Though the pain was palpably felt
And the dead were honored by thousands of souls
Who gathered to where they had dwelt.

“Return us oh God to days of yore”
To your Tree of Life we can cling
And the Torah shall be held high as once it was
And in this sacred place we shall again sing.

The world has learned that together we must
Fight hate with abounding love
And stronger will we become because
Of the lives of these precious white doves.

Brothers and sisters of all races and faiths
Must find in their hearts the truth
That humanity needs to begin to repair
This world for our future and youth.

Sing a song for the hope of the day
When hatred shall no longer be
Cause we're all in the need of love's melody
And it's up to both you and me.