

## *Sharing Little Tree*

*Granma said when you come on something good, first thing to do is share it with whoever you can find; that way, the good spreads out where no telling it will go. Which is right.*

IN REISSUING Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*, the University of New Mexico Press is doing exactly what Granma advised young Little Tree. The Press is sharing an important book. *Little Tree* is one of those rare books like *Huck Finn* that each new generation needs to discover and which needs to be read and reread regularly. *The Education of Little Tree* is a fine and sustaining book, wonderfully funny and deeply poignant.

*Little Tree's* author, Forrest Carter, wrote a number of important books including the popular *Outlaw Josey Wales*; he wrote one great book, *The Education of Little Tree*. Originally to have been called "Me and Grandpa," *Little Tree* is Carter's autobiographical remembrances of life with his Eastern Cherokee hill country grandparents. But *Little Tree* is more, much more than a touching account of 1930s depression-era life. This book is a human document of universal meaning. *The Education of Little Tree* speaks to the human spirit and reaches the very depth of the human soul.

Everyone who has ever read *The Education of Little Tree*

seems to remember when and where and how they came to know the book. Whether they saw it on a bookseller's shelf, or heard it reviewed as "Book of the Week" on a television book show, or found it on the gift table at a tribal souvenir shop while passing through an Indian reservation, *Little Tree's* readers passionately remember these first meetings. For *The Education of Little Tree* is a book from which one never quite recovers. After reading *Little Tree* one never again sees the world in quite the same way.

Upon publication in 1977 *The Education of Little Tree* was widely reviewed and universally acclaimed. Reviewers as diverse as those of *The New York Times* and local mountain weeklies saw in *The Education of Little Tree* an inspirational story of a young Indian boy which might provide a fresh perspective for a mechanistic and materialistic modern world. Thus *Little Tree* found its first and most loyal readership among those who cared about the young, about "growing up," about the Indian, about the earth, and about the relationship of man and the earth.

Soon *Little Tree* began to find fans among other groups. Teenagers took to the book almost as a cult. The values as well as the prose touched many who didn't usually read. Younger children found *Little Tree* on their own. Librarians began to find *Little Tree* missing from the shelves. Students of Native American life discovered the book to be as accurate as it was mystical and romantic. Elementary-school teachers learned that *Little Tree* fascinated their seemingly world-weary charges. But most generally the love of *Little Tree* passed from reader to reader with the increasingly hard-to-find borrowed copy of the book.

With this University of New Mexico Press edition, *The Education of Little Tree* is again available. Old and new readers can once more share this incredibly touching and deeply moving story which informs the heart and educates the spirit.