DRAWING SQUIRKLES AROUND A TREE

Brenda Hoddinott



Q-05 INTERMEDIATE: PLACES & THINGS

Even if you're an expert in botany, you'll have a hard time figuring out what kind of tree this is. The tree in this lesson doesn't exist; rather it's a figment of my imagination. If you prefer, you can base your drawing on a more realistic tree (from life or a photo).

Most beginners to drawing tend to draw only the branches that grow from the sides of the tree, without indicating those that are behind and in front of the trunk. The primary goal of this lesson is to provide learners with a strong sense of the three dimensional qualities of a tree.

This lesson is divided into four parts:

- **SETTING UP YOUR DRAWING:** You sketch the outlines of the trunk of the tree (without branches) and the edge of the cliff.
- **ADDING BRANCHES AROUND A TREE TRUNK:** You outline the placement of the tree's branches, beginning with the branches behind the tree trunk, then the side branches, and finally the branches in front.
- **SQUIRKLING BRANCHES:** You add shading to the branches to bring out their overlapping forms.
- **ADDING FINAL TOUCHES:** You add shading to the rocks and shrubs on the cliff, and add more details to the branches in front of the trunk.

Suggested drawing supplies include good quality white drawing paper, graphite pencils, kneaded and vinyl erasers, and a pencil sharpener.

Recommended for artists with strong skills in shading with squirkles, as well as students of home schooling, academic and recreational fine art educators

12 PAGES – 17 ILLUSTRATIONS

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SETTING UP YOUR DRAWING

Before you draw the various textures of a rocky cliff and the branches and trunk of a tree, you need to plan a place for everything on your drawing paper, sort of like a blueprint. In this section, you sketch the outlines of the trunk of the tree (without branches) and the edge of the cliff.

When you draw a portrait of a person, if your proportions are wrong, your drawing just won't look correct. Not so with a tree, if the proportions are off a little, it really doesn't matter. In Figures 501 to 503 I show you three trees. Even though the proportions are different, they still look like trees.



Figure 501: Drawing of a short wide tree.



Figure 502: A medium size tree (this is the size of the tree in my drawing).

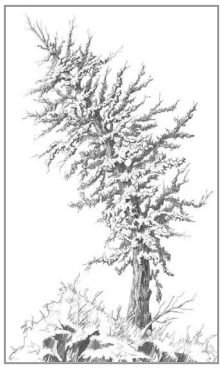


Figure 503: A tall thin tree.

1. Outline a tree trunk and the edge of the cliff.

Refer to Figure 504. If you want your tree to be a little less curved, draw the outlines of the trunk straighter.

Figure 504



Art Speak

Texture is the surface detail of an object, as defined in a drawing with various shading techniques. The senses of touch and sight help identify the surface texture of drawing subject.

Shading refers to the various shades of gray (values) in a drawing that make drawings look three-dimensional.

Sketching is drawing a quick, rough representation or outline of a planned drawing subject. A *sketch* can also be a completed work of art.

Proportion is the relationship in size of one component of a drawing to another or others.

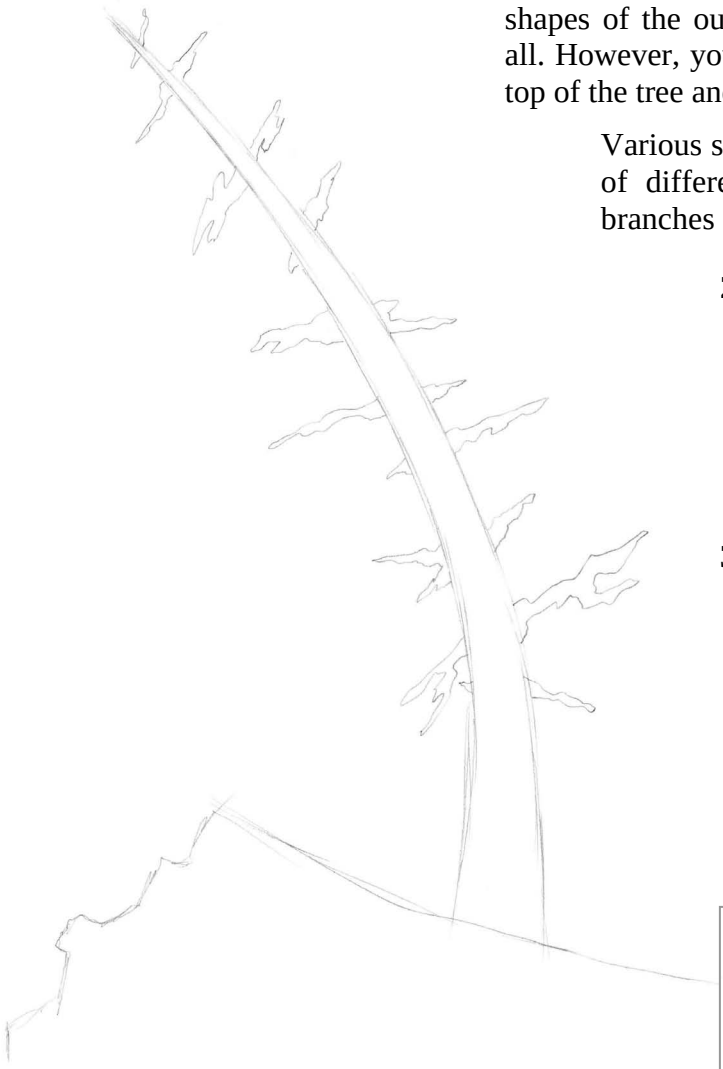
ADDING BRANCHES AROUND A TREE TRUNK

In this section, you outline the placement of the tree's branches. You begin with the branches behind the tree trunk, then outline side branches, and finally add branches in the front.

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You may want to draw fewer branches on your tree. You can gain a strong understanding of the process of drawing a three dimensional tree with a much less intricate drawing than mine.

Figure 505



My drawing is not based on a specific type of tree; rather it is simply a figment of my imagination. Hence, drawing the shapes of the outlines exactly like mine is not important at all. However, you should try to draw smaller branches at the top of the tree and larger branches toward the bottom.

Various straight, wiggly, and curved lines, and shapes of different sizes, make up the perimeters of the branches of the tree.

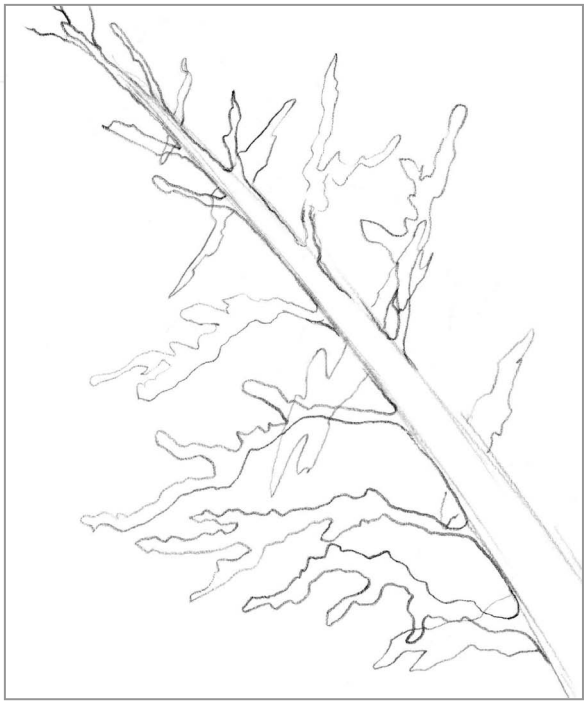
2. **Draw squiggly shapes that appear to be behind the trunk of the tree (to represent branches).**

   Keep your lines very light. Sections of these branches can't be seen because the trunk is blocking the view.

3. **Lighten the drawing slightly with a kneaded eraser.**

   You need to be able to tell the difference between the branches behind the tree and those growing from the sides.

Figure 506



4. **Take your time and draw a few branches that appear to grow from the sides of the trunk.**

   Remember, you do not need to draw this many branches!

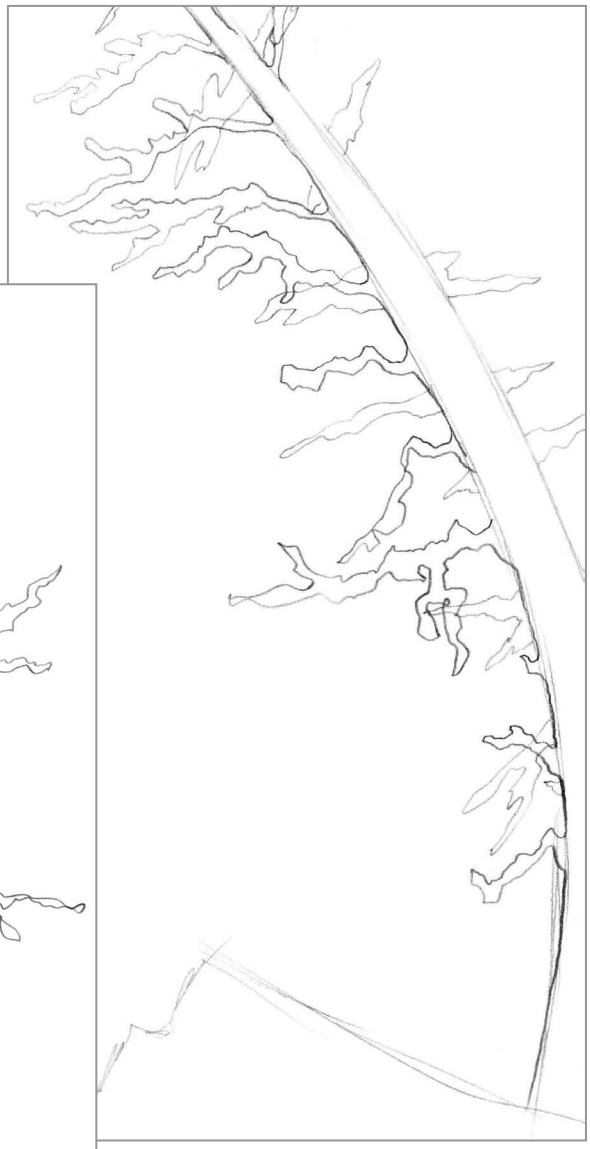
   Figures 506 to 508 show close-up views so you can follow along with the process of adding side branches.

   As I add more branches, I draw the outlines of the trunk more rugged (rather than smooth).

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The more you vary the shapes of your branches, the more believable your tree will appear!

Figure 507



5. Draw some foliage, grass and a small shrub on the top section of the cliff.

Refer to Figure 509.

Figure 508

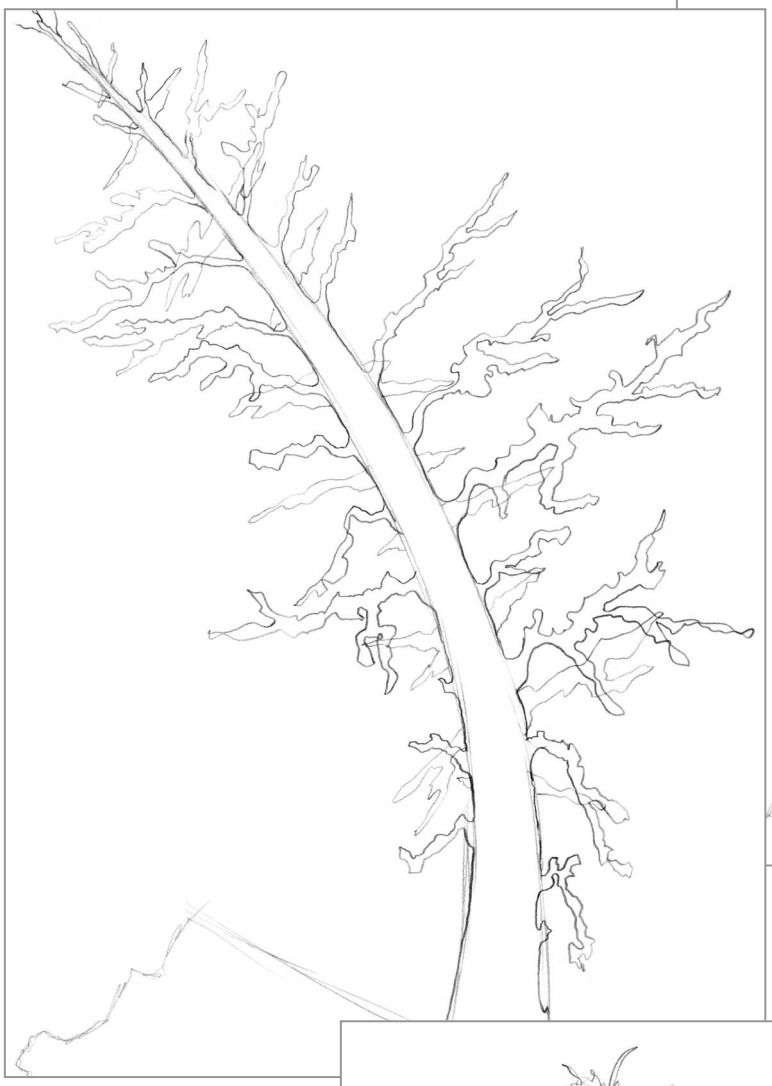
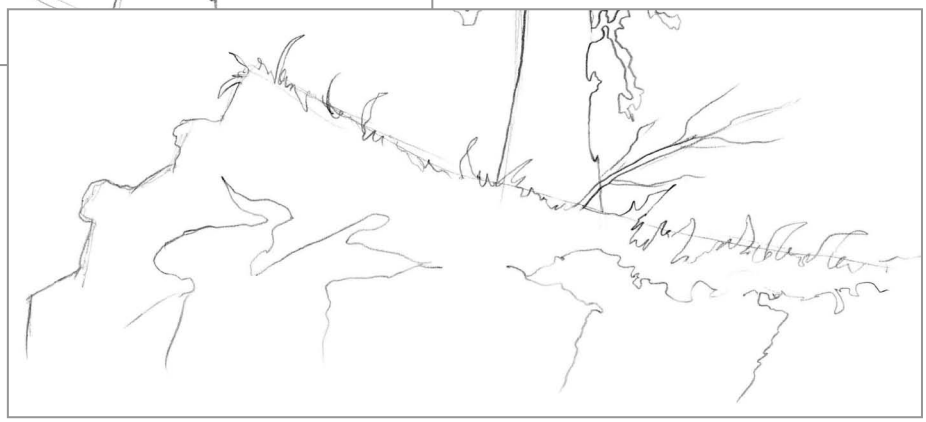


Figure 509



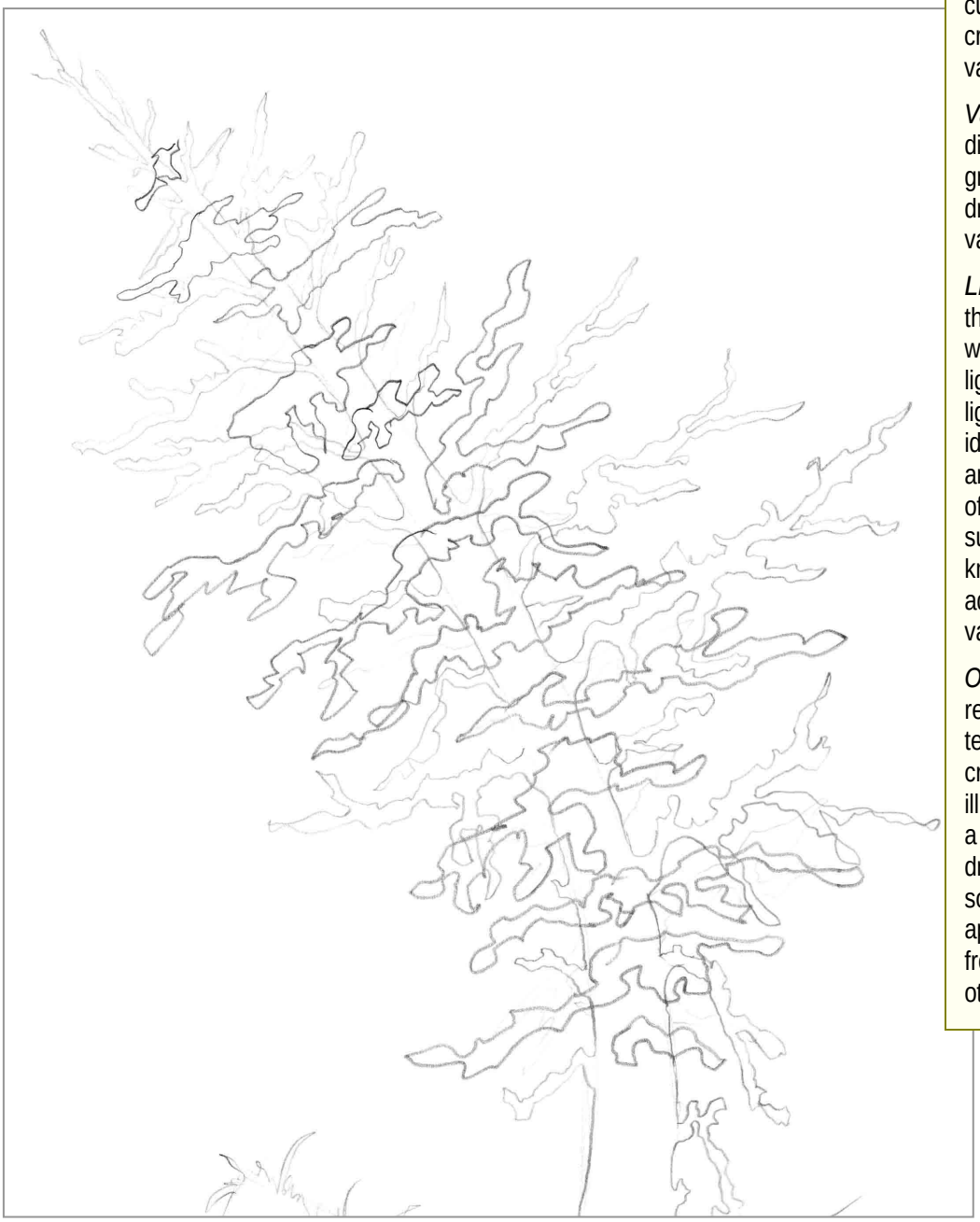
6. Outline a few sections of a rocky cliff below the top edge of the cliff.

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7. Pat your drawing with a kneaded eraser to lighten the lines again.

8. Outline branches that are in front of the tree trunk.

Figure 510



Art Speak

Squirkling is a method of shading incorporating randomly drawn curved lines to create textured values.

Values are the different shades of gray created in a drawing by various means.

Light source is the direction from which a dominant light originates. A light source identifies the light and shadow areas of a drawing subject, so artists know where to add different values.

Overlapping refers to a technique for creating the illusion of depth in a drawing by drawing a subject so it visually appears to be in front of another (or others).

If you think you may become confused as to which branches are which, tidy your drawing before continuing on to the next section. Work your way from front to back, and erase any lines that are showing inside the outlines of other branches. With these lines gone, you can more clearly see which branches are in front of others. Redraw any sections that were accidentally erased.

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SQUIRKLING BRANCHES

In this section, you add shading to the branches to bring out their overlapping forms.

9. Use an HB pencil and squirkles to add shading to the branches behind the tree.

Figure 511



Figure 512

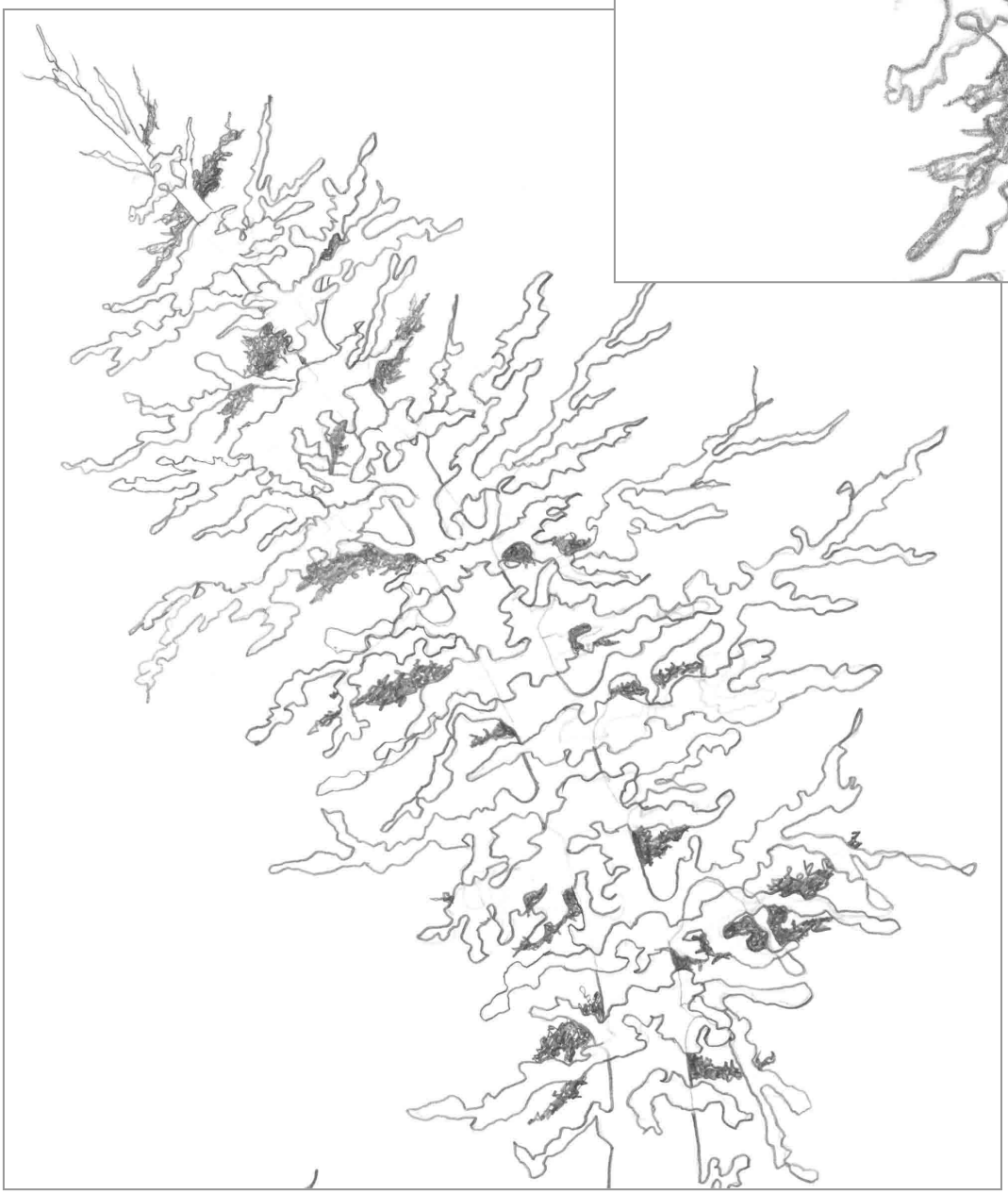


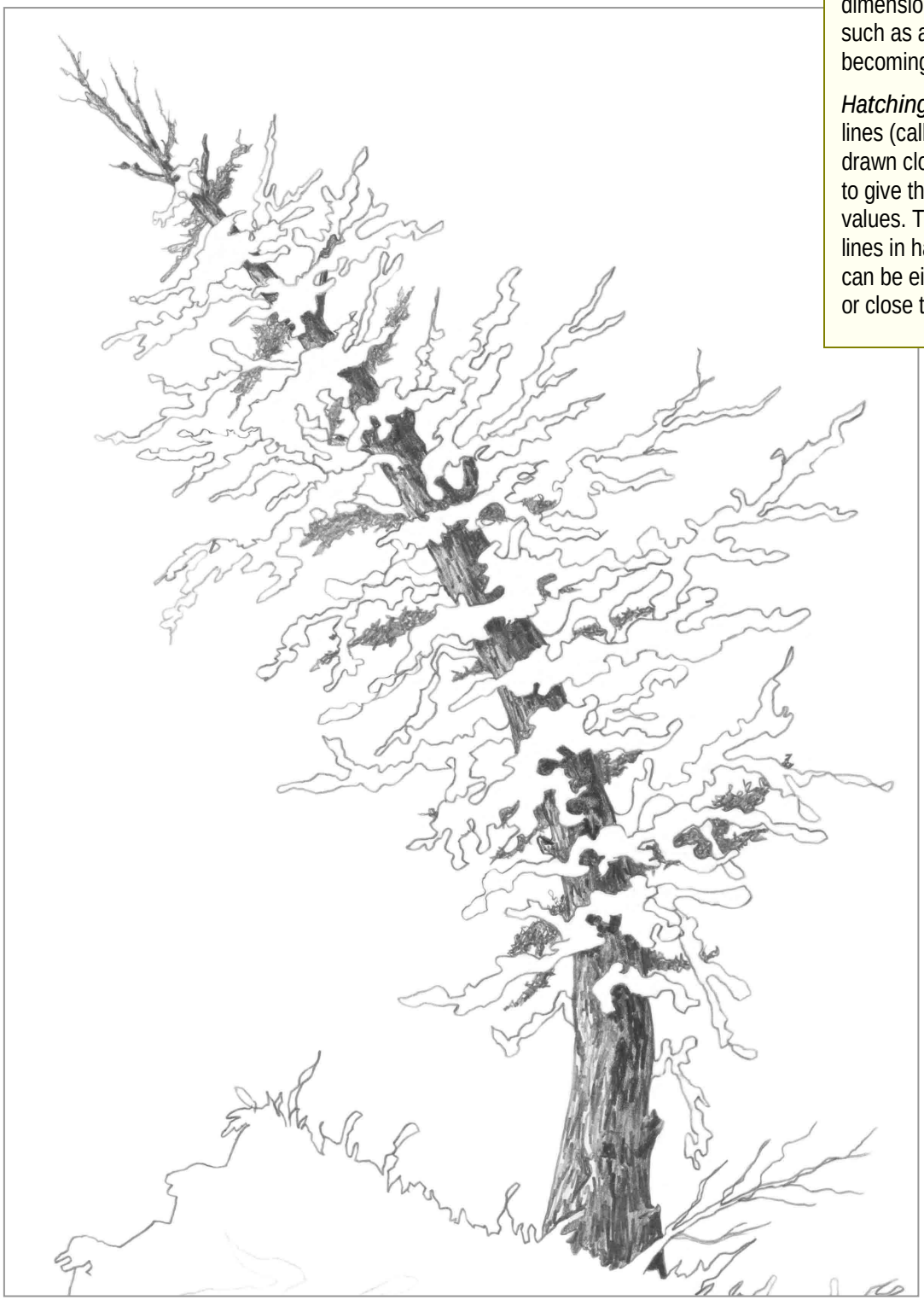
Figure 511 shows a close up view of branches rendered with squirkling.

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10. Use mostly oval squirkling to add shading to the tree trunk.

The three dimensional form of the tree trunk is created with various values from light to dark (HB, 2B, and 4B pencils).

Figure 513



The light source in this drawing is from the upper left; hence the shading is darker on the right and lower right.

Art Speak

Forms are created in drawings by adding shading to transform a shape into three-dimensional structures, such as a circle becoming a sphere.

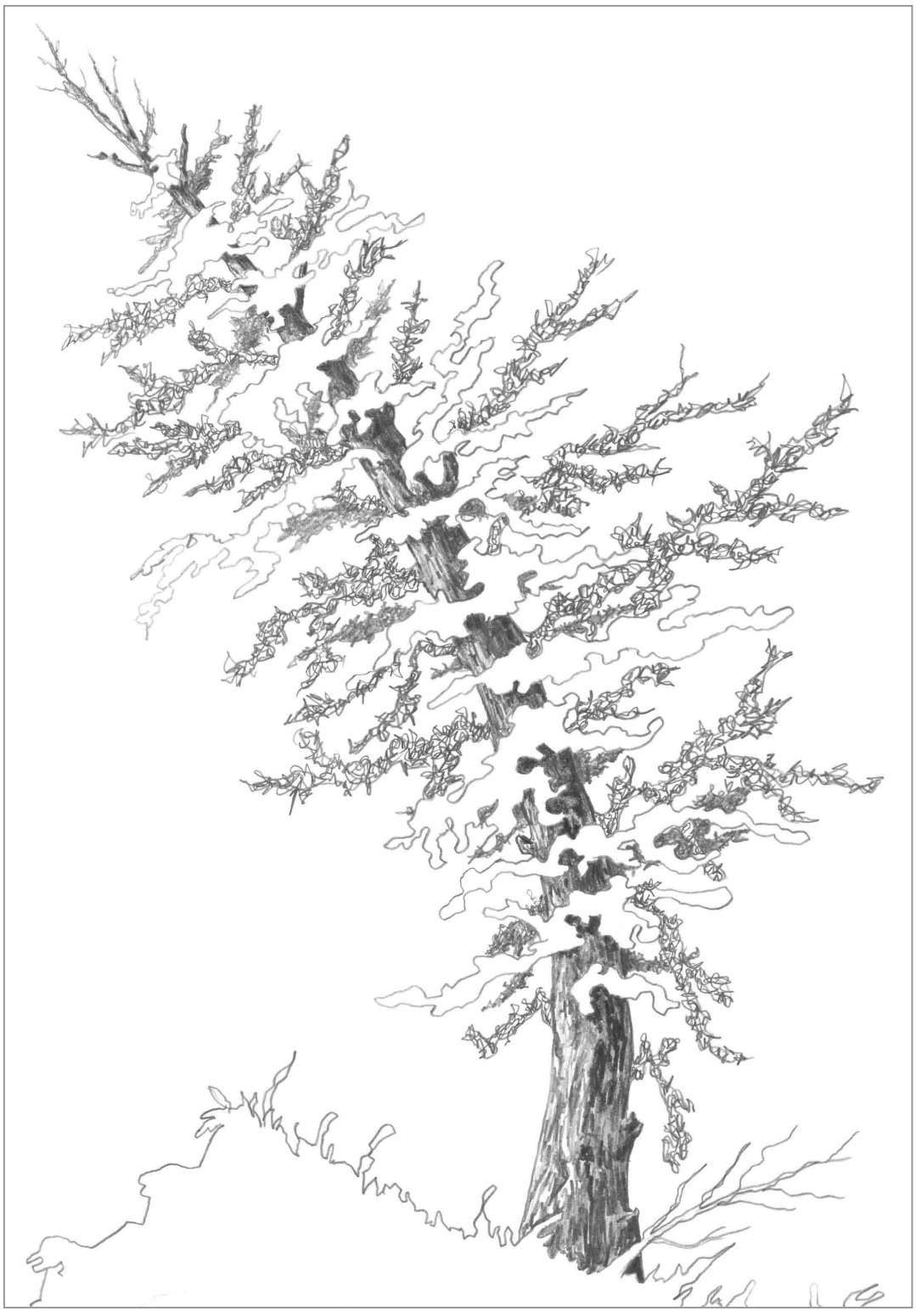
Hatching is a series of lines (called a set) drawn closely together to give the illusion of values. The individual lines in hatching sets can be either far apart or close together.

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11. Use an HB pencil to add medium values to the branches that grow from the sides of the tree trunk.

Only the branches in the very front are left white.

Figure 514



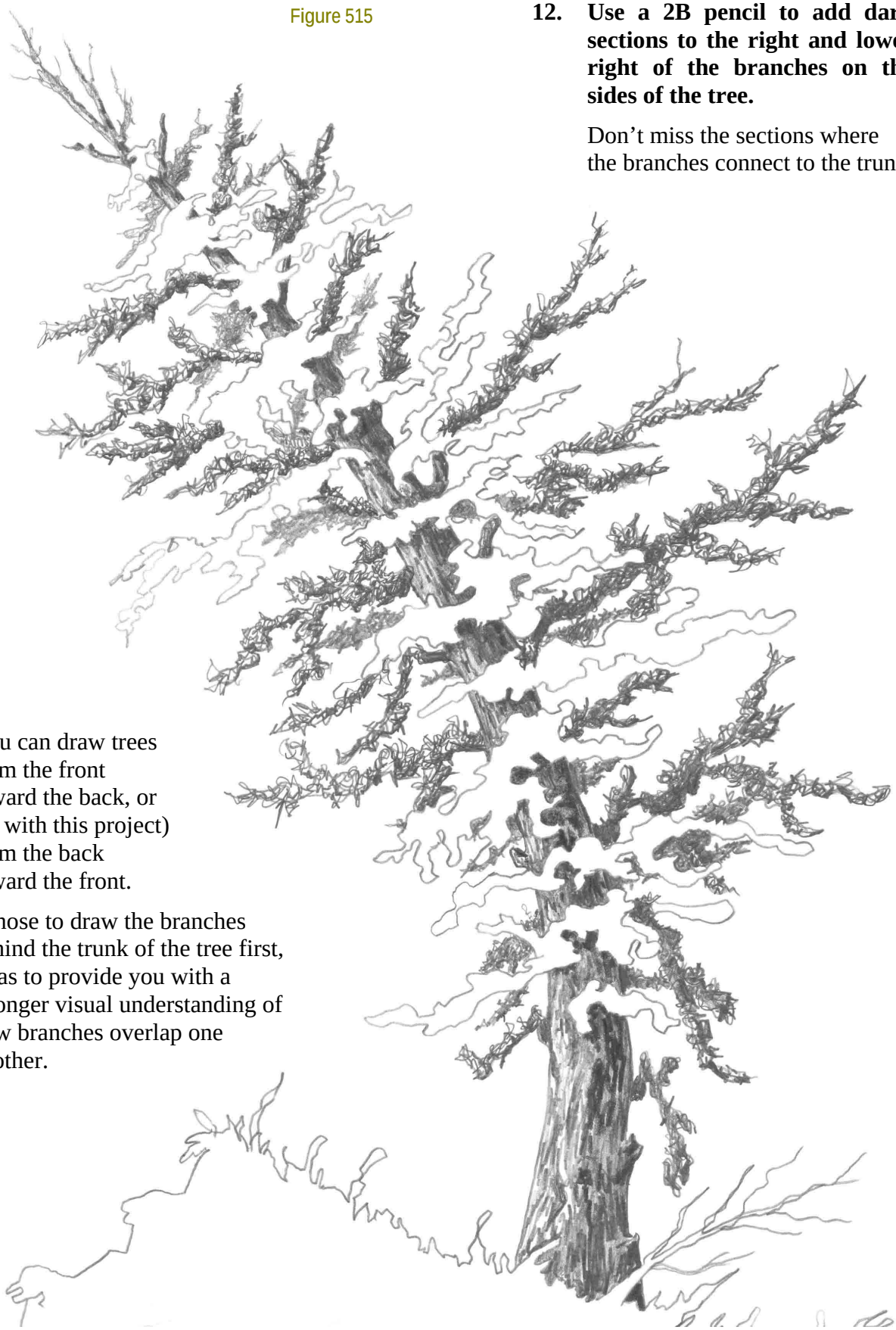
Closely examine the branches in Figure 514.

The squirkling lines extend outside the original outline of each branch to help make the tree look more natural.

You can barely see the outlines of the branches anymore.

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Figure 515



12. Use a 2B pencil to add dark sections to the right and lower right of the branches on the sides of the tree.

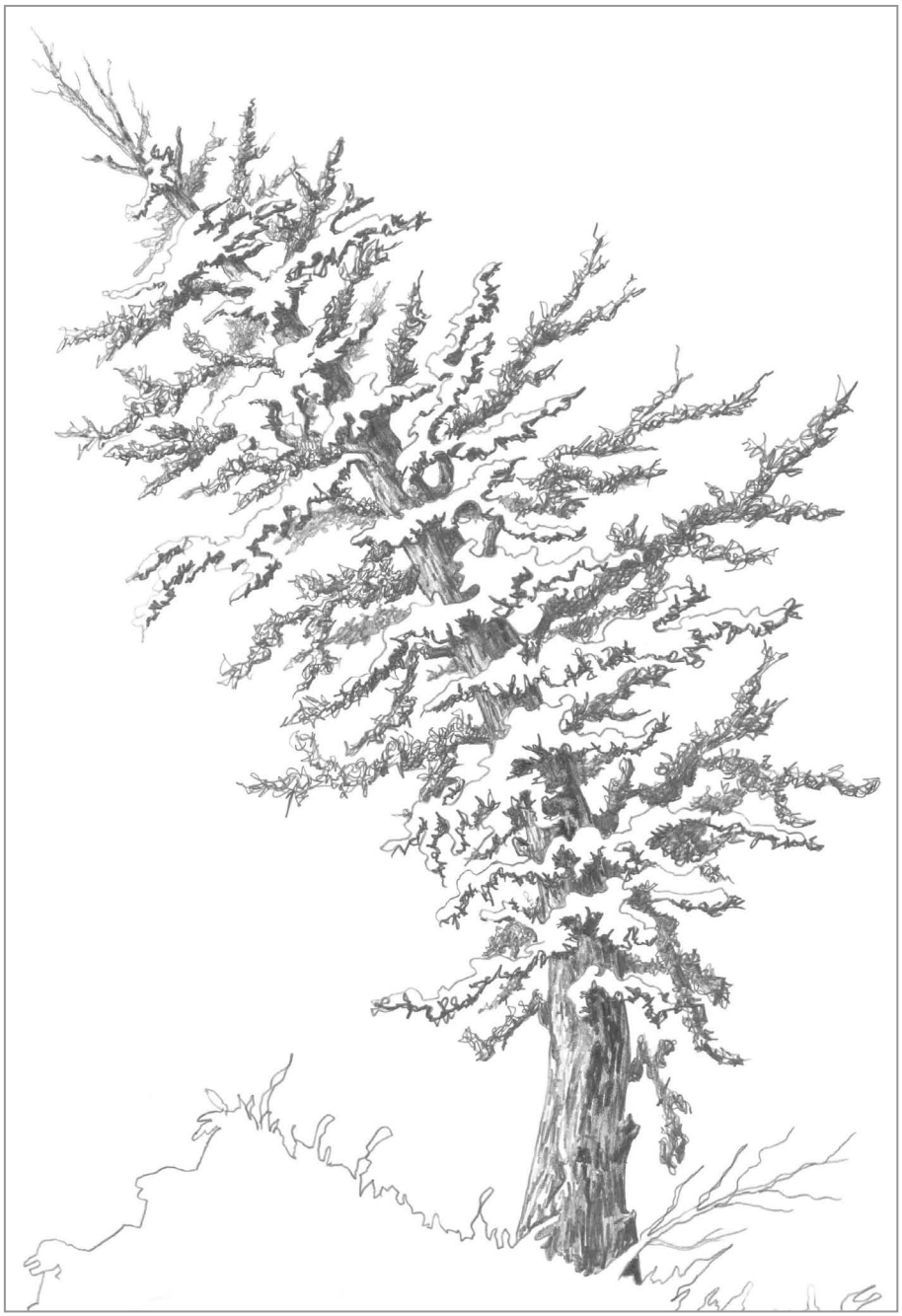
Don't miss the sections where the branches connect to the trunk.

You can draw trees from the front toward the back, or (as with this project) from the back toward the front.

I chose to draw the branches behind the trunk of the tree first, so as to provide you with a stronger visual understanding of how branches overlap one another.

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Figure 516



13. **Use a 2B to add dark shading on the lower and lower right sections of the branches in the front.**

ADDING FINAL TOUCHES

In this section, you add shading to the rocks and shrubs on the cliff, and add more details to the branches in front of the trunk.

14. **Use an HB pencil to add a few squirkles to the front branches, mostly around the edges.**

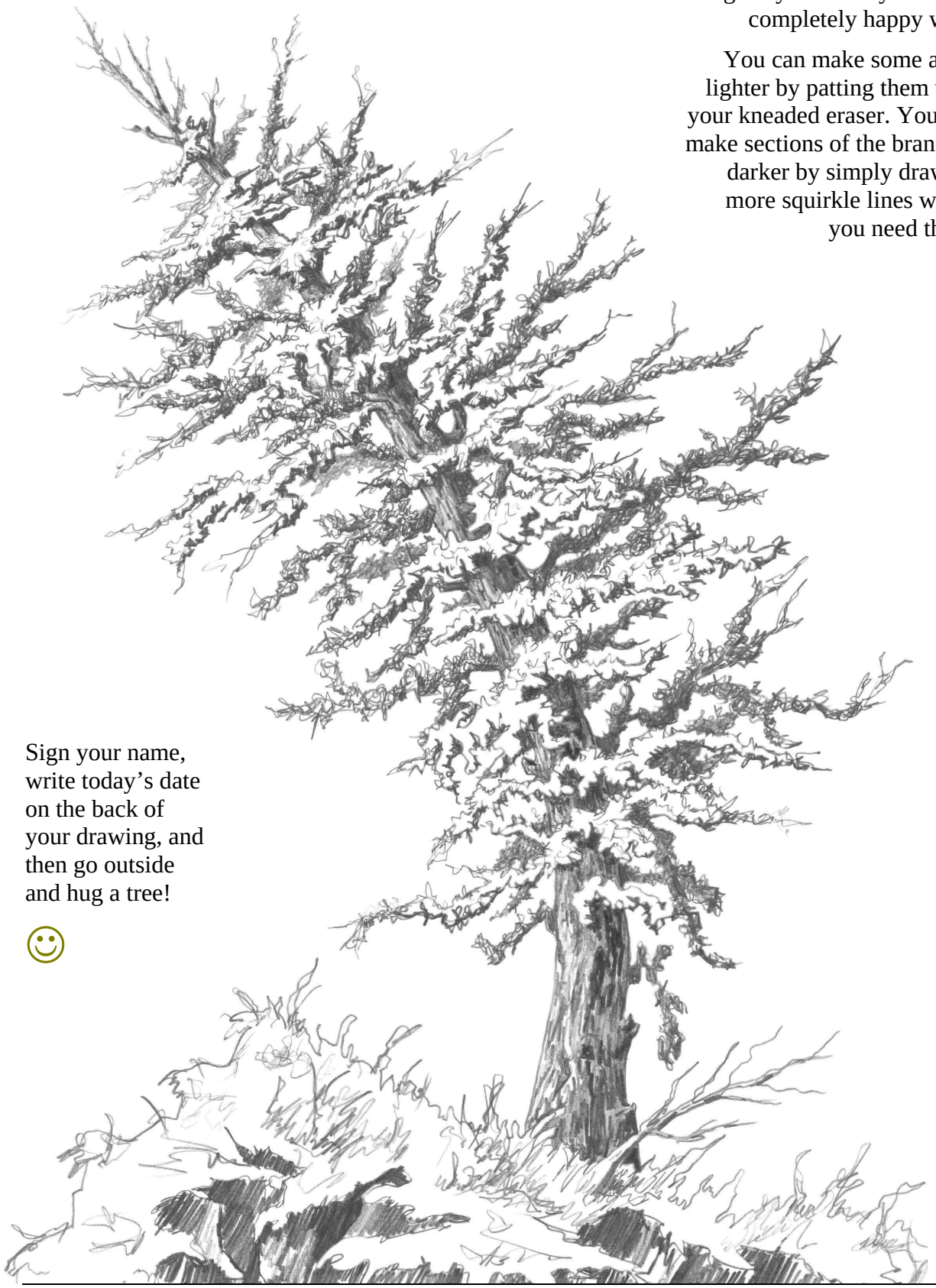
    Refer to Figure 517.

15. **Use squirkles and an HB pencil to draw a few sections of grass at the base of the tree.**

16. **Use hatching and 2B and 4B pencils, to add shading to a few rocky sections of the lower part of the cliff.**

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Figure 517



Have one last look at your drawing and change any sections you aren't completely happy with.

You can make some areas lighter by patting them with your kneaded eraser. You can make sections of the branches darker by simply drawing more squirkle lines where you need them.

Sign your name, write today's date on the back of your drawing, and then go outside and hug a tree!

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BRENDA HODDINOTT - BIOGRAPHY

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist, and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including graphite, technical pen, colored pencil, chalk pastel, charcoal, conté crayon, and oil paints.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong technical competencies with a personal commitment to self directed learning, and the aid of assorted "Learn to Draw" books. During Brenda's twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, numerous criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

Her home-based art career included graphic design, and teaching recreational drawing and painting classes. As supervisor of her community's recreational art department, Brenda hired and trained teachers, and designed curriculum for several children's art programs. In 1998, Brenda chose to end her eighteen-year career as an art educator in order to devote more time to writing, drawing, painting, and developing her websites.

Drawspace http://www.drawspace.com incorporates her unique style and innovative approach to curriculum development. This site offers downloadable and printable drawing classes for students of all abilities from the age of eight through adult. Students of all ages, levels and abilities have praised the simple step-by-step instructional approach. This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.

LEARN-TO-DRAW BOOKS BY BRENDA HODDINOTT

- **Drawing for Dummies:** Wiley Publishing, Inc., New, York, NY, this 336 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.
- **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People:** Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN, this 360 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.

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