Shade

I sit in the immense shade of a tree
A tree that is broken and beautiful
My ancestors were beaten by whips and chains
While believing in a God who only gave them hope, not freedom.
So, they freed themselves and planted a tree, in memory of their fight.
Before I found the tree, it had been burnt, cut down, and ignored.
But, it still stands proudly, covered with scars.
I visit the tree every day.
I relax in its shade and eat the apples from its branches.
Before I leave, I thank the tree as always:

Thank you for giving me shelter and protection.
Thank you for the fruit that nourishes me.
Thank you for fighting to stay alive, even when you lost hope.
Thank you for the shelter you provide to others besides me.
And thank you for letting me type these words at all.

I leave the tree to stand eternal, just as it always has.
It's given so much to give me life. What do I give them back?
The answer is simple:

I give them proof.

Proof that their fight was not in vain.
Proof that their shade gives life, even when it rains.
Proof that I can live my life without their scars.
Proof that thanks to their sacrifice:

We can go far.