

OUR CASUARINA TREE TORU DUTT



About

Our Casuarina Tree is a poem published in 1881 by Toru Dutt, an Indian poet. In this poem Toru Dutt celebrates the majesty of the Casuarina Tree that she used to see by her window, and remembers her happy childhood days spent under it and revives her memories with her beloved siblings.

The Text

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round
The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,
Up to its very summit near the stars,
A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
No other tree could live. But gallantly
The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung
In crimson clusters all the boughs among,
Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee;
And oft at nights the garden overflows
With one sweet song that seems to have no close,
Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose.

When first my casement is wide open thrown
At dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest;
Sometimes, and most in winter,—on its crest
A gray baboon sits statue-like alone
Watching the sunrise; while on lower boughs
His puny offspring leap about and play;
And far and near kokilas hail the day;
And to their pastures wend our sleepy cows;
And in the shadow, on the broad tank cast
By that hoar tree, so beautiful and vast,
The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.

But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
For your sakes, shall the tree be ever dear.
Blent with your images, it shall arise
In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!
What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear
Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,
That haply to the unknown land may reach.

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!
Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away
In distant lands, by many a sheltered bay,
When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith
And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
Of France or Italy, beneath the moon,
When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon:
And every time the music rose,—before
Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,

Thy form, O Tree, as in my happy prime
I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay
Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose,—
Dearer than life to me, alas, were they!
Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
With deathless trees—like those in Borrowdale,
Under whose awful branches lingered pale
“Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
And Time the shadow;” and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from Oblivion’s curse.

BENGALI TRANSLATION

বিশাল ময়াল সাপের মত চারিধারে জড়িয়ে আছে
অমসূণ গাছের গুড়ি কে, এবং গভীর ঝতচিহ্ন সৃষ্টি করেছে
গাছের চূড়া পর্যন্ত যা আকাশের তারার কাছাকাছি
একটি লতা গাছ ঝাউ গাছ বেড়ে উঠেছে, যার আলিঙ্গনের বন্ধনে
কোন কোন গাছ বাঁচতে পারে না। কিন্তু সাহসিকতার সাথে
এই বিশাল গাছটি ওই লতা কে গ্রহণ করেছে গলাবন্ধ হিসেবে এবং গাছের ফুলগুলি বুলছে
রক্তিম থোকায় থোকায় সমস্ত ডাল গুলিতে

যার ওপর সারাদিন ধরে পাখি মৌমাছি জড়ো হয়

এবং প্রায়ই রাত্রি বেলাতে বাগান থেকে ভেসে আসে

মিষ্টি মধুর গান যে গুলির যেন মনে হয় কোন শেষ নেই

আমাদের গাছে পাখিরা রাত্রিবেলায় গান করে যখন মানুষেরা বিশ্রাম নেয়

যখন দিনে প্রথমবারের জন্য আমার কাঁচের জালনা টা খোলা হয়

ভোরবেলা আনন্দের সাথে আমার চোখ গিয়ে পড়ে গাছের ওপর

মাঝে মাঝে এবং শীতের বেশিরভাগ সময়ই গাছের মগডাল এর উপর

একটি ধূসর রঙের বানর একা বসে থাকে মূর্তির মত

বসে বসে সে সূর্যোদয়ের লক্ষ্য করে, তখন নিচের ডাল গুলিতে

তার পুচকে বাস্চা লাফালাফি করে এবং খেলা করে

এবং দূরে এবং কাছে কোকিল পাখিরা নতুন দিনের আগমন জানায়

এবং ঘুমন্ত গরু গুলো সারিবদ্ধ ভাবে তাদের চারণভূমিতে যায়

এবং বিশাল পুকুরের উপর পতিত ছায়াতে

যে ছায়াটি ঝাউ গাছ সৃষ্টি করেছে, খুব সুন্দর এবং বিস্মৃতভাবে

তারমধ্যে লিলি ফুলগুলো ফুটে আছে পুঞ্জিত বরফের মত

কিন্তু গাছটির বিশালতার জন্য

গাছটি আমাদের কাছে প্রিয় না

এই গাছের তলায় আমরা কত খেলা করেছি; অনেক বছর পার হয়ে গেল

ওপ্রিয় সঙ্গীরা, তোমাদের ভালোবেসেছিলাম গভীর ভালোবাসা দিয়ে

শুধুমাত্র তোমাদের জন্য এই গাছটি চিরদিন আমার প্রিয় হয়ে থাকবে

তোমাদের স্মৃতি মিশ্রিত গাছের ছবি জেগে ওঠে

আমার স্মৃতিতে, তারপর উষ্ণ অক্ষর আমার চোখ গুলিকে সিক্ত করে দেয়

কি ওই গানের মত মর্মর ধ্বনি যা আমি শুনতে পাই

যা পাথুরে সমুদ্রতটের উপরে ঢেউ ভাঙার শব্দের মত?

এটি হলো সেই গাছের কান্না, যা শুনতে ভুতুড়ে প্রলাপের মত

যা হয়তো কোন এক অজানা দেশে পৌঁছায়

সেগুলি অজানা তবুও বিশ্বাসের চোখে সেগুলি খুব জানা

আমি ওই বিলাপ শুনেছি অনেক দূর থেকে

কোন এক দূরের সমুদ্রতীর থেকে

যখন সমুদ্রের ঢেউ গুলি তার গুহার মধ্যে ঘুমিয়ে থাকে

এবং ওই ঢেউগুলি মৃদুভাবে চুম্বন করে যায় কোন এক কিংবদন্তি তট কে

তা হয়তো চন্দ্রালোকিত ফ্রান্সের বা ইতালির

যখন পৃথিবী ঘুমে মগ্ন থাকে স্বপ্নহীন ঘরের মধ্যে

এবং প্রতিবার ওই সঙ্গীত জেগে ওঠে

আমার মানস চক্ষুতে, সেটি জেগে ওঠে মহিমাশ্রিত রূপে

ও গাছ, আমার সুখের যৌবনে তোমার রূপ

আমি দেখেছি, আমার নিজের প্রিয় মাতৃভূমিতে

তাই আমি আনন্দের সাথে একটি গান নিবেদন করছি

তোমার সম্মানে, ও গাছ, তাদের প্রিয় গাছ

যারা এখন চির বিশ্রামে শান্তিতে শুয়ে আছে

তারা ছিলো আমার জীবনের থেকেও আমার কাছে বেশি প্রিয়, হায়! তারা আজ আর নেই

যখন আমাদের দিন শেষ হয়ে যাবে তখনও তোমার দিন চলতে থাকবে

বরডেল উপত্যাকার সেইসব মৃত্যুহীন গাছেদের সাথে

যাদের ভয়ঙ্কর ডালপালার তলায় বিরাজ করে ল্লান

"ভয়, কল্পিত আশা, মৃত্যু, কঙ্কাল,

সময় এবং ছায়া" এবং যদিও আমার এই কবিতা খুবই দুর্বল

তবুও আমার কবিতা আনন্দের সাথে বলবে তোমার সৌন্দর্যের কথা

হয়তো আমার এই ভালোবাসা তোমাকে রক্ষা করবে বিস্মৃতির অভিশাপ থেকে

I) Short answer type Questions

a) **What is the creeper compared to?**

The creeper is compared to a **python**.

b) **How does the creeper appear on the tree?**

The creeper is **winding the trunk of the casuarina tree** round and round It embraces the tree very **tightly**.

c) **Describe the garden during the night.**

During the night the garden is **filled with an endless song**. It is **sung from the dark side of the garden**.

d) **How does the poet spend her winter?**

The poet spends her winter **watching the baboon that sits like a statue** on top of the tree, its offsprings run and play in th lower branches, the **cows grazing** and the **water lilies springing** in the pond.

e) **Name the bird that sings in the poet's garden.**

Kokila is a type of bird **similar to the cuckoo** that sings in the poet's garden

f) **Why is the casuarina tree dear to poet's heart?**

The Casuarina tree is dear to poet's heart not only for its impressive appearance **but also for the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood that it brings to her**.

g) **Does nature communicate with human beings?**

Yes, nature communicates with human beings.

h) What has Wordsworth sanctified in his poem?

Wordsworth has sanctified **the yew tree of Borrowdale valley** in his poem.

i) To whom does Toru Dutt want to consecrate the tree's memory?

Toru Dutt wants to consecrate the tree's memory **to her be loved ones who are not alive.**

j) The casuarina tree will be remembered for ever. Why?

The casuarina tree will be remembered for ever. Because the poet expresses her wish that **the tree should be remembered out of love** and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

ii) Read the lines given below and answer the questions that follow.

A) A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound

No other tree could live.

i. Which tree is referred to in the above lines?

Ans: Casuarina tree is referred to in the above lines.

ii. How does the tree survive the tight hold of the creeper?

Ans: The tree survives the tight hold of the creeper **because the tree is very strong.**

iii. Why does Toru Dutt use the expression 'a creeper climbs'?

Ans: The creeper is winding the tree upwards round and round. So Toru Dutt uses the expression 'a creeper climbs'.

B) The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung In crimson clusters all the bough among!

i. Who is the giant here?

Ans: The Casuarina tree is the giant here.

ii. Why is the scarf colourful?

Ans: Here the scarf refers to the winding creeper's flowers. They are colorful.

***C) "Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
And Time the shadow", and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, oh, fain rehearse,
May Love defend thee from oblivion's curse.***

1. What does the poet mean by the expression 'May love defend thee from oblivion's curse?'

Ans: Here 'oblivion's curse' means the 'curse of forgetfulness'. **The tree should be remembered out of love** and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

2. What does the expression 'fain' convey?

Ans: The expression 'fain' conveys **the eagerness of the poet** or the poem.

3. What does the poet convey through the expression 'Fear, trembling hope'?

Ans: The poet conveys (her) **humans' state of mind** through the expression 'Fear, trembling hope'.

D) Like a huge Python, winding round and round.

The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,

Up to its very summit near the stars,

A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound

1. **What is compared to python?**
 - A creeper is compared to python.
2. **Where is the tree's summit?**
 - The tree's summit is near the stars.
3. **Who embraces who?**
 - The creeper embraces the casuarina tree.
4. **Mention the figure of speech mentioned in this line.**
 - Figure of speech: Simile.
5. **What is the rhyme scheme of the above lines?**
 - Rhyme scheme: a b b a
6. **Pick out the rhyming words mentioned in the above lines.**
 - Rhyming words: round - bound; scars - stars

E) No other tree could live. But gallantly

The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung

In crimson clusters all the boughs among

Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee;

1. **How does the tree stand?**
 - The tree stands like a giant.
2. **Where are flowers hanging?**
 - Flowers are hanging from the creeper among the boughs of the trees.
3. **What does the scarf refer to?**
 - The scarf refers to the winding creeper's colourful flowers.
4. **what are gathered on the tree?**
 - Bird and bees are gathered on the tree.
5. **What is the rhyme scheme of the above lines?**
 - Rhyme scheme: a b b a
6. **Pick out the rhyming words mentioned in the above lines.**
 - Rhyming words: gallantly - bee; hung - among

F) And oft at nights the garden overflows.

*With one sweet song that seems to have no close,
Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose.*

a) What does the garden overflow with?

The garden overflows with a sweet song.

b) What time is referred here?

Night time is referred to here.

c) Who heard the song?

The poet heard the song.

d) What is the rhyme scheme of the above lines?

Rhyme scheme: a a a

e) Pick out the rhyming words mentioned in the above lines.

Rhyming words: overflows - close - repose

d) How does the poet see the casuarina tree?

The poet sees the casuarina tree through her casement, wtsteam

G) *A grey baboon sits statue-like alone*

Wathcing the sunrise; while on lower boughs.

a) What is compared to the baboon?

A statue is compared to the baboon.

b) What does baboon mean?

Baboon is a kind of monkey that lived in Asia and Africa.

c) What is the baboon watching?

The baboon is watching the sunrise.

H) His puny offspring leap about and play;

And far and near kokilas hail the day.

a) What does “offspring” refer here?

‘Offspring’ refers to a young one of the baboons.

b) What does the offspring do?

The offspring leaps and plays among the boughs of the casuarina tree.

c) What are kokilas?

Kokilas are birds like cuckoos.

d) What does ‘puny’ mean?

Puny means ‘sturdy or weak’.

e) What does the poet watch on the tree?

The poet watches a baboon, birds, a bee, and an offspring of the baboon.

I) By that hoar tree, so beautiful and vast,

The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.

a) What does ‘hoar’ mean?

Hoar means cluster (or) group of trees.

b) What is compared to the water-lilies’ springing?

‘Enmassed Snow’ is compared to the water-lilies’ springing.

J) Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:

Beneath it we have played; though years may roll

a) What does the tree bring to the poet?

The tree brings nostalgic memories of the poet's happy childhood.

b) What does the poet recollect himself?

The poet recollects her childhood days.

c) Where did they play?

They played among the boughs of the casuarina tree.

K) What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear

like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach.

a) What does the poet hear?

The poet hears the (dirge) murmuring sad songs.

b) What does the poet compare the murmur to?

The poet compares the murmur to the sound of sea waves breaking on the (shingle) rocky beach.

L) I saw thee, in my own loved native clime.

Therefore O foam would consecrate a lay

a) What does "thee" refer to?

'Thee' refers to the casuarina tree.

b) Where does the poet see the tree?

The poet sees the tree in her own beloved native land.

***M) With deathless trees-like those in Borrowdale,
Under whose awful branches lingered pale.***

a) Which deathless tree is compared to here?

The yew tree in Borrowdale is compared to the casuarina tree.

b) What is meant by Borrowdale?

Borrowdale is a valley in England.

c) Whose poem is referred to here ?

Wordsworth's poem is referred to here.

iii) Explain the following lines with reference to the context.

a) *Dear is the Casuarina to my soul;*

Context : The above line is taken from the poem 'OUR CASUARINA TREE' written by Toru Dutt.

Explanation: The poet says that the Casuarina tree is very dear to the poet's heart not only for its impressive appearance but also for the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood that it brings to her.

Comment : The poet expresses her love to the casuarina tree.

b) *It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,...*

Context : The above line is taken from the poem 'OUR CASUARINA TREE' written by Toru Dutt.

Explanation: The poet strongly believes that nature communicates with human beings. The poet could communicate with the tree even when she was in a far-off land as she could hear the tree lamenting her absence.

Comment : The poet personifies the tree and believes that it laments over her absence.

**c) *Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose,***

Context : The above line is taken from the poem "OUR CASUARINA TREE" written by Toru Dutt.

Explanation: The poet sanctifies the tree. He consecrates the tree's memory to her loved ones. But they are not alive. He praises the tree that it is so loveable to both living and dead.

Comment : The poet says that the tree is so dear to everyone.

iv) Identify the figure of speech used in each of the extracts given below and write down the answer in the space given below. The first one is done for you.

a) "**LIKE a huge Python**, winding round and round (Zoomorphism/Simile)

The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars",

b) "*A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound*

No other tree could live. But gallantly

The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung....." (Personification)

c) "*A gray baboon sits statue-like alone"* (Simile)

d) "*The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed.*"(Simile)

e) "*What is that dirge - like murmur that I hear*(Personification)

Like the sea breaking on a shingle -beach?(Simile,)

a) Zoomorphism / Simile

b) Personification

c) Simile

d) Simile

e) Personification, Simile

a) Zoomorphism

Describing the vine in animal terms (as a python). This is used to illustrate movement, making the tree seem more actively alive and also implying movement. This is a subtle indication of the process of life.

v) Answer each of the following questions in a paragraph of 100–150 words.

a. Describe the reminiscences of the poet, when she sees the casuarina tree.

Poem : Our Casuarina Tree

Poet : Toru Dutt

Theme : Reminiscences of the poetss

Outline : casuarina tree - tall and strong - creeper - scarf- Birds - song - watching - baboon - offspring - cows - water lilies - dear to poet's heart - nostalgic memories - communicate - tree laments - immortalizes - yew tree -remembered out of love

The casuarina tree is tall and strong, with a creeper winding around it like a python. The tree stands like a giant with a colourful scarf of flowers. Birds surround the garden during day time. The sweet song of the birds is heard at night. The poet is delighted to see the casuarina tree through her casement. The poet spends her winter watching the baboon sitting on top of the tree. Its offspring leaps and plays among the boughs of the tree. The cows are grazing and the water lilies are springing in the pond. The Casuarina tree is dear to poet's heart not only for its impressive appearance but also for bringing the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood.

The poetess could communicate with the tree even when she was in a far-off land. She could hear the tree laments in her absence. She immortalizes the tree through her poem like the poet Wordsworth who sanctified the yew tree of Borrowdale valley in his poem. She expresses her wish that the tree should be remembered out of love and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

b. How does nature communicate with the poet?

Poem : Our Casuarina Tree

Poet : Toru Dutt

Theme : Nature communicates with the poet

Outline : Casuarina tree - dear to poet's heart - nostalgic memories - communicate - tree laments - immortalizes - yew tree - remembered out of love

The Casuarina tree is dear to poetess's heart not only for its impressive appearance but also for the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood that it brings to her. She strongly believes that nature communicates with human beings. The poet could communicate with the tree even when she was in a far-off land as she could hear the tree lamenting over her absence. The poet consecrates the tree's memory to her loved ones, who are not alive. She immortalizes the tree through her poem like the poet Wordsworth who sanctified the yew tree of Borrowdale valley in his poem. She expresses her wish that the tree should be remembered out of love and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

c. The poet immortalizes the tree. Elucidate.

Poem : Our Casuarina Tree **Poet :** Toru Dutt

Theme : The poet immortalizes the tree.

Outline : Casuarina tree - dear to poet's heart - nostalgic memories - communicate - tree laments - immortalizes - yew tree - remembered out of love

The Casuarina tree is dear to poetess's heart not only for its impressive appearance but also for the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood that it brings to her. She strongly believes that nature communicates with human beings. The poetess could communicate with the tree even when she was in a far-off land. She could hear the tree lamenting her absence. The poetess

consecrates the tree's memory to her loved ones, who are not alive. She loves them above all. For their sake, she immortalizes the tree through this poem like the poet Wordsworth who sanctified the yew tree of Borrowdale valley in his poem. She expresses her wish that the tree should be remembered out of love and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

ESSAY

Introduction

Appearance of the tree

Nature and the tree

Reminiscences of the poet

Immortalize the tree Conclusion

Introduction:

Tom Dutt was a Bengali poet. In this poem the nostalgic memories of her childhood days are shared by her picturesquely.

Appearance of the tree:

The Casuarina tree is tall and strong. A creeper is winding around it like a python. The tree stands like a giant with a colorful scarf of creeper's flowers.

Nature and the tree:

Birds surround the garden during day time. The sweet song of the birds is heard at night. The poet is delighted to see the casuarina tree through her casement. The poet spends her winter watching the baboon sitting on top of the tree. Its offspring leaps and plays among the boughs of the tree. The cows are grazing and the water lilies are springing in the pond like snow.

Reminiscences of the poet:

The Casuarina tree is dear to poet's heart not only for its impressive appearance but also for bringing the nostalgic memories of her happy childhood. The poet could communicate with the tree even when she was in a far-off land. She could hear the tree laments over her absence.

Immortalize the tree:

She consecrates the tree's memory to her loved ones, who are not alive. She loves them above all. For their sake, she immortalizes the tree through this poem like the poet Wordsworth who sanctified the yew tree of Borrowdale valley in his poem.

Conclusion:

Finally, She expresses her wish that the tree should be remembered out of love and not just because it cannot be forgotten.

Moral: *Nature can communicate with human beings.*