Title - The Casuarina tree

Author - Toru Dutt

Birth - 4th March 1856

Death - 30th August 1877 Kolkata,

Special note - founder of the Modern School of Indo Anglican poetry

Works

1. “The Lotus” - Petrarchan sonnet
2. “The Casuarina tree”
3. The Young Captive
4. The Young Captive
5. My Vocation
6. The Broken Bell
7. Christmas
8. Love Came To Flora Asking For A Flower
9. Sonnet
10. The Sower
11. Lakshman

Our Casuarina Tree

Published in : 1881

It is an autobiographical poem

About : celebrates the majesty of the Casuarina Tree and remembers her happy childhood days spent under it and revives her memories with her beloved siblings, brother and sister.

Genre : Lyric

Poem

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 trancèd 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.

"Our Casuarina Tree" is is a touching recollection in a pleasant lyric of an object of Nature. The tree is in the big garden **house at Rambagan**. The poetess used to play with her young mates, under the boughs of that vast tree. It occupied much of her young heart.

"Our Casuarina Tree" is an impulsive, frank expression of the poetess' intimate attachment to the big, hoary tree that bore **the happy memories of her early days and sweet companions**. Though she lived apart from her country home it is favorite tree for a pretty long time. When she was **in France and Italy**, she could not forget that and remained with it even in her quiet mood of happy vision.

The poem begins with the description of the tree. The creeper has wound itself round the rugged trunk of the Casuarina Tree, **like a huge Python**. The **creeper has left deep marks on the trunk** of the tree. The tree is so strong that it bears the tight hold of the creeper. The tree is described as being gallant and brave, as very few trees could survive in the strangle-hold of this creeper.

The poet then describes the life that thrives amidst every facet of the tree. The tree is metaphorical said as **a giant due to its huge size, strength and boldness**. The tree is covered with creeper which **bears red crimson flowers** which appear as though the tree is **wearing a colorful scarf**. Often at night, the garden echoes and it seems to be jubilant and **the song of a nightingale has** no end; it continues till

dawn. At dawn when the poet opens her window she is delighted to see the Casuarina Tree.

In **winters a gray baboon is seen sitting** on the crest of the tree seeing the sunrise with her younger ones leaping and playing in the tree's boughs. The shadow of the tree appears to fall on the huge water tank. It is dear to **her heart and soul.** She spent happy moments under it along with her siblings. Even in France and, she can hear the tree's lament. She immortalizes the tree through this poem.

She was **very close to her dead brother Abju and sister Aru**. They loved the Casuarina tree very greatly. So she loves the tree greatly. She is looking forward to death as an acceptable thing. She hopes that the tree will be remembered for ever as **the yew trees of Borrowdale immortalized by Wordsworth** are still remembered. She immortalizes the tree for the sake of her loved ones by writing a poem for it.

The tree in her childhood was not only as a paragon of strength, but gentle and loved by the birds and bees.

SLIP TEST QUESTIONS

1. Who is the author of the poem, “Our Casuarina Tree” ?
   A) Sarojini Naidu B) Toru Dutt
   C) Rabindranath Tagore D) Kamala Das

2. Rhyme Scheme in Our Casuarina Tree is :
   A) abab cdcd efef B) aba cddc eeff
   C) abab cdcd ee D) abba cddc eee

3. "Beneath it we have played, though years may roll...
   For your sakes shall the tree be ever dear !
   Toru Dutt's our Casuarina Tree sets in a double commemoration:
   A) the poet and the hindu mythology
   B) the poet's departed ones and the tree
   C) the poet and her friend under the tree
   D) the poet and the people of her village

4. The varied impressions of the Casuarina Tree glow with the memory of the poet's lost _____and ._____
   A) cousins ; brothers B) brother ; sister
   C) mother ; father D) husband ; children

5. Who is the founder of the Modern School of Indo Anglican poetry?
   A) Derozig B) Toru Dutt C) Aurobido D) Sarojini Naidu

6. In "Our Casuraina Tree" - the tree is a symbol and in it is implicated:
   A) Politics and power B) Time and eternity
   C) Fate and impermanence D)Death and gloom

7. In _____ Toru Dutt recaptures the past and immortalises the moments of time so recaptured.
   A)The Lotus B)The Casuarina Tree C)Tree of life `D)Lakshman

8. Choose the correct chronological sequence
   A. Kamala Das, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Meena Alexander
   B. Meena Alexander, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das
   C. Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Meena Alexander, Toru Dutt
   D. Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Meena Alexander

9. What sits statue - like alone watching the sunrise in Our Caswarina Tree?
   A) a gray python B) a dark bird C) the poetess D)a gray baboon

10. Toru Dutt's our Casuarina Tree sets in a double commemoration:

(A) the poet and the hindu mythology
(B) the poet's departed ones and the tree
(C) the poet and her friend under the tree
(D) the poet and the people of her village