

Poems about trees

Joyce Kilmer wrote the most famous poem about trees, copied below. It first appeared in print in 1913, *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*, the oldest monthly magazine devoted to verse in the English-speaking world. When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. army, at the age of 30. According to military records, Kilmer died on the battlefield near Muercy Farm, beside the Ourcq River near the village of [Seringes-et-Nesles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seringes-et-Nesles), in France, on July 30, 1918 at the age of 31 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joyce_Kilmer). He left behind a wife and five children.



Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

It's beautiful and sentimental, as was lots of Kilmer's poetry, but some people parodied it. Ogden Nash, that famous author of humorous poetry, wrote the little poem to the right.

The poem that Gries learned as a kid appears below. A little searching on the internet uncovered the fact that it is a modification of a poem written by William Carlos Williams in "The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1909-1939". Gries likes his version better than the original.

Of all the things I hadda be
I hadda be a lousy tree.

A tree who lifts his arms to pray
In hopes the dogs will go away.

A nest of robins I do wear,
And what they do gets in my hair.

That's all I am, alack, alas
A comfort station in the grass.

Song of the Open Road

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.

Ogden Nash