

OUR CASUARINA TREE

-Toru Dutt

"Every man's memory is his private literature."

-Aldous Huxley

Toru Dutt was a Bengali poet from the Indian subcontinent, who wrote in English and French. Our Casuarina Tree is the most well-known among all the poems of Toru Dutt. This poem, celebrates the majesty of the Casuarina Tree as the poet remembers and revives her happy childhood days spent under the tree with her beloved siblings. It is an ode to the Casuarina Tree. The poem begins with the description of the tree. The poet picturesquely

says in the poem as follows,

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round

The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,

Up to its very summit near the stars,

The creeper has wound itself around 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 described as a strong and tall tree whose summit reaches near the stars. The Tree being gallant, and possibly brave, it could survive in the strangle-hold of the creeper. The Casuarina tree is covered with creeper bearing red crimson flowers which appear as the tree is wearing a colourful scarf. Often at night, the garden overflows with the sweet song of the nightingale. It continues till dawn. At dawn, when the poet opens her window, she is delighted to see the Casuarina Tree. Mostly in winters, a grey baboon is seen sitting on the crest of the tree seeing the glorious sunrise. Its puny off-spring is seen leaping and playing on the tree's boughs. The shadow of the tree appears to fall on the huge water tank. Toru Dutt says that it is not because of the majestic appearance of the Casuarina Tree that is dear to her heart and soul, but also for bringing the nostalgic memories of her happy

childhood. She says that tears swell in her eyes and almost make her blind when she thinks about her departed beloved ones. Then poet becomes philosophical and says,

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!

Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away

She strongly believes that nature communicates with human beings. Though she is away from her homeland, she could hear the sweet music of nature. The Tree is associated with the happy moments she experienced in her native land. She consecrates the Tree's memory to her loved ones, who are not alive. She immortalizes the tree through her verse like the poet William Wordsworth who sanctified the Yew Trees of Borrowdale in his poem. She expresses her hope that love may defend the Tree from the curse of oblivion. She believes that the people will remember the Tree for aeons due to the power of love.

No one can erase or steal those sweetest memory of love.

- D. Mridha