



4

TALL TREES

Think of some tall trees you have seen. You find them in villages, in gardens, on the roadside, in towns, in forests and on mountain slopes, and maybe you even have one such tree in your courtyard. Have you ever observed trees carefully? Have you noticed how trees silently offer care and protection to all? Read the poem to find out what the poet thinks of when he looks at tall trees. He imagines them to be watching, sheltering and peeping like human beings.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this poem you will be able to:

- read and enjoy the poem;
- explain the theme of the poem;
- pick out the words ending in similar sounds at the end of lines;
- explain how words ending in similar sounds add rhythm and flow to a composition;
- identify ‘personification’;
- explain how ‘personification’ adds a new meaning to the poem & relates it to the world of humans;
- feel the strong presence of Nature everywhere, and
- recognise the values of caring and protection as expressed by Nature.



4.1 LET US READ THE TEXT

Tall Trees

With their feet in the earth
And their heads in the sky
The tall trees watch
The clouds go by

When the dusk sends quickly
The birds to rest
The tall trees shelter them
Safe in a nest

And then in the night
With the tall trees peeping,
The moon shines down
On a world that's sleeping

– Eileen Mathias

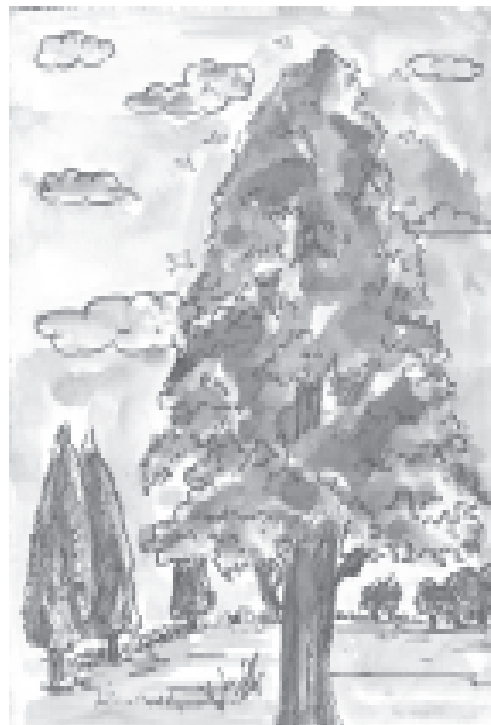


Fig. 4.1

4.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

4.2.1 PART 1

With their feet.....clouds go by.

By saying that the trees have their feet in the earth and their heads in the sky, the poet conveys to the reader that the trees are very, very tall.

The poet looks at the tall trees and feels that they are standing and watching the clouds as they pass. Do you notice that she also describes the trees as if they were human beings with heads and feet, and even eyes to see things around them.

Why does the poet compare the tall trees to human beings? Does the poet see some other similarity between human beings and the tall trees? May be she feels that some human beings are like the tall trees that are strong, tall and powerful. Like the tall trees that have their feet in the ground, these empowered human beings are humble, kind and caring towards those who need their help.

dusk : evening

peeping : a quick and secret looking into something here it means looking, watching.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

Answer the following questions.

1. Which parts of the tree does the poet describe as its head and feet? Why?
2. What does the phrase 'feet in the earth' mean in the context of trees?
3. a. What do you think the phrase 'feet in the earth' might mean in the context of a person who is tall (empowered) like the tall trees?
b. Have you met or do you know such a person? Why do you think that this person is like a 'tall tree'?
4. In what ways do the trees behave like human beings in the poem?



DO YOU KNOW

Some tall trees in the rain forests can be more than 100 feet tall but most of the tall trees around us in india grow to a height of about 40 feet.

The following are accepted as **the top three tallest species of trees**:

1. Coast Redwood (379.1 feet) California, USA
2. Australian Mountain Ash (326.8 feet) Tasmania, Australia
3. Coast Douglas Fir (326.1 feet) Oregon, USA

The oldest human planted tree with a known planting date is the Shri Maha Bodhi Sacred Tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It is 2293 years old.

This tree was planted from a cutting of the original Bodhi Tree in Gaya. The cutting was carried by Emperor Ashoka's daughter Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka.

It takes 100 years to 3000 years for a bodhi tree to grow fully.



The Bodhi Tree at the Sri Mahabodhi Temple



Notes

**LET US DO 4.1**

Nature takes care of us. Let us take care of nature.

Look around your house and decide how you can improve the environment of your area. Here are some suggestions.

- Start a campaign to keep the drains clean.
- Start a campaign for disposal of household garbage in the right manner.
- Take care of plants.

4.2.2 PART 2

When the dusk.....in a nest.

The poet gives an integrated picture of Nature in this stanza. In the evening the darkening sky drives the birds to the safety of their homes in the trees. In this way the different elements in Nature complement each other to provide comfort and shelter to the birds.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2**

1. What time of the day does the poet refer to in this stanza? Pick out the word that indicates the time.
 2. Describe the two images that the poet has created through personification in this stanza.
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4.2.3 PART 3

And then.....world that's sleeping

The evening changes into the night, and by the light of the moon, the trees stay awake to keep a watch over the world as it sleeps. The poet sees the tall trees as our protectors and guardians, in whose care we can sleep safely and soundly without any worries.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3**

1. a. Pick out words from the poem which rhyme with each other.
- b. Write five more pairs of rhyming words of your choice.



2. Who else, besides the tall trees is taking loving care of the world? How?

**DO YOU KNOW**

Trees are an integral part of our world. There are a number of poems about trees. One such poem is given below:

A tree stood so strong on top of a hill
It was majestic and handsome, gracious if you will

It was a shelter to some, to others a toy
Just to be with people brought the tree great joy

Lauren Saari

**LET US DO 4.2**

You must have seen big, tall trees growing on both sides of the road in some areas. Have you noticed how these trees offer shelter and protection to travellers when the sun is bright and hot in the summer, or when they get caught in heavy rain all of a sudden?

Imagine that you are a tall tree. One day an injured/tired/hungry boy comes running and sits down under the tree panting/puffing/in pain.

He picks up a big leaf to fan him. He covers his wound with leaves to stop the blood and ties them with a twig. He folds some leaves into a cup and drinks water from the nearby river. Then the boy lies down under the tree for sometime. The tree watches in silence.

Describe in 3-4 lines what you might have felt as a tree.

4.3 APPRECIATION**Personification**

When we speak of a thing as if it were a living being it is called ‘personification’ of that object. For example, when we say ‘walls have ears’ we speak of walls as if they were living beings with ears. When we say ‘fortune smiles on those who work hard’ we give a human form and a smile to good luck.

We apply human qualities and feelings to something that is not human in order to create a clear and vivid picture of that object or idea. Personification expresses the qualities of the



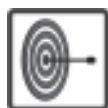
Notes

personified object as human qualities and relates it to the world of humans. This adds intensity and clarity to an expression.

Poets often make use of this literary form.

You will notice that the second and the fourth lines of each stanza in the poem end in words that end with a similar sound. The similar sounds lend a flow and a rhythm to the lines and make them catchy and easy to remember.

The similar sound at the end of lines is called 'rhyme'. The pattern of rhyme varies from poem to poem. Poets create rhyme schemes of their own choice for the desired rhythm.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In the poem 'Tall Trees' the poet presents an integrated picture of nature. It is a harmonious world where various elements and objects of nature like the clouds, birds, day, night, and moon work in close association, and without any disagreement. It is a pleasant picture of selfless care and protection.

The trees provide shelter to birds and guard the world as it sleeps. They do not ask for anything in return. The trees are tall but they are not proud of their height and stature. Even the small birds are dear to them. They love them and protect them at night. Human beings who are tall and powerful like tall trees, should also be humble and caring like them.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

I

1. a. Write a paragraph of 20-25 words about the three activities of the tall trees as described in the poem.
 - b. Which activity do you appreciate the most and why?
2. Describe in a few words the picture of nature as presented in the poem.

II.

1. Personification adds richness to the meaning, makes a thought vivid and clear, and relates an object/idea to the world of humans.

Think of some commonly used personifications associated with the words given below. The first one is done for you as an example.

Tall Trees

- Books are our best friends
 - a. Love _____
 - b. Opportunity _____
 - c. Earth _____
 - d. Time _____

2. Have you ever tried to write a poem? Why not try now? Write four lines on any object of Nature. You may create your own rhyme scheme. Read out your poem to a friend and notice how the rhyming words lend an easy flow to your reading.

You may write on any of the following ideas or you may think of some other topic for a poem.

sun, moon, stars, night, river, stream, mountain.

Here is an example of a simple poem with rhyming words at the end of every pair of lines:

The Sun rises every day
It brightens every bay.

Stars come up every night
They are such a wonderful sight!

III.

1. Imagine that as an MLA of your area or as Sarpanch of your village panchayat, you are a 'tall' man like a tall tree. You have both power and position. Write a short paragraph about how you used your power to help others.



ANSWERS

4.2.1 PART 1

INTEST QUESTIONS 4.1

1. The poet visualises the top of a tree as its head and compares its roots to human feet. The poet has personified tall trees as tall human beings. The trees are so tall that their heads seem to be close to the clouds but their feet (roots) are firm and steady in the earth.
2. In the context of tall trees the phrase 'feet in the earth' means that the roots of trees are going under the ground to give them a strong hold.



Notes



Notes

3. a. Individual responses.

Suggested response: The phrase 'feet in the earth' conveys a different meaning in the context of a person. A tall person (a person with power, position, influence, wealth) who does not lose his/her head over his success or his position of power could be referred to as having his/her 'feet in the earth'. His head may be high but his feet are on the ground – he/she never forgets that he/she is an ordinary person like anyone else.

- b. Individual responses.

4. The poet thinks of tall trees as human beings. He finds them behaving like human beings. The tall trees watch the clouds and the things around them, as humans do. They offer shelter to birds and keep a watch over the sleeping world like night watchmen.

4.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

1. Evening time. Dusk
2. dusk as a person sending away the birds to shelter/trees provide nests for birds to rest.

4.2.3 PART 3

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3

1. a. sky-by, rest-nest, peeping-sleeping
b. Individual responses.
(Some examples of pairs of rhyming words are beam-gleam, sky-dry, feel-deal, ring-sing, bell-tell.)
2. The moon - She is spreading her light over the sleeping world at night.

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

I.

1. a. The tall trees are watching the clouds in the first stanza. In the second stanza they provide shelter to birds at night. In the third stanza the trees are watching/ peeping over the sleeping world.
b. Individual responses.
2. Individual responses

Suggested response: Nature is presented as an integrated whole. The trees lovingly watch the clouds. The dusk sends birds to their homes in the trees. The trees make the

Tall Trees

birds comfortable in their nests. At night the moon spreads her soft moonlight over the world and the trees silently keep a watch. It is a picture of harmonious co-existence and working together for others' welfare.

II.

1. a. Love is blind/divine.
b. Opportunity knocks only once.
c. Earth is our Mother, Mother Earth
d. Time waits for none, Time marches on, Time does not stop, Time stands/stood still
2. Individual responses.

III.

1. Individual responses.



Notes