

# On KILLING a tree



# ABOUT THE ABOUT

The simple poem with a profound meaning, 'On Killing a Tree', has been written by Gieve Patel, a famous Indian poet and playwright. He was born in Mumbai, and has completed all of his education from Mumbai.



# On KILLING a Tree Introduction to the Lesson

The poet sensitizes the reader and highlights the fact that trees are living things. He equates trees with humans to convey that trees should not be cut because destroying trees is just like killing a human being.

A tree does not die by merely cutting because it regrows from where it is cut. If it has to be destroyed, then it has to be uprooted.

# On KILLING a Tree Introduction to the Lesson

It takes much time to kill a tree,  
Not a simple jab of the knife  
Will do it. It has grown  
Slowly consuming the earth,  
Rising out of it, feeding  
Upon its crust, absorbing  
Years of sunlight, air, water,  
And out of its leprous hide  
Sprouting leaves.



# On KILLING a Tree Poem EXPLANATION

**Jab: sudden rough blow**

**Leprous hide: discoloured bark**

**A simple cut does not destroy a tree. A tree grows gradually, it is rooted in the soil. A plant takes nutrition from the soil to grow into a big tree. The tree is firmly bound with the soil. It takes in sunlight, water and air to grow into a strong trunk and have numerous leaves.**

# On KILLING a Tree Poem Explanation

**So hack and chop  
But this alone won't do it.  
Not so much pain will do it.  
The bleeding bark will heal  
And from close to the ground  
Will rise curled green twigs,  
Miniature boughs  
Which if unchecked will expand again  
To former size.**



# On KILLING a Tree Poem EXPLANATION

**Hack: cut roughly by striking heavy blows**

**Humans cut and chop the bark of trees into many pieces but that is not sufficient to destroy the tree. The point of the tree which gets cut gives out sap just like a human being bleeds. Gradually, this would heal and from there new branches start growing again.**

# On KILLING a Tree Poem Explanation

No,  
The root is to be pulled out —  
Out of the anchoring earth;  
It is to be roped, tied,  
And pulled out — snapped out  
Or pulled out entirely,  
Out from the earth-cave,  
And the strength of the tree exposed  
The source, white and wet,  
The most sensitive, hidden  
For years inside the earth.



# On KILLING a Tree Poem EXPLANATION

**Anchoring earth: trees are held securely with the help of the roots in the earth**

**Snapped out: chopped out**

**The poet says that in order to kill the tree, it has to be uprooted. One has to separate the tree from the Earth which supports it. The roots of the tree bind the tree with the soil in the pit of the Earth. From there, the most sensitive and hidden part of the tree - the roots have to be detached. The roots are white in colour and are damp.**

# On KILLING a Tree Poem EXPLANATION

**Then the matter  
Of scorching and choking  
In sun and air,  
Browning, hardening,  
Twisting, withering,  
And then it is done.**



# On KILLING a Tree Poem EXPLANATION

**Scorching and choking: the drying up of the tree after being uprooted**  
**Once the tree has been uprooted, then gradually it withers and dries up with the action of heat and wind. The trunk will become brown, twist and will harden. Finally, the tree will die this way.**

# Literary Devices

- 1. No rhyme scheme is there in the poem. It is written in free verse. There is no rhyme or rhythm.**



# Literary Devices

2. Enjambment: When one sentence continues into two or more lines.

Not a simple jab of the knife  
Will do it. It has grown  
Slowly consuming the earth

Rising out of it, feeding  
Upon its crust, absorbing  
Years of sunlight, air, water,  
And out of its leprous hide  
Sprouting leaves.

The most sensitive, hidden  
For years inside the earth.

# Literary Devices

## 3. Metaphor : indirect comparison

**Leprous hide** - the uneven colour of the surface of the trunk of a tree is compared to the skin of a person suffering from leprosy.

**Bleeding bark** - the sap coming out of tree where it is cut is compared to the bleeding from the wound in a human's body.

**4. Alliteration:** repetition of a consonant sound in 2 or more closely places words.

**Bleeding bark** - 'b' sound

**White and wet** - 'w' sound

**5. Repetition:** a word or sentence is repeated to lay emphasis on it.

**'Pulled out'** is repeated



# On KILLING a Tree Summary

“On Killing a Tree” is a sensitive poem. The poet persuades the reader not to destroy trees and equates it with “killing” a human being. He says that a plant takes sunlight, water, air and nutrients from the soil to gradually become a huge tree. It develops a strong trunk and gets numerous leaves.

Merely cutting the trunk of the tree does not kill it. When a tree is cut, the sap flows out just like a wounded man bleeds. Once the wound heals, new branches and tiny leaves grow from there which grow into trees.

# On KILLING a Tree Summary

In order to destroy a tree, it has to be uprooted. The roots which are white in colour and are damp due to the moisture that they get from the soil are hidden in a pit in the Earth. These roots are the most sensitive part of the tree as they bind it to the earth. In order to kill the tree, these roots have to be detached from the soil.

Once the roots are detached, the tree starts dying, It withers, dries up with the action of heat and wind, twists, hardens and finally, dies



A lush, misty forest scene with a rocky stream flowing through the center. The water is white with foam as it cascades over dark, mossy rocks. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees and thick foliage. Several glowing blue spheres, resembling fireflies or magical orbs, are scattered throughout the scene, some floating in the air and others resting on the ground or rocks. The overall atmosphere is serene and magical.

Thank You