

CBSE Class 10 English Language and Literature

Revision Notes

Chapter 8

The tree (poem)

- The poet wants to show that everything has deep desire to acquire freedom.
- It is necessary for our growth and well –being.
- We must confirm to the natural laws.
- Can there be a forest without trees?
- Where are the trees in this poem?
- And where do they go !
- The “I,” the voice of the speaker of Adrienne Rich’s poem, “The Trees,” is a voice with a body engaged in activities and sensing intrusions that are not organic to the conventions of a nature poem.
- This is, in fact, an (un)natural poem that narrates the struggle of a population of trees to escape the confines of a greenhouse. In evoking the trees’ “strain,” the poem demonstrates the unsuitability of language itself as a greenhouse or container of nature.
- The speaker is a witness to the trees’ exodus, but distances herself from participating in the making of something out of the spectacle. She “sit[s]” and “writ[es]” but not poems, “long letters,” in which she “scarcely mention[s] the departure / of the forest.” Even though the speaker addresses an audience, her own “head is full of whispers”—she’s an audience as well.
- We, however, the audience to the poem, are compelled by the command: “Listen.” The speaker reaches across the barrier between poem and audience, a transaction that occurs on a page, and says: Listen, you.