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## The Cemetery Tree

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**Author Bio**

Andrew C. Nosti studies History and English with a Writing Concentration at Gettysburg College.

# The Cemetery Tree

Andrew Nosti

The shadows stretch and slither  
across the frost-encrusted ground.  
Sunset casts a final ray of light  
upon that hallowed mound.  
The wind whispers through the branches,  
and makes an eerie sound,  
that besides the caw of the crow,  
marks the only noise around.

Oh, those branches, those heavy branches,  
that stand so stark and bare.  
Oh, those leaves, those withered leaves,  
that tumble through the air.  
Underneath that winding tree,  
oh yes, that is where,  
you can find that fateful stone  
that holds her final prayer.

Her name across it, etched in rock,  
rings a hollow tune.  
Whether cast in sunlight of highest sun,  
baking hot at noon,  
or resting gloomy in the darkness,  
alighted by the moon,  
that name sits etched upon the rock,  
etched upon it, oh! too soon.

The roots dig deep, they hug the casket  
that holds my broken dreams.  
And across time, across the years,  
it never truly seems  
as if the tears, running hot and free,  
will stop pouring out in streams.  
But those tears always fail to smother  
my sobbing and my screams.

That tree, that tall, strong tree,  
in that cold graveyard.  
Its trunk stands thick.  
Its bark proves hard,  
but something has left that tall, strong tree  
battered and bruised, crippled and scarred.

A deep dark cut slices through its wood  
as black as darkest night.  
Oh, that cut, oh, that scar,  
what a ghastly sight!  
For a tree so strong, a tree so tall,  
still had not the might  
to defend itself from whatever force  
gouged it in its plight.

The tree lives on, despite its wound,  
fixed upon that slope,  
reaching blindly through the darkness,  
wishing it could grope  
something that could teach it how  
it could ever cope  
with a world of empty shadows,  
drained dry of all its hope.

Now propped against that tree I weep,  
sitting quite alone,  
piled upon the tree's dead leaves  
atop my autumnal throne.  
I sit and stare straight at the name,  
the name upon the stone,  
the only name I've ever loved,  
the only name I've ever known.

Years will come and years will pass,  
with me beside that tree,  
but only it, the crows, and the stone  
will ever hear my plea,  
my wish that, just one last time,  
I could wake and see  
the woman underneath that stone,  
the better half of me.

But wishes prove worthless,  
only whispered in vain,  
so here, alone, is where I stay,  
here is where I remain.  
Throughout all time, both day and night,  
through sunshine and the rain,  
here is where you'll find the tree and me,  
and our never-ending pain.