

PULLING THE EVIL BOUGHS OF THE TREE

By Vivagalatchmie Anthavallie Naicker

The young man stood transfixed
At the foot of the humungus tree
A kind well known for its delicious fruit
He marvelled in disgust at the roots
Ugly and gnarled –product of an evil spell
Then he looked up
Hoping to spot a fruit or two
But instead each branch carried a disease
That guaranteed misery, suffering and death
How could this be he silently questioned
In a land of such beauty and sunshine
Yes, indeed it must be the work of a witch
Depriving the tree of coming to fruition
To be admired, loved and enjoyed by all
Then he decided to put his plan into action
He would pull each branch until it touched the ground
As it did so he would break it where it connected to the trunk
The pulling and breaking of each branch meant the killing of a disease
Surely he thought, this would enable the tree to sprout new branches
Which would bring forth the sweet and tasty fruit it ought to be bearing
As he pulled the first branch, he was joined by a number of young men and women

From the village

“What are you doing Nelson? They asked”

“Come and join me get rid of this evil

So that we could live better and enjoy some sweet fruit”

“one, two, three rholinlahla one, two, three rholinlahla”

As each branch was pulled

It cracked and broke its hinge

Giving each eager young face

Hope, that soon this ugly, evil looking tree

Would disappear

And reappear as a model of the efforts of people to get rid of evil

Serving the purpose it was intended for

“Oh Nelson, rholinlahla is very hard work, I m so tired”

“It has to be, considering the number of evil branches there are on this tree,

But one day it will be gone forever and we shall lie under the shade of this

Tree and enjoy it to our hearts content”

“You are so clever Nelson”

“I would not have done it without you”

Nb. in the xhosa language the word rholinlahla literally means pulling the branch.

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Bio:

Vivagalatchmie Anthavallie Naicker is a tourism educator at Sihle high school, Malangeni. She was born in Umzinto where she still resides. Her hobbies and interests include philately, short-story writing, vegetable gardening, cultural diversity, reading, correspondence, crossword puzzles and global travel.