

-speaker is the poet who addresses the tree by name repeatedly throughout the poem, giving a strong sense of the tree as a living being

personification developed further through both physical and relational comparisons with humans

characterisation through generous actions and the **simile** comparing the tree to God and **metaphor** comparing the tree's position at the entrance of the street to the gate of heaven all building a positive view of benevolence and goodwill

enjambment and caesura usually used together in free verse in which the subject matter is serious and the poet desires the reader to focus intently on the line of argument being presented, rather than be distracted by end rhymes
examples of enjambment between lines 3 & 4 and 5 & 6
examples of caesura and enjambment in the following verse cause the reader to consider the sentence as a whole thought and to stop and consider its implications

allusion to Psalm 139:1-3 introducing a new idea of the gum as a **metaphor** for God's constancy, care and protection
-allusion to God the Son giving his life, just as the tree lives and dies that we might live as part of the created ecosystems of our planet



Grandfather Gum

Grandfather Gum,
although you tower over me,
like the Cyclops towered over mere mortals,
your arms are open wide to embrace me
and the light reaches through
your outstretched arms and caresses my cheeks.

Grandfather Gum,
as you pipe me down the street with bird song,
I marvel at all you have seen,
standing guard, like God himself,
at the gate of that street that
has been my personal paradise.
I long for you to live forever
to conduct the evening chorus
for generations to come.

I salute you, Grandfather Gum –
your unassuming resilience,
your unbroken contract with the harsh summer sun
and your gentle understanding with the wind,
as you whisper vows of eternal love
to each of us as we pass by.

Grandfather Gum,
I love everything you have ever been
and will ever be to me. You keep watch over
my goings out and my comings in,
and every breath you take
is life to me. It is your silent,
unspoken love for me that will never fail
because your life has been given for mine
and I thank you.

All I have is this poem to honour you,
and my love to offer you in return,
my dear Grandfather Gum.

personification used to emphasize
-the commonality of living things
and our interdependence
-Grandfather implies age and
resilience
-protective role

simile used to draw a comparison between the size and power of the tree
-allusion to Ancient Greek texts, especially the story recounted in *The Odyssey* acting as a reminder of the vulnerability of human beings, but also our craftiness in difficult situations
-contrast
-used to subvert the usual view of humans being superior to other living things and make the reader consider the importance of trees to our survival on this planet
-reinforcing the welcoming and protective character of trees rather than their immense size

-metaphor that draws a comparison between the birdsong and a choir, building on the **imagery** in the second line suggesting a guard of honour made up of pipers and building on the characterisation of the tree as bestowing honour upon us

personification of the characteristics of resilience, the making of contracts, enjoying a particular understanding and whispering vows of eternal love all building on the idea of seeing trees as more than objects in the landscape

parallelism & stylistic repetition is used in the three phrases: 'I marvel at all you...', 'I salute you,' 'I love everything you...', 'I thank you' reinforcing the personification and the idea of a relationship with nature that is honouring and respectful

message summarized
-viz. that all we can do is be grateful for all that the tree gives us, just as all we can do is be grateful for all that God has given us in the created world, his life given for our salvation, and his constant presence and protection in our lives
-neither the tree nor God asks us for anything more

'Grandfather Gum' is a celebration of the beauty, resilience and practical protection trees offer us and asks the reader to think more about the role of trees in our lives and our survival on this planet. It places the poet and the tree in suburbia and recognizes that trees play an important part in our lives, bringing us joy and a sense of awe in response to their immense size. 'Grandfather Gum' celebrates the way trees provide a home for dozens of birds who thrill our ears and our hearts every day with their song and transform our manmade environments into something extraordinary that fills a deep need in us to remain connected to nature, even as we systematically destroy it in pursuit of other pleasures. The poem operates on three levels; it reaches back to Ancient Greek literature and our long, shared history of artful ingenuity, it celebrates the everyday nature of Australian suburban life, and it links us to our creator through the idea of eternal, protective love reaching out and celebrating us and being an abiding presence in our lives.