

Da bi hrast mogao rast, Darko Posarić

*Naslov: **What makes the oak tree grow free?***

Translation by Nina Bađun

Foreword

This little work is intended for all those who love nature and rhymed poems, and especially for schoolchildren. Its aim is to present, in an interesting and simple manner, the entire life cycle of an oak forest and the work performed from forest's early stages to forest regeneration. In order to make the understanding easier and more vivid, each stanza is accompanied by two photographs.

For an acorn to become a tree, humans do not need to interfere much. For this tree to survive in the competition with other trees, some human effort is needed. But for many oak trees to develop from acorns first into small trees and eventually into huge trees, out of which only the best ones will survive to live more than a hundred years, a lot of knowledge, effort and love is required. These verses and photographs offer only a part of foresters' everyday work.

For an oak tree to grow tall

First an acorn must fall.

The acorn is safe under the leaf cover

So hungry animals wouldn't it discover.

Leaves don't let the moisture out

And thus help the acorns sprout.

So in the spring on the forest ground

Oak seedlings are all around!

From little acorns alive they rise

Looking up towards the skies:

Why is everybody else so tall?

And why are we so small?

First a lot of things aren't good:

Oak seedling are everybody's food!

Caterpillars, bugs and mice they fear

And even boars and hungry deer.

Everybody likes an acorn they find

And young leaves are a specialty of some kind!

But little oaks don't disappear
Cause there's a lot of them growing near.

To escape they've got a great plan:
Grow tall as fast as they can!

So into the heights they sprawl
Cause there's no chance of staying small.

They get help from big trees

Who spread out their branches

Like umbrellas made of leaves!

They protect them from frosting

And from sun when it's exhausting

With help they welcome another spring!

Little seedlings from the year before
Have now grown even more.

From small seedlings once reared
A real forest has appeared!

Every oak has grown many leaves
And every tree now easily breathes.

Now strong enough they need more space

The old trees they shall replace.

Young trees now need light

Sky that is sunny and bright.

So old trees with a large crown

Now need to be cut down.

But the other plants also rose
As if they're standing on their toes!

Other plants are growing so fast
Little oaks are not to last.

As along comes the shade
Oaks' happiness will fade.

But when problems are more than few

The foresters shall come to rescue!

Young oak forest they will save

From growing in thick shade.

Other trees they trim and tend

For the sun will its help now send.

The sun is very nice and warm
Helping oaks in years to come.

But the sun being so bright
Brings other plants also light.

They outgrow oaks once again
Was all the cutting in vain?

For sun again they have to fight
Until foresters come and bring light.

Foresters don't hesitate
So help doesn't come too late.

Other plants they cut down fast
Oaks' struggle is now the past!

While the light and shade play
The forest grows day by day.

As years come and go
Young oaks grow and grow.

Enough light they have to obtain
So foresters might help again.

After many, many years
Once small forest has no fears.

The oaks have outgrown all the rest
In fighting shade they've passed the test.

Towards the bright sky now stream
Little trees of maple and hornbeam.

As the forest grows more dense
Breathing in now yet more tense.

What was once enough space
Now is a fully crowded place!

The forester will solve this too
Since thinning is now due.

With every decade that occurs
Tree density is even worse
And what is needed is thinning.

The trees are beginning
To grow their branches and spread
In every direction ahead.

Years past, time flies

Forest's wonders now arise:

Mushrooms, fruits and wood to harvest

And even shade for us to rest!

But most beautiful is forest's art

To always be peaceful at heart.

As you can see in growth rings
To the forest old age it brings.

Many, many years have gone
Since the first seed was sown.

The seeds fell onto the ground
Where now a whole forest is found!

Acorns now there's many more
Falling on the forest floor.

In such deep shade bellow
Young forest won't grow.

So all the acorns sweet
Hungry animals can eat.

For a while everything's good
But soon the forest shall be renewed.

When forest's reached the right age
It's time to turn another page.

When 140-years-old
Forest's renewal shall unfold.

For renewal to attain

Light must be brought again.

While some trees are thinned

Other trees more fruit bring.

Shrubs are also cleared out

To let the new trees sprout.

Foresters patiently look up

For acorns to develop.

Finally on the ground they rest

Soon to create a new forest.

Towards the sky young oaks are leaning

Everything is at a new beginning!