



**P**adma Sachdev born on 17th April, 1940 is a prominent Dogri poet and short story writer. Her writings have given a new face lift to Dogri literature. She has been widely read and acknowledged in the literary circles. She has written about women related subjects, nature and human emotions. Her poetry is intensely emotional.



She was awarded 1971 Sahitya Academy Award for her collection of poems *Meri Kavita*, *Meray Geet*. Her short stories have also made a mark in the field of Dogri literature. Besides, five anthologies of poetry Padma has penned for DiwanKhana and Mitwa Ghar. Painful experiences in Chest Disease Hospital, Srinagar enriched the poetess emotionally and intellectually.

The poem is about the love a mother has for her children. It's an eerie atmosphere that creates fear and dread. It's a tussle between the love mother has for her own self and the love she has for her children.

In the fearful silence of the forest  
I hear  
The sound of paws  
Of a careful bulbul  
Out in the night shaking the feathers on his head  
To find food for its four little ones,  
Hungry in the nest.

Moving slowly, afraid,  
its ears pricked to pick  
some sound somewhere

with a grain in its beak  
it hastens to the nest  
its twittering fledglings do not know  
the forest is in the throes of fear  
they continue chirping.  
The bulbul trembles  
Moves with his head raised  
Alert, all ears.

Suddenly there is a sound of wheels  
The sound of dry leaves crackling  
The sound rising and subsiding  
The bulbul hides itself in the bushes.

It sees

A bullock cart laden with goods  
Bullocks moving by themselves  
Heads down

The driver asleep, snoring

Eyes covered with the end of his turban

What if the cart stumbles!  
The cart drivers' hookah overturns!  
The forest catches fire!  
It imagines the forest on fire  
Wishes to run towards its nest  
To save its young ones  
But cannot lift its legs  
Out of fear.

*(Translated from Dogri by Dr. Karan Singh)*

## Glossary

prick prik

twitter 'twɪtə'

fledglings 'fledʒ.lɪŋz

in the throes/ ɪn/ðə/θreuz/

crackling 'kræk.lɪŋ

snore snɔ:'

stumble 'stʌmbəl

raise the ears.

to sing like a bird.

young bird with new flight feathers.

experiencing or doing something which is difficult, unpleasant or painful.

series of noise.

to breathe in a very noisy way while you are sleeping.

fall.

## Thinking about the Poem

1. Why is the bulbul afraid? Why does the bulbul want to hasten to its nest?
2. Why does the bulbul hide itself in the bushes?
3. What does the bulbul imagine?
4. What feelings does the bulbul's imagination arouse in the readers?
5. Why is the poem named 'cart driver'?
6. Have you ever feared anything either in the reality or in your imagination?

Write an account of your feelings in 300 words.

## Learning about the literary device

1. What images does the poet use to create an atmosphere of fear and silence in the poem?

## Discussion

The poem reveals a tussle between the love a mother has for her children and the love the mother has for own self as a person. Discuss.

## Suggested Reading

*An Evening Wet with Rain* by Ved Pal Deep Singh.

*Christabel* by Coleridge.

### Quote to remember

*The only fear we have to fear is  
fear itself.*

Roosevelt.