

2017 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 1<sup>st</sup> Prize]

## The Mulberry and Me

(Original)

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Have you ever felt like you have hit the rock bottom? Like there's no hope for survival? I did. I think everyone goes through that phase, when life seems to be going through hell, when it feels like your world has been burnt down to ashes and NO! In reality the phoenix just doesn't rise back from the ashes.

In medical terms a sustained feeling of this kind is referred to as depression.

I have had a phase of depression. Every little thing seemed to be beyond my control. Exams, family and friends, every issue related to each one of them supposedly enhanced its might to be too big to be handled by me and eventually I found myself spending my days staying gloomy and doing nothing. Life seemed meaningless and as negative as possible. My favorite hobbies suddenly lost all their charm. I used to stare at the blank ceiling most of the times.

Life would have been similar if I had not drifted my sight from the ceiling to the skylight of my room. I could see a tree there. No leaves. No signs of life at all. Just like me. I found some peace in knowing that I have a companion in this "being lifeless" game. It was a Mulberry tree. I called it The Mulberry.

I had a new thing to do now, stare at The Mulberry and ponder why is it not dead yet? Why had my mom not cut it yet? Why was it still there if there is no life in it? I thought it'll fell someday by itself and then I'll lose my new friend. Days turned into weeks and weeks into months. One day I noticed lots of green bumps on it, sprouting little leaves and mulberries. I wondered how it could bear fruits all over it, right after coming from the dead. In the upcoming days I saw the lifeless tree turning into the most beautiful thing ever. It was all green and laden with sweet fruits. There were bees and birds and squirrels and so many other creatures on it.

I still don't know what the right word for that feeling is. That day The Mulberry taught



me how the life rises from the dead. The Mulberry was my phoenix. Even when it appeared dead it was a cradle of life all the time. It was just a matter of seasons. Sometimes life has to get on the back seat but that doesn't mean it's not there. My perspective changed all together, if a plant can come back to life what's stopping me then? Life has been happier and I have been stronger since then. As I write this, The Mulberry is still there out of my window, maybe checking on me.

As I paid some attention I realized that all that nature knows is to live like there's no tomorrow. No matter what, the plants and the animals, even the littlest of them all, just don't know how to give up on life.

As I learnt about depression I was startled to know that there are so many people going through it. As I write this, lot of people would have taken their lives because they couldn't hold onto hope till the change of seasons. By 2050 it's supposed to be the largest cause of deaths across the world. Yes, it'll surpass the big bad Cancer and the mighty AIDS. I wish The Mulberry could talk and I could let everyone hear its story of rising back from the dead. Life can never be bad enough to be worth taking our lives. A tree or a puppy can help us learn how good the life is if we let it, as The Mulberry taught me.

Now I work to help those fighting with depression. Nothing can match the joy of seeing someone learning to laugh again. Yes! Phoenix does rise back.

I believe that we have to choose our battles. This is mine. Helping others fight Depression. If I could make even a single person see the life in the dead tree, it'll all be worth it.