

40<sup>th</sup> UPU International Letter-writing Competition for Young People

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*Dearest Rosemary,*

*It is an absolute pleasure to be writing to you. I do hope that all is well. I would be wholly grateful if you sent my hearty greetings to the rest of your family.*

*I am very much afraid for the up-coming generations for I have a feeling that they will not be fortunate enough to see and know the forests of the world. My heart overflows with sorrow at the utterly horrible suspicions that the forests of the world will only be known in writing than by the downright naked eye. We exist among many but only a profound few seem to understand the gravity of our existence.*

*Human folk don't seem to understand the importance of preserving and conserving forests. They toss forests like mere pennies and without a clue, they are destroying the backbone of all life. The spirit of greed and the strong wanting of our very wood for worthless things like furniture, things man can well be without is, at the very most revolting.*

*For their own selfish needs they burn the bodies of many like me for light and heat. Frankly, I'd much rather have them use dead trees for wood. Without stopping to think, they wipe out my fellow trees. Some are sliced off for many mahogany, some for the pricey timber. It is mostly shocking to know that they shave the faces of forests just to make their way through.*

*Little do they know that we are the source of food for every creature imaginable that walks earth. We plants play an important role in the cycle of life. We remain the hand that gives all. For those with four legs, we offer luscious leaves and for the brainy two legged man our succulent fruit. The poor, defenseless rodents somewhat supposedly chew on our roots and barks. This I do not think of as a crime for they, in the end pay their dues and they after all do not carelessly assassinate us.*

*We plants are the homes and habitants of many. Birds of different species rest their heads on us every night. They lay their eggs and without a doubt care for their young on these strong branches of ours. Termites nibble on our wood from my branches, beehives filled with honey to the pulp hang. Tiny maggots hatch on our leaves and literally live off us.*

*Plants are the cleaners and sweepers of mother earth. Without us, unpleasant gases like carbon dioxide would hang in the air. Yet again we come to the rescue of many organisms and clean out the unholy gases they excrete and in turn give them clean-cut oxygen. This surely they would not attempt to live without.*

*The impeccably cunning man has discovered that a few of our species can help relieve them of their dreadful diseases. Take my jolly cousin Rosy Periwinkle for instance, who is in fact a well established citizen of Madagascar. She has been discovered to have two anti-cancer drugs that can be extracted from her. Other important drugs like digitalis, or heart drugs, are extracted from other undoubtedly important plants.*

*Other plants in vast parts of our globe are seen as rather fascinating parts of the environment. Some like the amazing Baobab are very rare and so are important. Man takes time to marvel at the prestigious structure of the Baobab. Many travel the seven seas to see the Baobab which exists in the rather dry parts of the world.*

*Plants are also seen as objects of fantasy. In some parts of the world people hang their wishing threads of life on particular trees. They tend to call these trees sacred. Some human beings refer them as "wishing trees" and take to believe that wishing for various objects and apparently moments. Some people turn to such plants for advice on certain life matters.*

*Many religions take plants to be objects of prayer. The African traditional religion has great respect for plants as they depend on us for certain rituals. The African herbalists too see us to be priceless gems for it is we that provide them with their herbs.*

*Although some human beings litter incredulously and well hinder our growth, there are good Samaritans in the mix. These saints are determined to protect our lives. They have come up with incredible ideas on how to protect us and have campaigned tirelessly to get the others to realize how vital our existence is. The "green tips" and other efforts are slowly but surely proving to work.*

*Their idea of planting new trees every once in a while is a brilliant one. I am beginning to notice a growth spurt in our population and I am very impressed.*

*After so long I am beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I might as well enjoy the long awaited International Year of Forests 2011.*

*Your loving friend,*

*Charlene*