

A Story a Week ...

... from woodblock printmaker David Bull

I Lost my Cherry!

Just so there is no misunderstanding about that title, I'd better tell you right away, this story is about a cherry tree, or more accurately, about a tree that is no longer there ...

I have no garden. Most houses in my neighbourhood have some sort of space for gardening, but the company that put up this building wanted to squeeze the largest possible structure into the space available, and as a result, there is only the tiniest of spaces left around the edges of the property. There is about a one meter strip at the front with a scruffy hedge in it, but on the other three sides, there is room for nothing at all.

When I was inspecting this building while deciding whether or not to buy it, this lack of garden space didn't bother me. Although I of course would enjoy relaxing in a nice garden, I have no particular personal interest in plants, and I am sure that if this house had happened to come with a wide garden space, that area would by now have become a jungle, due to my neglect. It is perhaps better this way.

A more important reason for not being concerned about the lack of garden here though, is that although I have no green space of my own, my building backs onto a small river, and on the other side of this is a very wide property covered with trees and greenery. I can enjoy a wonderful garden view, without having to lift a finger in maintenance!

In winter that property is rather bare of course, and not so attractive, but come spring the trees burst into blossom and provide a wonderful show for me. I'm not sure what all the trees are; there are a couple of peach trees I think, but most of them seem to be different varieties of plum, as one would expect living in a town named 'Ome'. But towering tall above all the rest, positioned right where I can see it clearly from my workshop window, is a wonderful cherry. It is far taller than most cherry trees one sees in the parks, and during the time every spring when it is flowering, it provides a fabulous view - a huge 'fluffy' pink cloud against the blue sky!

But, as I mentioned at the beginning of this story, it is gone. One day a couple of weeks ago - thankfully while I was away from home for the day - the owner of the property cut it down, and there is nothing left of it but a pile of logs he has dumped into a far corner of his property to rot away. I have no idea why he did this; last year when he cut down a tall 'keyaki' tree and I asked him why, he just mumbled that 'it was getting kinda big ...', but there are no buildings anywhere near this cherry tree, and I don't think it was a danger to anyone. I don't really want to talk to him about it, because I of course have no rights at all in his affairs, and it's not worth creating any bad feeling ...

So all I can do is shrug my shoulders, tell myself to 'forget about it, and enjoy what you still have ...', and return to my carving work ...

My carving work ... which today consists of using my wide chisel and heavy hammer to chop away at a wide plank of ... yes, cherry wood. The piece of wood that I am so much enjoying working with today, was of course once part of a vigorous cherry tree covered in pink blossom, standing proudly against a blue sky ... Until one day, somebody came along with his chain saw ...

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