and this arboreal landmark had to be cut down. But one shoot from the roots survived as though the old tree were determined that its scion should provide shade and beauty for future generations of students as the parent had done for those of the past. The sentiments of the Pharmacy students were expressed vividly and with feeling by Gursaran Singh Jandu, then a second year Pharmacy student, in his imagined last thoughts of “our carob tree” in the 21 December issue, 1964, of Outlook.

“When a tree is old and its leaves begin to fall it can tell a tale or two. Alas, if I were whole, not one but many stories I would have told. Here I stand, a drying limb, not a tree, opposite the School of Pharmacy. Age, cruel age, wind, rain and sun all became enemies. First one half and then the other were deprived of me. Then one day came two men wielding axes and cut me down leaving behind just a bare stub and one small branch, me.

“In The Apothecary, 1946, someone [The Apothecary was the Pharmacy School publication and the ‘someone’ was Torkom Vahan Kaltbian, PhC ‘48] wrote about me ‘If one morning we found that the carob tree was there no more, would we not feel that part of the Pharmacy Building was missing?’ Oh, if only he were here now to see how true his words were! Only the other day when I was being cut down after the wind had broken me in two, some students came to Prof. Haddad [Amin Farid Haddad, PhC ‘33] and asked in disappointed tones, ‘why are you getting this done, Sir?’ And when they were told what had happened, in tears they said, ‘But, Sir, this is our tree, this is the Tree of Pharmacy. Oh, Sir, we’ll miss it so much!’ When I heard these words, my heart overflowed with compassion (we trees have hearts too)! If only I had eyes they would have seen them filled with tears. But I was helpless like all other trees. All I did manage to do was to look at them before most of me was taken away. Here I stand, a small arm, proud to be part of the School of Pharmacy for as long as I shall be able to endure.

“In 1871, the School of Pharmacy was opened. Some years later I was a seedling opposite the School to witness its changes and growth. Many came without caps and gowns but when they left after some years they were clad in honours and their names were lengthened by a BS. I was the one who welcomed them first, though some professors might like to steal this fact, but don’t you believe them! And I was the one to bid them farewell. My message to them ‘I was thy neighbour and a friend. You trusted me – I never told when I saw you copying from the window – and you got my trust. Now go into the world and love thy neighbours and they will love you. Think of me sometimes – self reliant, that’s what I would like you to be.’

“They came and they went but I stood my ground. I was the welcoming post for all those who came in through the Medical Gate. I shook my boughs and trembled the leaves in the breeze. They came near me and sat underneath and took refuge from the blistering summer heat. I looked down at them and smiled. It gave me pleasure to be their protector. The howling cold winds and patterning rain made them run and hide beneath me. How I wished I could envelop them like a blanket and give them warmth. However, I did what I could – shielded them as much as possible. Spring came and brought the blossoms with it. Ah, spring, the season I love so much. Girls in pretty dresses passed underneath and hurried to attend Mr. Kanaqani’s [Uthman Hassan Kanaqani, PhC ‘49] – lecture only to find themselves, or for me to see them talking!

“So I passed the years happy and gay. I saw them laugh and sing, work and play – they play while being lectured but don’t tell them I told you. Industry and persevering diligence is their life. May they all be successful, prosperous and merry in all the years to come. I ask of them but one thing. If I was and am part of the School of Pharmacy, the School is part of me and I hope they always remember me, the Carob Tree.”

The Carob Tree survived, but not the School of Pharmacy. Did the tree weep for the School as the School wept for the tree? Do Torkom Kaltbian and Gursaran Singh Jandu know that? Does anyone know whatever happened to Kaltbian and Gursaran Singh, or where they are?

We, at al-Kulliyah, would like to know.