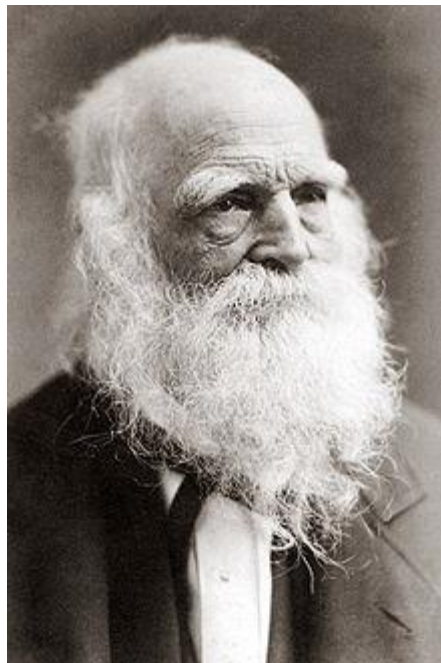


Tea Time: William Cullen Bryant

post by Wende

William Cullen Bryant was born on November 3, 1794 in the rugged hill country of western Massachusetts. From the time he entered this world he showed remarkable powers of mind. He could read by the time he was two years old, wrote verses at nine, and when barely eighteen wrote his most noted poem, "Thanatopsis," now one of the world's classics.



Bryant studied law in Massachusetts and was admitted to the bar in 1815. On January 11, 1821, Bryant, still striving to build a legal career, married Frances Fairchild. He relocated to New York, where in 1825 he followed his passion for writing and became editor of the *Evening Post*. Within two years, he was Editor-in-Chief and a part owner. He remained the Editor-in-Chief for half a century (1828–78). Eventually, the *Evening-Post* became not only the foundation of his fortune but also the means by which he exercised considerable political power in his city, state, and nation.

While much time was spent building up one of America's largest newspapers, Bryant still found time to study nature and to write so many poems that we now think of him as a poet, not as an editor. He chose American subjects taken from his own surroundings: the scenes of his boyhood, the flowers, birds, and hills of his old

New England home. He found pleasure in the simplest things, and he wrote about this pleasure in the simplest way. "The Yellow Violet" is one example.

THE YELLOW VIOLET

When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the bluebird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume;
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mold;
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Dale-skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk,
But 'midst the gorgeous blooms of May
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they who climb to wealth forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the weds of April bright.

Bryant died in 1878 of complications from an accidental fall in Central Park.

Learning Activities

Read the [Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant](#) (*Free Download*)

Record what you learn about William Cullen Bryant on the notebooking page.

Recite and/or memorize the poem, "The Yellow Violet"

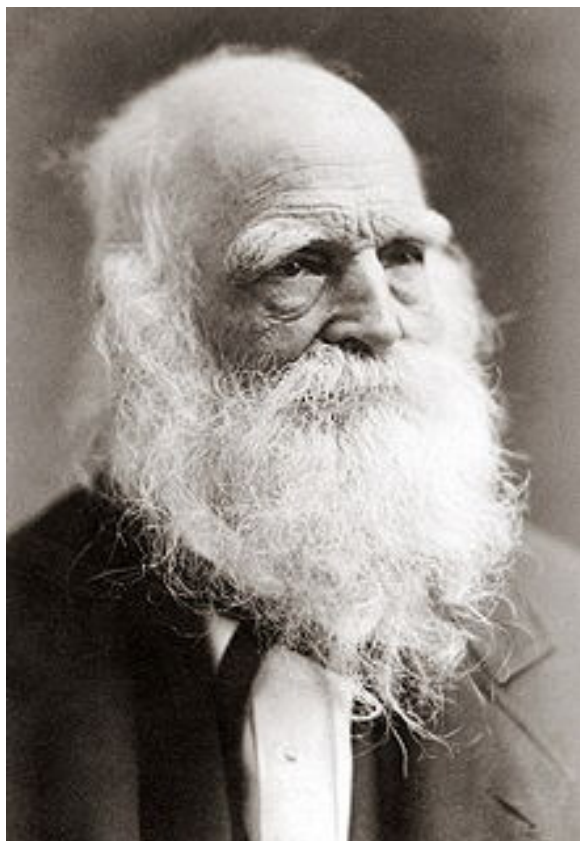
Analyze "The Yellow Violet" using the study notes.

Tea Time Treat:

[Violet Tea](#) and serve with [Violet Shortbread Cookies](#).

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William Cullen Bryant

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

Place of Death: _____

What is he famous for?

THE YELLOW VIOLET by William Cullen Bryant

When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the bluebird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume;
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mold;
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

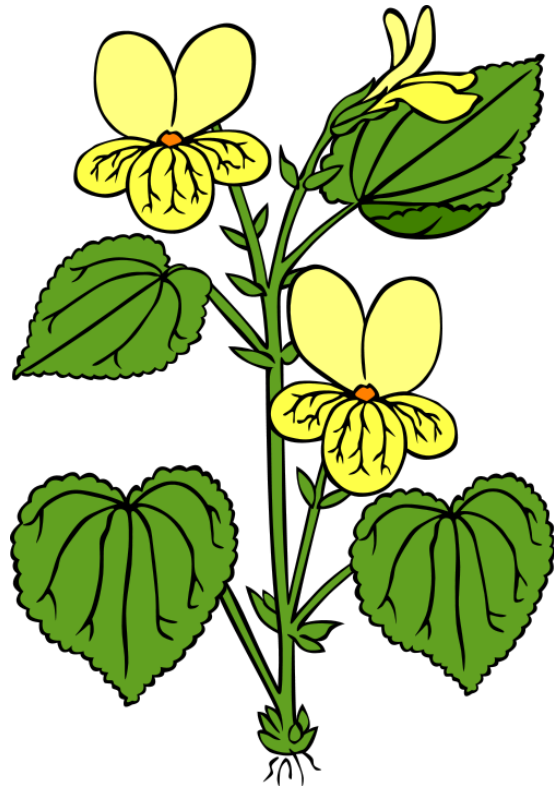
Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Dale-skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting high.

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk,
But 'midst the gorgeous blooms of May
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they who climb to wealth forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the weds of April bright.



“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant

First Stanza

When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the bluebird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Second Stanza

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume;
Alone is in the virgin air.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant

Third Stanza

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mold;
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Fourth Stanza

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Dale-skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated eight times.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant

Fifth Stanza

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Sixth Stanza

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk,
But 'midst the gorgeous blooms of May
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, providing space for copying or writing the poem.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Seventh Stanza

So they who climb to wealth forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance. There are eight sets of these lines provided for practice.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Eighth Stanza

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the weds of April bright.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
First Stanza

*When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the bluebird's warble know,
The yellow violets' modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Second Stanza

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume;
Alone is in the virgin air.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Third Stanza

*Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mold;
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Fourth Stanza

*Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Dale-skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Fifth Stanza

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for tracing or independent writing.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Sixth Stanza

Oft, in the sunless April day,

Thy early smile has stayed my walk,

But 'midst the gorgeous blooms of May

I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated ten times.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Seventh Stanza

*So they who climb to wealth forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.

“The Yellow Violet” by William Cullen Bryant
Eighth Stanza

*And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not overlook the modest flower
That made the weds of April bright.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance.

The Yellow Violet by William Cullen Bryant

Study Notes

Define:

Beechen: _____

Russet: _____

Train: _____

Unapt: _____

Ere: _____

Genial: _____

Ape: _____

Examine:

Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:

Alliteration - the repetition of initial consonant sounds in neighboring words.

Assonance – the repetition of vowel sounds without the repetition of consonants

Personification - when the writer gives human like qualities to a non-human

Interpret:

When a poet selects certain words or phrases to create a picture in the reader's mind, it is called imagery. What are some of the sensory details Bryant used to create imagery?

Compare:

Bryant stops to view the violet in April but passes it by in May. With what does the poet compare this treatment of the violet? How does this compare with Proverbs 16:19 and 29:23?

The Yellow Violet by William Cullen Bryant

Study Notes

Define:

Beechen:	of the beech tree
Russet:	reddish brown or reddish gray
Train:	those in a company
Unapt:	unlikely
Ere:	before
Genial:	favorable to growth
Ape:	imitate; mimic

Examine:

Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:

Alliteration - the repetition of initial consonant sounds in neighboring words.

There are many examples. These include:

beechen buds begin;

woods the bluebird's warble

russet fields their green resume

flower, I love, in forest

flowers are flaunting

smile has stayed

Assonance – the repetition of vowel sounds without the repetition of consonants

Peeps from the last year's leaves below. (long e sound repeats)

That I should ape the ways of pride (long a sound repeats)

Awakes the painted tribes of light, (long a and long i sounds repeat)

Personification - when the writer gives human like qualities to a non-human

The violet is given human-like physical attributes such as a glowing lip, gentle eye, and early smile, and character traits such as modesty and humbleness.

Interpret:

When a poet selects certain words or phrases to create a picture in the reader's mind, it is called imagery. What are some of the sensory details Bryant used to create the imagery?

April *feels* cold with a chilling moisture and *looks* pale and often sunless.

We *hear* the bluebird's warble.

We *see* the violet peeping up; blossoming, bending to the earth on its short stem.

The violet *smells* like a sweet flower and faint perfume.

Compare:

Bryant stops to view the violet in April but passes it by in May. With what does the poet compare this treatment of the violet? How does this compare with Proverbs 16:19 and 29:23?

Answers will vary. Bryant admires the lowly violet only until the loftier flowers appear. He compares this to prideful people who become wealthy and forget their roots, ignoring those less affluent. Proverbs 16:19 says, "Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. Proverbs 29:23 says, "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Bryant decides he will not copy the ways of the prideful, by overlooking the lowly and humble.