

Tea Time: William Dean Howells

Post by Wende

William Dean Howells was born the second of eight children on March 1, 1837, in Martins Ferry, Ohio. His father was a newspaper editor and printer, and gave young William the job of typesetting and printing. Even though his family wasn't wealthy, William was encouraged by his parents to follow his literary interests, and when William was just 15 years old, his father had one of his poems published in the *Ohio State Journal* without telling him. By 1858 W.D. Howells began working at the same newspaper writing poetry, short stories, and also translating pieces from French, Spanish, and German.



In 1860 he visited Boston and met with other American writers James Thomas Fields, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. He then visited France, where in 1862 he married Elinor Mead. They returned to America in 1865, settling in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he lived until his death on May 11, 1920.

Throughout his long life, William Dean Howells wrote for various magazines, including the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*. He published many novels, most portraying his own social views, as well as collections of his poems. In time he developed and became well known for his literary style called realism.

Realism is literature which attempts to represent life as it really is by paying close attention to what might otherwise be considered insignificant details. Howells considered it "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material."

The following poem, "In August," is a prime example of Howells' realism style.

In August.

All the long August afternoon,

The little drowsy stream

Whispers a melancholy tune,

As if it dreamed of June

And whispered in its dream.

The thistles show beyond the brook

Dust on their down and bloom,

And out of many a weed-grown nook

The aster-flowers look

With eyes of tender gloom.

The silent orchard aisles are sweet

With smell of ripening fruit.

Through the sere grass, in shy retreat,

Flutter, at coming feet,

The robins strange and mute.

There is no wind to stir the leaves,

The harsh leaves overhead;

Only the querulous cricket grieves,

And shrilling locust weaves

A song of Summer dead.

Read:

Many of Howells' works found free [HERE](#).

Extended Learning

Recite or memorize the poem, "In August."

Record what you learn about W.D. Howells on the notebooking page.

Analyze "In August" using the study notes.

Tea Time Treat

Your favorite fruity tea, to treasure the last of summer's flavors, along with some orchard muffins. I use this basic recipe to utilize my summer bounty. It is versatile; just choose your favorite add-in, found at the end of the recipe.

Basic Muffin Recipe

1 egg

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil (I use olive oil, coconut oil, safflower oil, or butter)

2 cups flour

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar (I use $\frac{1}{4}$ t Stevia instead of sugar)

3 t baking powder

1 t salt

Bake at 375 for 15-20 minutes. If you use butter, they tend to brown quicker, so keep an eye on them. Makes about 36 mini muffins or 1 dozen regular muffins

Choose one to add to basic muffin mix:

- 1 apple, peeled and chopped, cinnamon and nutmeg to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup applesauce and spices
- Decrease milk to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup and add 1 cup mashed banana (we add mini chocolate chips too)
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pumpkin and spices to taste (I use cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves)
- 1 peeled, diced fresh peach
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded zucchini, most water squeezed out

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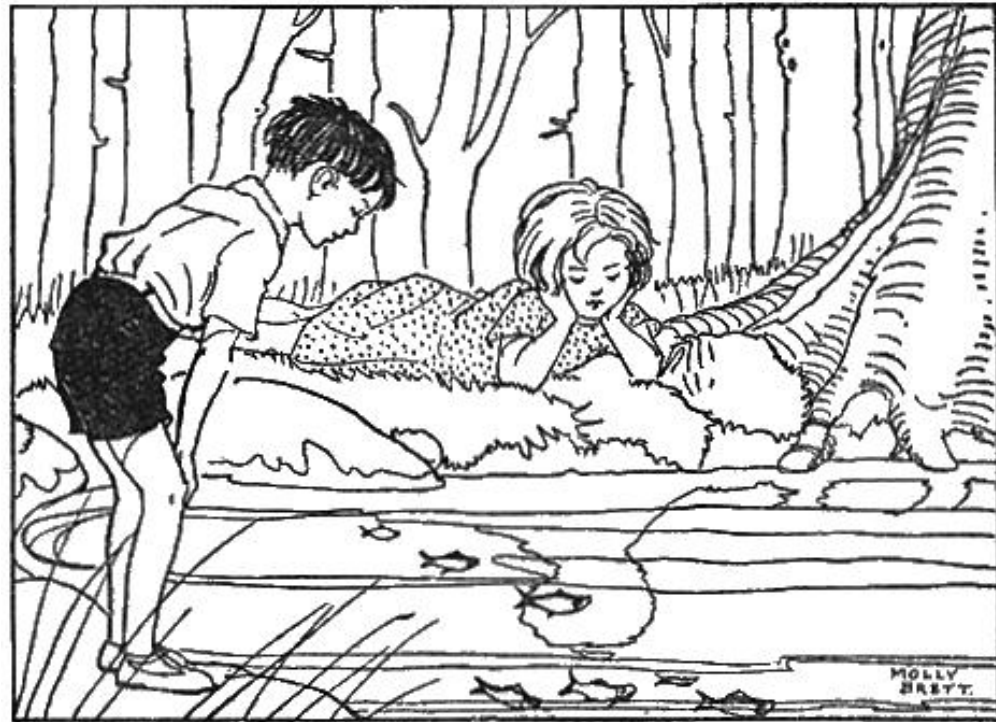
In August by William Dean Howells

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A song of Summer dead.





William Dean Howells

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Date of Death: _____

Place of Death: _____

What is he famous for?

In August by William Dean Howells

First Stanza

All the long August afternoon,
The little drowsy stream
Whispers a melancholy tune,
As if it dreamed of June
And whispered in its dream.

In August by William Dean Howells

Second Stanza

The thistles show beyond the brook
Dust on their down and bloom,
And out of many a weed-grown nook
The aster-flowers look
With eyes of tender gloom.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated seven times.

In August by William Dean Howells

Third Stanza

The silent orchard aisles are sweet

With smell of ripening fruit.

Through the sere grass, in shy retreat,

Flutter, at coming feet,

The robins strange and mute.

***In August* by William Dean Howells**

Fourth Stanza

There is no wind to stir the leaves,
The harsh leaves overhead;
Only the querulous cricket grieves,
And shrilling locust weaves
A song of Summer dead.

In August by William Dean Howells

First Stanza

*All the long August afternoon,
The little drowsy stream
Whispers a melancholy tune,
As if it dreamed of June
And whispered in its dream.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of six sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

***In August* by William Dean Howells**

Second Stanza

*The thistles show beyond the brook
Dust on their down and bloom,
And out of many a weed-grown nook
The aster-flowers look
With eyes of tender gloom.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of five sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom).

***In August* by William Dean Howells**

Third Stanza

*The silent orchard aisles are sweet
With smell of ripening fruit.
Through the sere grass, in shy retreat,
Flutter, at coming feet,
The robins strange and mute.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of four sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

***In August* by William Dean Howells**

Fourth Stanza

*There is no wind to stir the leaves,
The harsh leaves overhead;
Only the querulous cricket grieves,
And shrilling locust weaves
A song of Summer dead.*

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

In August
by William Dean Howells

Study Notes

Define:

Melancholy: _____

Sere: _____

Querulous: _____

Mute: _____

Interpret:

W.D. Howells described Realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material." Do you think this poem is a good example of Realism? Why or why not?

Examine:

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

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

Consonance – the repetition of consonant sounds in a line of poetry

Evaluate:

The value of a poem is determined by the impact it has on its reader. When you think of August, how does it compare to the poet's reflections?

Study Notes Answers

Define:

Melancholy: sad; depressed; downhearted

Sere: dried; withered

Querulous: grouchy; irritable; argumentative

Mute: silent; quiet; voiceless

Interpret:

W.D. Howells described Realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material." Do you think this poem is a good example of Realism? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. The poem does exemplify Realism in that it details the realistic sights, sounds, and smells of summer.

Examine:

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

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

The stream is personified – it is drowsy, it whispers, and it dreams.

The asters are personified – they are said to look with eyes.

The cricket is personified – is querulous and shows grief

Summer is personified – it is capitalized as a proper noun, and dies.

Consonance – the repetition of consonant sounds in a line of poetry

The silent orchard aisles are sweet

The aster-flowers look

Flutter, at coming feet,

Only the querulous cricket grieves,

Evaluate:

The value of a poem is determined by the impact it has on its reader. When you think of August, how does it compare to the poet's reflections?

Answers will vary