

# Lesson Plan #2: Forest Poems

**Note:** This lesson plan may be used after reading any one of the articles in any *Natural Inquirer*.

The purpose of this lesson plan is to give students a chance to reflect on their reading and create poems to express what they have learned.

To create their poems, students will need paper and pencil.

Follow the reading guide and graphic organizer from the previous lesson plan. After students have read their article and formulated summaries and questions, they will read one or more of the following poems. These poems are from Guthrie, John. 1929. *Forest fire and other verse*, the American Forestry Association, 3rd printing (1935).

Begin with a discussion of the publication date of these poems. Students should be aware that the poems were written at least 80 years ago, and life was much different then. After reading each poem, students should answer the following:

- A. List three things the author said that you think are important.
- B. Why do you think this poem was written?
- C. What evidence in the poem helps you know why it was written? Quote from the poem.
- D. List two things the poem tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.
- E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the poem.

## Oh! Wonderful Horse by H. R. Elliott

Oh horse you are a wonderful thing, no buttons to push, no horns to ring, you start yourself, no clutch to slip, no spark to miss, no gears to strip, no license buying every year with plates to screw on front and rear, no gas bills climbing up each day stealing the joy of life away. No speed cops chugging in your rear yelling summons in your ear. Your inner tubes are all O.K. and thank the Lord they stay that way, your spark plugs never miss and fuss, your motor never makes us cuss. Your frame is good for many a mile, your body never changes its style. Your wants are few and easy met, you've something on the auto yet.

## The Forester's Life, no author given

The forester's life is full of ease;  
A timber famine he foresees;  
He tries to warn the he's and she's  
Who will not listen to his pleas.  
Then he gets down upon his knees  
And plants the seed to grow the trees;  
Their life he fondly oversees,  
And talks about their pedigrees.  
The people learn by slow degrees,  
By ones, and twos, and even threes.  
Then they, too hold some jubilees  
And follow up with planting-bees.  
'Tis only then the famine flees.  
Why don't you plant some little trees?

## **Our Forests by Charles Allen**

A safe retreat from summer's heat  
Fresh green on winter's snow  
Our forests stand in stalwart band  
To greet the folks who know.

To weary souls they're restful goals  
On nerves distraught with care  
They spread a balm of soothing calm  
No doctor can prepare.

Quite free to all who heed the call,  
Supreme in scenic lure,  
Their verdant arms outflung with charms  
Inviting, safe, secure.

## **The Bargain of Forest and Stream by A. G. Jackson**

The streams and the woods made a bargain,  
That as long as the waters ran,  
As long as the trees grew skyward  
They'd follow this helpful plan:

The trees would shelter the rivers  
And hold their flood-waters back.  
The rivers would nourish the forest  
And see that it ne'er would lack.

You never will have a river,  
Steady and sure in its flow,  
Unless in its upper reaches  
Trees verdant and helpful grow.

And ne'er will you find a forest,  
Wide and refreshing and grand,  
Unless it is nourished by rivers  
That flow through, renewing the land.

And man, who destroys the timber,  
Leaving the mountain slopes bare,  
Wonders what dried up the rivers  
That once ran steadily there.

## **The Magic Change by Mrs. (Ranger) Dewey S. Wright**

I do not know my world today,  
The summer sun has gone away,  
The touch of fall is in the air,  
It can be seen now everywhere.

Close here at hand some poplars rise  
And rear their heads up to the skies.  
But yesterday their clothes were green,  
But now today—a golden sheen.  
A magic hand has dealt to vine  
I knew so well in summer time,  
A color one can scarce describe  
And stand close there by its side

The sumac that could not withstand  
The artist with the faultless hand.  
He with deft touch from foot to head  
Has changed it to a crimson red.

The only things familiar now  
Are standing on the mountain's brow,  
The little pines so green and fair  
Will not be changed by frosty air.

In a class discussion (or in small groups), have students share their answers to the five questions. Could this poem have been written today? Why or why not?

Have students write a haiku based on the *Natural Inquirer* article they just read. A haiku is a Japanese poem that is usually written in response to an observation about or within nature. A haiku has the following structure:

### Three lines

Lines 1 and 3 have five syllables  
Line 2 has seven syllables  
The lines do not rhyme.

### An example to help you remember:

I am first with five  
Then seven in the middle—  
Five again to end.

Here is a “what am I” haiku example:

Green and speckled legs,  
Hop on logs and lily pads  
Splash in cool water.

Post student haikus in the hallway. You may send the haikus electronically to Jessica@naturalinquirer.org and we will post them on the *Natural Inquirer* Web site. If you choose to send them to the *Natural Inquirer*, please include the name of the *Natural Inquirer* article that inspired the haiku.

## Answers to the puzzles

### Sentenced!

Bristlecone pine trees are special.

Bacteria and fungi are decomposers.

The soil is a world about which we seldom think.

The scientists were surprised at their findings.

Scientists can study just about anything.

Think about your friends at school.

People should carefully consider and learn from the past.

Social scientists study what people do, think, and believe.

A case study is a detailed examination of one example.

You, as an individual, have our own history.

(As an individual, you have your own history.)

A historian is an individual who does research and writes about events that happened in the past.

### Who Or What Am I?

Forest Service

Pitfall trap

Arthropods

Thesis

Biosphere

The Rio Grande

Herpetologist

Control

Air

Social Scientist

Hypothesis

Wildland Urban Interface

Nurse object

Trust

Plains Black Headed snake