

Lesson Plan to Accompany “The Fire of Drift-Wood”

Read: “The Fire of Drift-Wood”

This poem addresses the feeling of being safe, warm and dry from the elements of nature. It also creates a sense of belonging through family and friendships.

- (a) Are these relationships and environments available to you today?
- (b) What impact or how has pop culture (TV, film, music, etc.) affected people’s access to the intellectual and emotional surroundings discussed in this poem?

Create a:

- **Watercolor interior:** Watercolor flows. Use it to express an image of safety and belonging. This image could be imagined, observed, abstract, or realistic. Color and texture used to create an “image” to express the feeling of safety and belonging.

“The Fire of Drift-Wood”

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Devereaux Farm, near Marblehead

We sat within the farm-house old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze damp and cold,
An easy entrance, night and day.
Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.
We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.
We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;
And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;
The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.
The very tones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.
Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire.
And, as their splendor flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
And sent no answer back again.
The windows, rattling in their frames,
The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech;
Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answers back again.
O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
They were indeed too much akin,
The drift-wood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.