

# November Cotton Flower

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Boll-weevil's coming, and the winter's cold,  
Made cotton-stalks look rusty, seasons old,  
And cotton, scarce as any southern snow,  
Was vanishing; the branch, so pinched and slow,  
Failed in its function as the autumn rake;  
Drouth fighting soil had caused the soil to take  
All water from the streams; dead birds were found  
In wells a hundred feet below the ground--  
Such was the season when the flower bloomed.  
Old folks were startled, and it soon assumed  
Significance. Superstition saw  
Something it had never seen before:  
Brown eyes that loved without a trace of fear,  
Beauty so sudden for that time of year.



—Jean Toomer

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## Discussion and Activities

1. Students will take turns reading the poem aloud.
2. Discuss the poem's rhythm.
3. What makes the cotton stalks look “rusty?”
4. Discuss the phrase "cotton scarce as southern snow." How often does it snow in the southern states?
5. What is the autumn rake? Why does it fail in its function?
6. Where does the soil get its water? Why? What is the significance of dead birds in wells?
7. Why were the "old folks" startled by the blooming flower?
8. Identify the poetic style.
9. Identify any use of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification and idiom in this poem.

## P.A.S.S.

Grade 4: Reading - 2.1; 4.1b,3a,4

Grade 5: Reading - 2.1,4d; 4.1b,3bcd,4

Grade 6: Reading - 1.1b; 2.1; 4.3acd,4a

Grade 7: Reading - 1.3c; 2.1; 4.3ac,4a

Grade 8: Reading - 3c; 4.3ac,4a

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