

VOICE LESSONS : SAMPLES 2
USING VOICE LESSONS FOR POETRY ANALYSIS

TONE

Piazza di Spagna, Early Morning

I can't forget
How she stood at the top of that long marble stair
Amazed, and then with a sleepy pirouette
Went dancing slowly down to the fountain-quiet square.
5 Nothing upon her face
But some impersonal loneliness,—not then a girl,
But as it were a reverie of the place,
A called-for falling glide and whirl;
As when a leaf, petal, or thin chip
10 Is drawn to the falls of a pool and, circling a moment above it,
Rides on over the lip—
Perfectly beautiful, perfectly ignorant of it.

—Richard Wilbur

DISCUSS:

1. What is the speaker's attitude toward the woman he describes? List the images, diction, and details that support your position.
2. Consider the last line of the poem. How does the repetition of the syntactical structure (adverb adjective, adverb adjective) support the tone of the poem?

APPLY:

Using Wilbur's poem as a model, write a sentence which expresses stunned admiration for a stranger. Use repetition of a syntactical structure to create your tone.

Nancy Dean. *Voice Lessons: Classroom Activities to Teach Diction, Detail, Imagery, Syntax, and Tone*. Gainesville: Maupin House, 2000, Print.