November Cotton Flower

Jean Toomer | Grades 6 to 12

Complete poem and inquiry

First Name

Last Name

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

Complete public domain poem. Numbered poetic lines support citation. Original poetic punctuation is retained. Source details appear in the teacher guide.

How does a damaged landscape make the final image of fearless love more powerful?