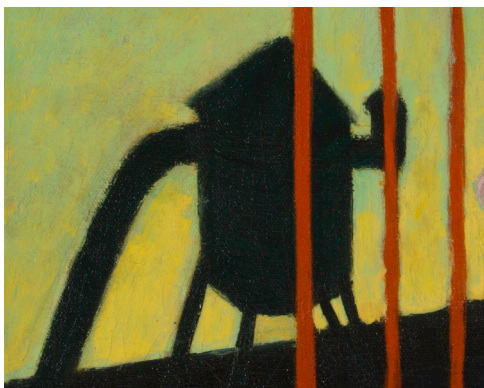


JULY 2013

Setting the Scene for a Story

Walter Henry Williams | *A Quick Nap*



VISIT THE BMA
and look for *A Quick Nap* on view in the Cone Wing.

Walter Henry Williams (American, 1920-1998).
Detail, *A Quick Nap*. 1952. Oil on canvas.
24 x 30 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art:
Purchased as the gift of Eddie C. Brown and
C. Sylvia Brown, Baltimore, BMA 2008.8.
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Can you write a story about the sleepy little girl in this painting? First you need to figure out where the little girl lives. What season is it? What time of day? The artist provides five visual clues:

Dress The little girl's dress looks light, cool, and comfortable—perfect for a summer day.

Sky The sun is low in the sky. It's probably early evening.

Skylight (a window cut into the roof of a building) Since the little girl can look down upon the skylight on a roof nearby, we know that her own apartment is way above ground level.

Rooftop water tank For more than a century, New York City apartment buildings taller than six stories have used rooftop tanks to supply the tenants with water. Therefore, we know that the water tank on the roof of the neighboring building is at least six stories off the ground, and the little girl must be up even higher. Even so, she's relaxed enough to lean against the railing and close her eyes.

Window reflection The red railings on the apartment house across the street look similar to the railing where the little girl is resting her head. The railings, landings, and ladders that we see on the reflected building are fire escapes. In case of emergency, people can crawl out of their windows and use the ladders to reach the street safely. But like many New Yorkers, this little girl likes to use her fire escape as a "porch in the sky"* where she can daydream, sleep, or simply enjoy the cool evening breeze as the sun goes down.

*Quote from: nyti.ms/12SfpWl

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Create an illustrated story that tells what this little girl might see from her perch high above the busy street. Or write about a place where you like to daydream or nap.

Walter Williams started his art career in Brooklyn, New York, by painting scenes of city life. In *A Quick Nap*, he surrounded the little girl with the rectangles and straight lines typical of city structures. Draw or paint a scene in your city or town.

Rooftop water tanks: bit.ly/1b2bPL

Also: nyti.ms/127G0ug

Fire escapes: bit.ly/16ULxYR

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.



Walter Henry Williams. *A Quick Nap.*

1952. Oil on canvas. 24 x 30 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchased as the gift of Eddie C. Brown and C. Sylvia Brown, Baltimore, BMA 2008.8. ©Estate of Walter Henry Williams