



Hand in hand they dance in a row,
Hither and thither, and to and fro,
Flip! Flap! Flop! and away they go —
Flutt'ring creatures as white as snow,

Like restive horses they caper and prance;
Like fairy-tale witches they wildly dance;
Rounded in front, but hollow behind,
They shiver and skip in the merry March wind.

One I saw dancing excitedly,
Struggling so wildly till she was free,
Then, leaving pegs and clothesline behind her,
She flew like a bird, and no one can find her.

I saw her gleam, like a sail, in the sun,
Flipping and flapping and flopping for fun.
Nobody knows where she now can be,
Hid in a ditch, or drowned in the sea.

She was my handkerchief not long ago,
But she'll never come back to my pocket, I know.

- Charlotte Drutt Cole



- **restive**: restless, fidgety, unable to remain still
- **caper**: leap, skip or dance about in a lively, playful manner
- **prance**: walk or move with high, springy steps
- **wildly**: Here, it means very hard, violently.
- **pegs**: pins used to secure something in place, as for example, clothes on a clothesline

1. Read the poem aloud. Recite any stanza of your choice from memory.
2. Answer the following questions with reference to the poem.
 - (a) What is described in the poem?
 - (b) What are the clothes compared to? Give two examples.
 - (c) What do restive horses do?
 - (d) What do fairy-tale witches do?
 - (e) What did one of the fluttering creatures do?
 - (f) What could have happened to the one who flew away? Who was she?
3. Form groups and discuss the following questions :
 - (a) Why are the clothes compared to living things?
 - (b) The events described in the poem take place at a certain place, at a certain period of the year, under specific weather conditions. Describe the place, the time and the weather conditions.
4. When we say that two or more words rhyme, we mean that they end with the same sound or syllable. For example, 'ring-sing'. Rhyming words are often used in verse at the end of the lines. List the rhyming words from the poem. Note the words 'behind' and 'wind'. They have similar spellings, that is, they look the same. But they are pronounced differently, that is, they do not 'sound' the same. This is known as 'eye rhyme'. Separate the examples of eye rhymes from the following list.
 - cry-try • stronger-longer • laughter-daughter • known-grown
 - none-shone • beat-feat • shut-put • won-done • imply-simply
5. List all the phrases from the poem in which two or more words are joined with 'and'.
6. Form groups and discuss what must have happened to the handkerchief. Write the story in your own words.
7. Wash your handkerchief clean. Hang it with a peg to dry in the wind. Watch how it flutters.
8. Complete the following comparisons.
 - as white as • as green as • as red as
 - as blue as • as black as • as bright as
 - (a) Rewrite these comparisons using the comparative degree.
Example : Whiter than snow
 - (b) Find suitable objects for each comparison.
Example : Petals or flowers or feathers whiter than snow.