

Tone

Consider:

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-quieted square;

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
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 Wilber, "Piazza Di Spagna, Early Morning"

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 Wilber's poetry as a model, write a sentence which expresses stunned admiration for a stranger. Use repetition of syntactical structure to create your tone. Share your sentence with the class.