

Directions
Read this article. Then answer questions 8 through 14.

Excerpt from *Snowflake Bentley*

by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

- 1 In the days when farmers worked with ox and sled and cut the dark with lantern light, there lived a boy who loved snow more than anything in the world. Willie Bentley's happiest days were snowstorm days. He watched snowflakes on his mittens, on the dried grass of Vermont farm fields, on the dark metal handle of the barn door. He said snow was as beautiful as butterflies, or apple blossoms.
- 2 He could net butterflies and show them to his older brother, Charlie. He could pick apple blossoms and take them to his mother. But he could not share snowflakes because he could not save them.
- 3 When his mother gave him an old microscope, he used it to look at flowers, raindrops, and blades of grass. Best of all, he used it to look at snow. While other children built forts and pelted snowballs at roosting crows, Willie was catching snowflakes. Day after stormy day he studied the icy crystals.
- 4 Their intricate patterns were even more beautiful than he had imagined. He expected to find whole flakes that were the same, that were copies of each other. But he never did. Willie decided he must find a way to save snowflakes so others could see their wonderful designs. For three winters he tried drawing snow crystals. They always melted before he could finish.
- 5 When he was sixteen, Willie read of a camera with its own microscope. "If I had that camera I could photograph snowflakes," he told his mother. Willie's mother knew that he would not be happy until he could share what he had seen.
- 6 "Fussing with snow is just foolishness," his father said. Still, he loved his son. When Willie was seventeen his parents spent their savings and bought the camera. It was taller than a newborn calf, and cost as much as his father's herd of ten cows. Willie was sure it was the best of all cameras.
- 7 Even so his first pictures were failures—no better than shadows. Yet he would not quit. Mistake by mistake, snowflake by snowflake, Willie worked through every storm. Winter ended, the snow melted, and he had no good pictures. He waited for another

season of snow. One day, in the second winter, he tried a new experiment. And it worked! Willie had figured out how to photograph snowflakes! “Now everyone can see the great beauty in a tiny crystal,” he said.

8 But in those days, no one cared. Neighbors laughed at the idea of photographing snow. “Snow in Vermont is as common as dirt,” they said. “We don’t need pictures.” Willie said the photographs would be his gift to the world. While other farmers sat by the fire or rode to town with horse and sleigh, Willie studied snowstorms. He stood at the shed door and held out a black tray to catch the flakes.

9 When he found only jumbled, broken crystals, he brushed the tray clean with a turkey feather and held it out again. He waited hours for just the right crystal and didn’t notice the cold. If the shed were warm the snow would melt. If he breathed on the black tray the snow would melt. If he twitched a muscle as he held the snow crystal on the long wood pick the snowflake would break. He had to work fast or the snowflake would evaporate before he could slide it into place and take its picture. Some winters he was able to make only a few dozen good pictures. Some winters he made hundreds. . . .

10 But his snow crystal pictures were always his favorites. He gave copies away or sold them for a few cents. He made special pictures as gifts for birthdays. He held evening slide shows on the lawns of his friends. Children and adults sat on the grass and watched while Willie projected his slides onto a sheet hung over a clothesline.

11 He wrote about snow and published his pictures in magazines. He gave speeches about snow to faraway scholars and neighborhood skywatchers. “You are doing great work,” said a professor from Wisconsin. The little farmer came to be known as the world’s expert on snow, “the Snowflake Man.” But he never grew rich. He spent every penny on his pictures. Willie said there were treasures in snow. “I can’t afford to miss a single snowstorm,” he told a friend. “I never know when I will find some wonderful prize.”

8

Read this sentence from paragraph 1 of the article.

In the days when farmers worked with ox and sled and cut the dark with lantern light, there lived a boy who loved snow more than anything in the world.

How does the author’s word choice in the sentence affect the meaning of the passage?

- A by suggesting that the ideas in the passage are made up
- B by showing that the subject of the passage became famous
- C by suggesting that the topic of the passage is familiar
- D by showing that the events in the passage happened long ago

9

What is the meaning of the word “pelted” as it is used in paragraph 3?

- A created
- B found
- C saved
- D threw

- 10** Which quotation **best** supports a main idea of the article?
- A** “He expected to find whole flakes that were the same . . .” (paragraph 4)
 - B** “‘Fussing with snow is just foolishness,’ his father said.” (paragraph 6)
 - C** “Even so his first pictures were failures . . .” (paragraph 7)
 - D** “‘Now everyone can see the great beauty in a tiny crystal,’ he said.” (paragraph 7)
- 11** What does the information in paragraph 9 suggest about the author’s point of view?
- A** The author believes that Bentley could have been more careful.
 - B** The author respects Bentley’s many different interests.
 - C** The author admires Bentley’s dedication.
 - D** The author questions the methods Bentley used.
- 12** Which statement is true based on the information in paragraphs 6 and 11?
- A** Bentley’s work with snow required expensive equipment that he was willing to spend all his money on.
 - B** Bentley was thought to be foolish throughout his life because of his interest in snow.
 - C** Bentley’s parents thought he should do something with his life other than taking pictures of snow.
 - D** Bentley became less interested in studying snow than in publishing pictures and giving speeches.

GO ON

13 What does the reader learn about Bentley from paragraphs 10 and 11?

- A** He was more interested in sharing his work than in making money from it.
- B** He worked hard to develop a way of making photographs of snowflakes.
- C** He wanted to find out if all snowflakes were different from each other.
- D** He was able to follow his interests because of the help he got from his family.

14 Which sentence **best** describes how the article is organized?

- A** The reasons for Willie Bentley's experiments with snow are presented, followed by their eventual conclusions.
- B** The events of Willie Bentley's life and his study of snow are described as they happened over time.
- C** The different problems of photographing snow are explained and then Willie Bentley's solutions are described.
- D** The important ideas about snow in Willie Bentley's discoveries are presented, followed by details and examples.