Imagine laying on your back and watching the clouds above float across the sky. They paint pictures in the blue expanse of sky, and we can remember our stories in them as we close our eyes and drift along with them. As they drift into view, they sharpen with detail, only to drift away. Nothing is permanent; everything is transient.

Your objective for this mimic poem is two-fold. One, you will mimic the poem’s structure.Two, you will use words as your artist’s palette to describe 7 cloud scenes as they pass through the sky, concentrating on imagery and figurative language.

**Cloud Painter**

**By Jane Flanders**

At first, as you know, the sky is incidental-

a drape, a backdrop for the trees and steeples.

Here an oak clutches a rock (already he works outdoors),

a wall buckles but does not break,

water pearls through a lock, a haywain trembles.

The pleasures of landscape are endless. What we see

around us should be enough.

Horizons are typically high and far enough.

Still, clouds let us drift and remember. He is, after all,

a miller’s son, use to trying

to read the future in the sky, seeing instead

ships, horns, instruments of flight.

Is that his mother’s wash flapping on the line?

His schoolbook, smudged, illegible?

In this period, the sky becomes significant.

Cloud forms are technically correct-mare’s tails

sheep-in-the-meadow, thunderheads.

You can almost tell which scenes have been interrupted

by summer showers.

How his young wife dies.

His landscapes achieve belated success.

He is invited to join the Academy. I forget

whether he accepts or not.

In any case, the literal forms give way

to something spectral, nameless. His palette shrinks

to gray, blue, white- the colors of charity.

Horizons sink and fade,

trees draw back till they are little more than frames,

then they, too, disappear.

Finally, the canvas itself begins to vibrate

with waning light,

as if the wind could paint.

And we too, at last, stare into a space

which tells us nothing,

except that the world can vanish along with our need for it.