

August 2026: there  
will come soft rains  
essay sample



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“ There will Come Soft Rains” is a short science fiction story written in 1950 by Ray Bradbury. The entire story focuses on the setting of a mechanical house winding down its days. The house is a representation of humanity and technology. While technology seems to have replaced humans in the beginning of the story, by the end, Bradbury shows that without humans, technology is doomed. In the beginning, technology has reduced humans to be an unnecessary aspect of routine running of a household. By the end of the story, it was evident that there are limitations to the capabilities of technology, thus emphasizing the significance of humans being in control.

Apparently, due to a nuclear blast, “ the house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.” The author uses personification to develop the house as being the main character. He writes that the house “ quivered at each sound” leading us to believe that the house is alive. This use of personification can be seen throughout the story as the house runs its daily course. “ Tick-tock, seven o’clock, time to get up...” “ Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!” These are examples of the house being independently programmed to not need a human. The house didn’t require humans in order for it to function, as a matter of it, the house didn’t seem to notice that the humans were gone. Furthermore, despite all the capabilities of the house, it was still unable to save the family from the nuclear bomb.

Bradbury portrays how robotic the house is and how efficient. Throughout the story everything was timed. There appeared to be a specific schedule that the house followed and it had an organized “ personality”. We get that

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sense of organization as per the constant reference to the time of day and what should be occurring at that time. Without noticing the absence of the family, the house continued to do its chores as it prepared meals, opened and closed doors and windows, closed the shades, cleaned, watered the garden and even spoke. You can notice that there is a distinct lack of human emotion shown by the house and how oblivious it is to what's going on around it and simply focuses on getting the tasks done. As the afternoon stepped in, the house prepared dinner and moves on to set up a card table and poured drinks. During that time, the house asked " Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?" When no answer was given, the house selected one at random.

Coincidentally, it chose a poem by Sara Teasdale which starts off saying " there will come soft rains and the smell of the ground". Typically, rain often symbolizes sadness and dreariness and this particular poem was eerily chosen before the demise of the house. The poem goes on to say " and frogs in the pool singing at night, and wild plum trees in tremulous white; robins will wear their feathery fire, whistling their whims on a low fence-wire; and not one will know of the war, not one will care at last when it is done. Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, If mankind perished utterly; and Spring herself when she woke at dawn would scarcely know that we were gone". The words of this poem symbolizes the power of nature and its lack of dependency on humans whereas it is us that depend on it. Symbolism is key in this poem. Teasdale uses a plum tree which symbolizes strength because they tend to blossom at the peak of spring despite the cold, harsh winter snow. We can interpret this to mean that although life may test us at times,

we too can blossom. The robins symbolizes the birds welcoming spring not even aware of the calamity of war that mankind faces.

The poem is saying that neither the frog, the plum trees nor the robins are aware of the war and when it will be over. Neither the tree nor the bird will care if mankind perished and as the season changed nor will it know we were ever here. Basically, the poem claims that nature doesn't take notice of our problems or hardships and in the end when it's all over and done, when our problems are gone, nature still wouldn't care but will go on. " The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and through the house, tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience." This shows that the house, as technologically endowed as it is, doesn't have the capabilities of caring for an animal.

Animals can respond to humans and technology can respond to humans, however, animals and technology cannot respond to each other. Caring for the dog seemed to be a burden and was it treated indifferently by the house. The dog smells pancakes cooking but the house will not open its door to let it eat.

When the dog dies in a fit of hunger, the mice, without any sadness, hurries to remove the dog. Irony is also used as one of the dominant themes in this story. The narrator states the house is " an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly". The house is an altar for all the technology to worship the family. The worship of the humans is like a religion and the robots continue their ceremonies even <https://assignbuster.com/august-2026-there-will-come-soft-rains-essay-sample/>

though their gods are gone. The house symbolizes the development of technology and how pointless it actually is without any human. The house is awake, and in its unlimited capacity for serving the family, is preparing breakfast. No one will eat, because no one is left. The house is alone, going through the motions as if nothing had changed. One can't help but feel a sense of sadness in the tone as the story reads on. The house is religiously performing these tasks for the family only to receive not even an inkling that it was being done in vain.

As a sparrow brushed the window, the house snapped the shades up unwilling to let it be touched by the bird. It seems the house is trying so hard to please the family or to keep up to a certain standard but still feels no love. It remains a robot. Emotionless. The house is made up of various mechanical servants all which are designed to service their creators in life, but it can do nothing to help them from the other, more destructive advancement of technology: the atomic bomb. Speaking of which, Bradbury touches lightly on life before the atomic war. On one ash-covered wall of the house, there are five silhouettes: a man mowing a lawn, a woman bending to pick flowers, and a boy and girl throwing a ball to each other. This paints a picture of a happy family enjoying their time together in the yard of their robotic house. We see the competence of the house as the stove "ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunny side up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk." Also, it informs the family that "insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills". It seemed like the perfect life. As fortunate as it is having a house

that takes care of a family so well, it's almost creepy how inhuman the house really is.

As the house finishes the reciting the poem, a tree branch knows over a “ cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!” The house screams out “” Fire!”. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while the voices took it up in chorus: “ Fire, fire, fire!”.” Desperately, the house tried to save itself. It shuts its doors and windows but the wind and the fire was too strong. Both the rats and the house fought to save the house as the fire “ fed upon Picassos and Matisses in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings”.

Realizing that it was able to save itself, the house acted out in panic. “ In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with sublime disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked.” In its fit of panic, the house scrambles “ in the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts

at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen  
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bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!”

Inevitably the house fails and it too was destroyed. This establishes the necessity for a human mind and control because though the house was built to withstand hazards, without a mankind directing and operating technology, in the end, the house will fail. Also, depending on one’s perspective, we can analyze the story to show that even after an atomic bomb, technology has prevailed mankind, however, in the end the house couldn’t save itself without the help of humans. Which needs the other more to survive? While technology has ultimately lost the battle of survival, humans lost the war long ago. The house is a representation of humanity. The house is a reflection of man, now that the men have all died, the house has too. When we are gone the world will continue on, nature blooming and thriving, with mankind a distant memory of what was.

The story of men is told in the dying of a mechanical house. Bradbury sends a message in this story that even with all the technological advancements and conveniences that this “ smart” house has offered us, we should not become dependent on it. The house fully equipped with modern day amenities was certainly beneficial to the family that once lived there. However, it proved to be completely useless without the humans. We too can build a smart house to service us, but what builds a home? It takes a family, with the cooking, the cleaning, the errands and the love to build a home. This story was simply about a house, while efficient, still loveless and emotionless.