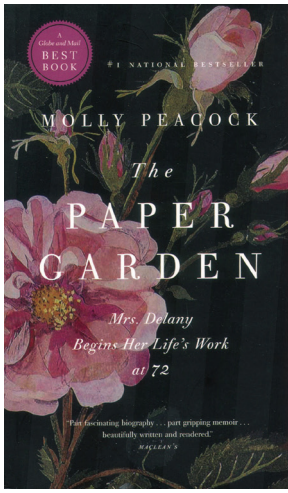


*November 2018***Reading Guide:*****The Paper Garden: An Artist Begins Her Life's Work at 72* by Molly Peacock**

1. Molly Peacock focuses each chapter of her book on a selected *flower mosaic*; do the metaphors help or hinder the structure of the book?
2. Did Peacock's personal story disrupt the story of Mrs. Delany? Do you think her life compares comparably to Mrs. Delany's?
3. Do you think Mrs. Delany's obsessive and observational tenacity for her crafts impedes her personal relationships? How do you think she was able to balance her commitment to the *hortus siccus* and her personal relationships?
4. After reading of the many relationships in Mrs. Delany's life, which were most important? Family, husbands, and/or friends?
5. Peacock's lyrical style floats in and out of the book, along with her personal life story; do you think this book is a biography or memoir? Why?
6. Mrs. Delany removes herself from court for the latter part of her life; however, court finds her while at Bulstrode. Do you think she sought to replace royal society with the scientific society? How did the scientific society influence her choices of mosaics?
7. Many historical figures appear in and out of Mrs. Delany's life. Who, and how, did these figures affect her?
8. The book offers momentary insights into the daily life of a lady in England in the 18th century. Were there any expectations or experiences that you were interested to know more about?

**Author Biography**

Molly Peacock is a poet, biographer, essayist, and short-fiction writer whose multigenre literary life has taken her from New York City to Toronto, from poetry to prose, from words to words-and-pictures, and from lyric self-examination to curiosity about the lives of others. Beginning her literary life as a poet, she has published six books of poetry. Her poetry is included in *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* as well as Canadian anthologies. A dynamic speaker, she has spread the word about late-life creativity, poetry, and the artist's life. Molly is from a blue-collar and farming family with roots both in Canada and the United States. She was born in Buffalo, New York, received a B.A. magna cum laude from Harpur College (Binghamton University) and an M.A. with honors from The Writing Seminars at The Johns Hopkins University. A dual American-Canadian citizen, she now lives with her husband, James Joyce scholar Michael Groden, in Toronto.

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## Related Texts

If you liked *The Paper Garden*, you may enjoy these other books. Descriptions courtesy of Amazon.

- ***Mrs. Delany and Her Circle*, Yale Center for British Art**

**By Mark Laird, Alicia Weisber-Roberts**

At the age of seventy-two, Mary Delany, née Mary Granville (1700–1788), embarked upon a series of nearly a thousand botanical collages, or “paper mosaics,” which would prove to be the crowning achievement of her rich creative life. These delicate hand-cut floral designs, made by a method of Mrs. Delany’s own invention, vie with the finest botanical works of her time. More than two centuries later her extraordinary work continues to inspire.

Although best known for these collages, Mrs. Delany was also an amateur artist, woman of fashion, and commentator on life and society in 18th-century England and Ireland. Her prolific craft activities not only served to cement personal bonds of friendship, but also allowed her to negotiate the interconnecting artistic, aristocratic, and scientific networks that surrounded her. This ambitious and groundbreaking book, the first to survey the full range of Mrs. Delany’s creative endeavors, reveals the complexity of her engagement with natural science, fashion, and design.

- ***Mrs. Delany: Her Life and Her Flowers***

**By Ruth Hayden**

First published in 1980, this book by Ruth Hayden, a descendant of the family, recaptures the atmosphere of privileged society in 18th-century England through a study of Mary Delany’s correspondence to both relatives and people of note.

- ***This Other Eden: Seven Great Gardens and 300 Years of English History***

**By Andrea Wulf**

*This Other Eden* is a captivating narrative of seven great gardens, beautiful canvases that represent not just pleasure grounds but a country’s evolution. Showpieces of grand design, they are also barometers of social change; lasting reflections of intellectual endeavor, of religion and philosophy, science and technology, art and literature. From Robert Cecil’s garden at Hatfield House, conceived by the famous botanist and plant-collector John Tradescant, who travelled widely to seek out unusual specimens, to Capability Brown, who “improved” upon nature to create the archetypal English parkland; from Joseph Paxton, whose engineering feats at Chatsworth mirrored the great Victorian age of technology, to Getrude Jekyll, who turned back to nature and designed the English cottage garden renowned the world over.

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