

## SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
A Maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye!  
--Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But she is in her grave, and, oh,  
The difference to me!

## A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

## THREE YEARS SHE GREW

Three years she grew in sun and shower,  
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown;  
This Child I to myself will take;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be  
Both law and impulse: and with me  
The Girl, in rock and plain,  
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn  
That wild with glee across the lawn  
Or up the mountain springs;  
And hers shall be the breathing balm,

And hers the silence and the calm  
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend  
To her; for her the willow bend;  
Nor shall she fail to see  
Even in the motions of the Storm  
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form  
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear  
To her; and she shall lean her ear  
In many a secret place  
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight  
Shall rear her form to stately height,  
Her virgin bosom swell;  
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give  
While she and I together live  
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake - The work was done--  
How soon my Lucy's race was run!  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be.

THE SOLITARY REAPER  
*from Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803*

Behold her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland Lass!  
Reaping and singing by herself;  
Stop here, or gently pass!  
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain;  
O listen! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands:  
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,  
Breaking the silence of the seas

Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?--  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago:  
Or is it some more humble lay,  
Familiar matter of to-day?  
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o'er the sickle bending;--  
I listened, motionless and still;  
And, as I mounted up the hill  
The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.

## SONNETS

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;  
And hermits are contented with their cells;  
And students with their pensive citadels;  
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,  
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,  
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,  
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:  
In truth the prison, unto which we doom  
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,  
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound  
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;  
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)  
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,  
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

*Composed upon Westminster Bridge  
September 3, 1802*

Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!

The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea:  
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder - everlastingly.  
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,  
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,  
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The Winds that will be howling at all hours  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind  
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom  
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,  
That spot which no vicissitude can find?  
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—  
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,  
Even for the least division of an hour,  
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind  
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return  
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,  
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,  
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;  
That neither present time, nor years unborn  
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

ODE: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

*The Child is father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
    To me did seem  
    Appareled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore; -  
    Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
    By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

    The Rainbow comes and goes,  
    And lovely is the Rose,  
    The Moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare;  
    Waters on a starry night  
    Are beautiful and fair;  
    The sunshine is a glorious birth;  
    But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,  
And while the young lambs bound  
    As to the tabor's sound,  
To me alone there came a thought of grief:  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
    And I again am strong:  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;  
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,  
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
    And all the earth is gay;  
    Land and sea  
    Give themselves up to jollity,  
    And with the heart of May  
    Doth every Beast keep holiday; -  
    Thou Child of Joy,  
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

#### IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call  
Ye to each other make; I see  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;  
My heart is at your festival,  
My head hath its coronal,  
The fulness of your bliss, I feel - I feel it all.  
Oh evil day! if I were sullen  
While the Earth herself is adorning,  
This sweet May-morning,  
And the Children are culling  
On every side,  
In a thousand valleys far and wide,  
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,  
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: -  
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!  
-But there's a Tree, of many, one,  
A single Field which I have looked upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone:  
The Pansy at my feet  
Doth the same tale repeat:  
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

#### V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But He  
Beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

#### VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;  
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,  
The homely Nurse doth all she can  
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,  
Forget the glories he hath known,  
And that imperial palace whence he came.

## VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,  
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!  
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,  
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes!  
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,  
Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;  
A wedding or a festival,  
A mourning or a funeral;  
And this hath now his heart,  
And unto this he frames his song:  
Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;  
But it will not be long  
Ere this be thrown aside,  
And with new joy and pride  
The little Actor cons another part;  
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"  
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,  
That Life brings with her in her equipage;  
As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation.

## VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
Thy Soul's immensity;  
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, -  
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;  
Thou, over whom thy Immortality  
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,  
A Presence which is not to be put by;  
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might  
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,  
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?  
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers  
Is something that doth live,  
That nature yet remembers  
What was so fugitive!  
The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction: not indeed  
For that which is most worthy to be blest;  
Delight and liberty, the simple creed  
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,  
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: -  
Not for these I raise  
The song of thanks and praise;  
But for those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings;  
Blank misgivings of a Creature  
Moving about in worlds not realised,  
High instincts before which our mortal Nature  
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:  
But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,  
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;  
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,  
To perish never;  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,  
Nor Man nor Boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy!  
Hence in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea



Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!  
And let the young Lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound!  
We in thought will join your throng,  
Ye that pipe and ye that play,  
Ye that through your hearts today  
Feel the gladness of the May!  
What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now for ever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,  
Forebode not any severing of our loves!  
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;  
I only have relinquished one delight  
To live beneath your more habitual sway.  
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,  
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;  
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day  
Is lovely yet;  
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;  
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.  
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.