

William Wordsworth Selected Poems

Notes

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!

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.

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!

The World is too Much With Us

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

London, 1802

1 Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 2 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 3 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 4 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 5 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 6 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 7 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 8 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 9 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 11 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 12 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 13 In cheerful godliness; and yet the heart
 14 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free

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

Notes

To a Skylark

1 Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
 2 Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
 3 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
 4 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
 5 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
 6 Those quivering wings composed, that music still!
 7 Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
 8 A privacy of glorious light is thine;
 9 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
 10 Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
 11 Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
 12 True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

Notes

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay:
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed---and gazed---but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.