

“This Lime Tree Bower My Prison” Coleridge – Group Work

Time Keepers: **Be sure you leave** at least 12 minutes for the final question (7 & 7b)!

0. Begin this group work by each group member recounting a story (if they can) of being left behind by a group of friends – because you were sick, in trouble, or had to do some work (or any other reason). For each group member jot down their feeling or comments on their feelings at the time of:

- loneliness
- thinking about what their friends were doing
- any **positive** feeling on being the one left behind while friends go off to some place great

After you are done, read aloud the information about the poem in the textbox to the right.

On July 2, 1797, Samuel Coleridge, with Dorothy Wordsworth sitting beside him, drove from Racedown in Dorset to Nether Stowey in Somerset, and for about two weeks the small cottage behind Tom Poole's hospitable mansion sheltered William and Dorothy and perhaps Basil Montague's little boy, whom they were educating, besides Coleridge and Mrs. Coleridge and Hartley the baby and Nanny their maid. To fill up the measure, Charles Lamb joined them on the 7th and stayed a week. Coleridge, writing to Southey, says:

‘The second day after Wordsworth came to me, dear Sara accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk on my foot, which confined me during the whole time of C. Lamb's stay, and still prevents me from all walks longer than a furlong. While Wordsworth, his sister, and Charles Lamb were out one evening, sitting in the arbour of T. Poole's garden, which communicates with mine, I composed these lines, with which I am pleased.’

1. Take turns reading the poem aloud (one member per stanza or so...) – try to summarize (but you don't need to write down) the literal action that takes place after you finish reading each stanza.

2. You have read Wordsworth's poem “I wandered lonely as a cloud” (the daffodil one - it is in your text books too). What similarity do you see (be specific) in the first stanza of Coleridge's “Lime Tree” (especially lines 2-5) to sentiments expressed in Wordsworth poem? What is fundamentally different in that sentiment as expressed between the two poets? Concentrate on the speakers of the poems and their *placement* to what they are describing. Use three quotes (1 from each poem in your answer).

3. If you look at “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” you will see that the speaker of the poem is lonely (see the opening of that poem) and yet is not sad about that fact – how would you specifically relate that to this poem (“This Lime Tree”)?

IMPORTANT: Remember, this idea (as expressed in this question) when you read “Tintern Abbey”



4. How is the garden where he must remain his prison? How **is it also his muse and his pleasure? (this is perhaps the most subtle and interesting idea in the poem) more on this in question 7.**

5. Make a connection (specific) to Anne and the time (7 years) she is apart from Captain Wentworth, in Austen's *Persuasion*. I suppose you could also make the same connection that he feels towards her while they are apart – but we specifically are given her musings on “what he must be doing.” Be specific. If you have a copy of the novel – use a quote for extra credit.

6. **The absolutely coolest, most unique thing** about this poem is its assertion that it is possible to be alone – and *to not be alone* – and perhaps to enjoy something even more vicariously (look it up) than it is possible to enjoy it in person. Comment on that assertion using at least two lines from the poem, one connection to another work that we have done (the connection must be

different than from any earlier question). In a little while we will see these words from Keats: “Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter”. How can that be how does it make sense?

7. If we read to “know that we are not alone” – explain how this poem, (perhaps even this group work), make us realize something – a feeling – an idea (and be specific here) that we didn't realize others felt. (There is much meta about this question – and perhaps even a little paradox (if you have time, explain the paradox)).

7b. In September, we read these words from an unknown Anglo-Saxon poet: “I can make a true song about me myself, tell my travels, how I often endured days of struggle, troublesome times, [how I] have suffered grim sorrow at heart, have known in the ship many worries [abodes of care], the terrible tossing of the waves...” The poem was “The Seafarer” (and you acted it out – waves pounding in the background). Consider how that journey figuratively matches each of ours and connect it directly or indirectly to “The Lime Tree Bower my Prison”