**LINES WRITTEN A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY**

From ***Lyrical Ballads***

**William Wordsworth**

[London: J. & A. Arch, 1798]

Five years have past; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a sweet inland murmur.\*—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

Which on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,

Among the woods and copses lose themselves,

Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb

The wild green landscape. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,

With some uncertain notice, as might seem, 20

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire

The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,

These forms of beauty have not been to me,

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,

And passing even into my purer mind 30

With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,

As may have had no trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life;

His little, nameless, unremembered acts

Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

To them I may have owed another gift,

Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight 40

Of all this unintelligible world

Is lighten'd:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,

And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things.

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If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,

In darkness, and amid the many shapes

Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir

Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,

Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee

O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the wood

How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd though[t,]

With many recognitions dim and faint, 60

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams, 70

Wherever nature led; more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all gone by,)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me 80

An appetite: a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, or any interest

Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,

And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts

Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompence. For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour 90

Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes

The still, sad music of humanity,

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean, and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man, 100

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,

And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world

Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,\*

And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense,

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, 110

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me, here, upon the banks

Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read

My former pleasures in the shooting lights

Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while 120

May I behold in thee what I was once,

My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray

The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,

Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress

With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, 130

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

Our chearful faith that all which we behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;

And let the misty mountain winds be free

To blow against thee: and in after years,

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind 140

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,

Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,

If I should be, where I no more can hear

Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence, wilt thou then forget 150

That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long

A worshipper of Nature, hither came,

Unwearied in that service: rather say

With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,

That after many wanderings, many years

Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake. 160

Footnotes.

[4] \* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

[107] \* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.