

*Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting The
Banks Of The Wye During A Tour, July 13, 1798*

FIVE years have passed; 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.¹ Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
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 15
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: 25
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 35
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

¹The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

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 45
 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.

If this 50

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, 55
 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-extinguished though[t,]
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
 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 65
 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,
 Wherever nature led; more like a man 70
 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 75
 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
 An appetite: a feeling and a love, 80
 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 85
 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
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes 90
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Not harsh or 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 95
 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,
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
 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 105
 Of eye and ear, both what they half-create, ²
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110
 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, 115
 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

²This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.

Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once, 120
 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 125
 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,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130
 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; 135
 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
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 140
 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, 145
 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
 That on the banks of this delightful stream 150
 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. Now wilt thou then forget, 155
 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.

From *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798–1802

*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 piety³.*

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5
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.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose; 10
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; 15
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

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: 20
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, 25
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 30
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,

³William Wordsworth, *My Heart Leaps Up*

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd-boy!

Ye bless'd creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make; I see 35
 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.
 O evil day! if I were sullen 40
 While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the children are culling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide, 45
 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 look'd upon, 50
 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?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: 55
 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, 60
 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, 65
 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 70
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

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, 75
 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.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, 80
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, 85
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learn'd art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 90
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, 95
 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; 100
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind, 105
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, 110

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;
 To whom the grave 115
 Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height, 120
 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, 125
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

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 130
 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:— 135
 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; 140
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
 But for those first affections, 145
 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 150
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,

To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy, 155
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 160
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.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound 165
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 to-day
Feel the gladness of the May! 170
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 175
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; 180
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

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 relinquish'd one delight 185
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet; 190
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.

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