

And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
 —Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 “How is it that you live, and what is it you do?”

18

120 He with a smile did then his words repeat;
 And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
 He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the pools where they abide.
 “Once I could meet with them on every side;
 125 But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.”

19

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:
 In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
 130 About the weary moors continually,
 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
 He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

20

And soon with this he other matter blended,
 135 Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
 But stately in the main; and when he ended,
 I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
 “God,” said I, “be my help and stay⁷ secure;
 140 I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!”

May 3–July 4, 1802

1807

I wandered lonely as a cloud¹

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;
 5 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
 10 Along the margin of a bay:

⁷ Support (a noun).

¹ For the original experience, two years earlier,

see Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journals*,
 April 15, 1802 (p. 414).

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:
15 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
20 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.

1804

1807

My heart leaps up

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
5 So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.¹

Mar. 26, 1802

1807

Ode: Intimations of Immortality In 1843 Wordsworth said about the ode to Isabella Fenwick:

This was composed during my residence at Town End, Grasmere; two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere [in the opening stanza of "We Are Seven"]:

—A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death!

1. Perhaps as distinguished from piety based on the Bible, in which the rainbow is the token of God's promise to Noah and his descendants never again to send a flood to destroy the earth.

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
 I love to see the look with which it braves,
 50 Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
 The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
 Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!^o *humankind*
 55 Such happiness, wherever it be known,
 Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
 And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
 Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
 60 Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

Summer 1806

1807

SONNETS

Prefatory Sonnet [Nuns fret not]¹

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,^o the Weaver at his Loom, *spinning wheel*
 5 Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,
 High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,²
 Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells:
 In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
 10 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
 Pleas'd if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find short solace there, as I have found.

1802

1815

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802¹

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by

1. In *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), this celebration of the restrictions of the sonnet form headed up the book's selection of sonnets. In old age Wordsworth remembered that his interest in the form was first revived when Dorothy read John Milton's sonnets aloud to him in 1802.

2. Hills forming the southwestern part of the Lake District.

1. The date of this experience was not September

3, but July 31, 1802. Its occasion was a trip to France, made possible by a brief truce in the war (see Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journals*, July 1802, p. 417). Wordsworth's conflicted feelings about this return to France, where he had once supported the Revolution and loved Annette Vallon, inform a number of personal and political sonnets that he wrote in 1802, among them the four that follow.

A sight so touching in its majesty:
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear
 5 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
 10 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!

1802

1807

It is a beauteous evening

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;
 5 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,¹
 10 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom² all the year;
 And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

Aug. 1802

1807

To Toussaint l'Ouverture¹

Toussaint, the most unhappy Man of Men!
 Whether the rural Milk-maid by her Cow
 Sing in thy hearing, or thou liest now
 Alone in some deep dungeon's earless den,
 5 O miserable Chieftain! where and when

1. The girl walking with Wordsworth is Caroline, his daughter by Annette Vallon. For the event described see Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journals*, July 1802 (p. 417).

2. Where the souls destined for heaven rest after death. Luke 16.22: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

1. First published in the *Morning Post*, Feb. 2,

1803. François Dominique Toussaint, later called L'Ouverture (ca. 1743–1803), was a self-educated slave who became leader of the slave rebellion in Haiti and governor of Santo Domingo. For opposing Napoleon's edict reestablishing slavery (abolished in France and its colonial possessions in the early stages of the Revolution), Toussaint was arrested and taken to Paris in June 1802. He died in prison in April 1803.

- 10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

Sept. 1802

1807

The world is too much with us

- 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!¹
 5 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
 10 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 Triton² blow his wreathèd horn.

1802–04

1807

Surprised by joy¹

- 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?
 5 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
 10 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.

1813–14

1815

1. Gift. It is the act of giving the heart away that is sordid.

2. A sea deity, usually represented as blowing on a conch shell. Proteus was an old man of the sea who (in the *Odyssey*) could assume a variety of shapes. The description of Proteus echoes *Paradise Lost* 3.603–04, and that of Triton echoes

Edmund Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, lines 244–45.

1. This was in fact suggested by my daughter Catherine, long after her death [Wordsworth's note]. Catherine Wordsworth died June 4, 1812, at the age of four.