

POEM - DAFFODILS BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

▣ ABOUT THE POET

William Wordsworth was a 19th century literary stalwart and the most influential proponent of English Romantic Poetry. He was born on 7th April, 1770 at Cockermouth, Cumberland.

Wordsworth, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Movement in English literature with their joint publication, Lyrical Ballads (1798).

Wordsworth's ~~my~~ magnum opus is generally considered to be The Prelude, a semi-autobiographical poem of his early years that he revised and expanded a number of times. It was published posthumously.

Wordsworth was Britain's poet laureate from 1843 until his death on 23rd April, 1850.

▣ ABOUT THE POEM

The poem 'Daffodils' is one of the loveliest and best-known poems of William Wordsworth. The poem was written in the year 1802. It was published in 'Poems in Two Volumes' in 1807. The very starting line of the poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud" informs the poet's profound sentiments of being left alone. The inspiration for the poem came from a walk Wordsworth took with his sister Dorothy around Glencoyne Bay, Ullswater, in the Lake District. He was inspired by Dorothy Wordsworth's journal entry describing the walk.

Wordsworth revised the poem in 1815. He changed 'dancing' with 'golden', 'along' with 'beside', and 'ten thousand' with 'fluttering and'. He then added a stanza

between the first and second, and changed
'laughing' to 'frowning'. The last stanza
was left untouched.

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
Outdid 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.*

The Poem in Detail

The poet says that, once while wandering like a cloud floating about above the hills and valleys, he came across a field of golden daffodils beside a lake. The dancing, fluttering flowers stretched endlessly along the shore, and though the shining waves of the lake danced beside the flowers, yet the daffodils outdid the water with their beauty. The poet says that the golden daffodils twinkled and stretched in a continuous line just like the stars in the Milky Way Galaxy for putting a greater implication in indicating a concrete visual.

He sees the endless view of golden daffodils as a never-ending line. The poet's exaggeration of the number of flowers by saying "Ten thousand I saw at a glance" indicates that he is really overwhelmed by the visual of the daffodils. The poet could not help to be happy in such a joyful company. He says that he stared ^{and} stared, but did not realise what wealth the scene would bring him. For now, whenever he feels 'vacant' or 'empty', the memory strikes 'that inward eye' that is 'the bliss of solitude' and his heart fills with pleasure, 'and dances with the daffodils'.