

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

William Wordsworth was born in the English Lake District in 1770, where he spent most of his life. This place became his main source of inspiration. He excelled in vivid descriptions of nature and the joy derived from the beauties of nature. In his poetry he tells about the relationship between man and nature. He thinks that man and nature are inseparable: each is a part of the same whole. Man exists not outside the natural world but as an active participant in it. *NATURE COMFORTS MAN IN SORROW, IT IS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND JOY, IT TEACHES MAN TO LOVE AND TO ACT IN A MORAL WAY, IT IS THE SEAT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE.*

He established his reputation as a poet of great lyricism with his "Poems in Two Volumes" published in 1807; these included his famous "Daffodils" and "Ode". His friendship with Coleridge became very important for the development of English Romanticism. In 1843 he was appointed Poet Laureate: he was considered the most important English poet. He died in 1850.

### DAFFODILS

The poem "Daffodils" is a clear example of Romantic poetry for its naturalistic theme. The poet, during a walk with his sister in the Lake District, saw a great quantity of daffodils which made him feel happy and in contact with nature. The flowers are personified, in fact they are described as a dancing crowd whose beauty is superior to everything else. This experience was so important to become a source of joy, even for the poet's sad. Nature was for Wordsworth a protection and the clear manifestation of God.

#### ANALYSIS:

The key of the poem is **joy**, as we can see from the many words which express pleasure and delight: in fact the *daffodils are golden, waving in a sprightly dance and outdoing the waves in glee: they provide a jocund company and the sight of them fills the poet's heart with pleasure.*

The flowers are set in a natural environment made up of land, air and water. The words related to the three elements are: **for land:** *vales, hills, tree.* **For air:** *cloud, breeze, stars, milky way.* **For water:** *lake, bay, waves.*

The daffodils, too, are not static like in a painting, but alive with motion. *They are in fact fluttering and dancing in the breeze, and tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

Describing the daffodils the poet mentions only one colour: golden; but the whole poem implicitly suggests a wealth of colours: white = clouds; green = hills, vales, trees; blue = lake; silver = star; silver-white = milky way.

The poem presents a perfect structure. It is divided into four stanzas which correspond to the various moods of the poet.

**Stanza 1** Setting and "shock" at the scene

**Stanza 2** Description of the flowers

**Stanza 3** Relationship between the flowers and the poet, the emotions of the poet (at the moment of the vision)

**Stanza 4** Emotion recollected in tranquility, consequences of the experience

## DAFFODILS

*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  
Out-did 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.*

## GIUNCHIGLIE

Vagabondavo da solo come una nuvola  
che fluttua in alto sopra le valli e le colline  
quando improvvisamente vidi una folla,  
una schiera di giunchiglie dorate,  
vicino al lago, al di sotto degli alberi,  
ondeggianti e danzanti nella brezza.

Continue come le stelle che risplendono e  
scintillano nella via lattea,  
si estendevano in una linea senza fine  
lungo il margine della baia:  
ne ho viste 10.000 con un'occhiata,  
che scuotevano le loro teste in un'allegria danza.

Le onde accanto a loro danzavano; ma esse  
superavano le onde spumeggianti in gaiezza.  
Un poeta non poteva che essere felice  
in una tale compagnia giocosa.  
Io fissavo e fissavo ma pensavo poco a quale  
ricchezza lo spettacolo mi aveva dato:

perché spesso, quando sono sdraiato sul mio  
divano in uno stato d'animo ozioso e pensieroso,  
esse appaiono (improvvisamente) in quell'occhio  
interiore che è la beatitudine della solitudine,  
.....e allora il mio cuore si riempie di piacere  
e danza con le giunchiglie.

Wordsworth in this poem uses:

**Similes:** lonely as a cloud; continuous as stars.

**Personification:** crowd, host, (the daffodils) fluttering and dancing (line 6), (the daffodils) tossing their heads (line 12) ;( the waves) dance (line 13) company (line 16), (my heart) dances (line 24).

## ABOUT WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND DAFFODILS

**-Who was William Wordsworth?** He was the most important English Romantic Poet.

**-Where and when was he born?** He was born in the English Lake District, in England, in 1770.

**-Why was this area very important for the poet?** Because this place surrounded by nature became his main source of inspiration

**-What is the content of his poetry?** He tells about the relationship between man and nature.

**-What does the poet think?** He thinks that man and nature are inseparable, man is an active participant in nature. Nature comforts man in sorrow, it is a source of pleasure and joy. It teaches man to love and to act in a moral way, it is the seat of the spirit of the universe.

**-What is his most famous poem?** It's "Daffodils".

**-What is the content of the poem?** The poet, during a walk in the Lake District, saw a great quantity of daffodils which made him feel happy and in contact with nature.

**-So, which is the key of the poem?** It's the joy derived by the beauty of nature. There are many words expressing pleasure and delight, for example: *sprightly dance, a jocund company, with pleasure.*

**-How is divided the poem?** It's divided in four stanzas which correspond to the various moods of the poet.

**-Which is the content of each stanza?** In the first stanza the poet is shocked by the scene; in the second stanza there is the description of the flowers; the third stanza is about the relationship between the flowers and the poet and it expresses the emotions of the poet at the moment of the vision; in the fourth stanza the emotion is recollected in tranquility and peace.

**-What does the poet use in this poem?**

- He uses **personification**, the daffodils are personified, they are described as a *dancing crowd, they are fluttering and dancing in the breeze, and tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

- Describing the daffodils he uses one **colour**, *golden*, but the whole poem suggests a wealth of colours: white = clouds; green = hills, vales, trees; blue = lake; silver = star; silver-white = milky way.

- He uses words related to the three elements: **land** (*vales, hills, tree*), **air** (*cloud, breeze, stars, milky way*) and **water** (*lake, bay, waves*).

- He also uses **similes** such as *lonely as a cloud; continuous as stars.*