

Lines Written in Early Spring

By William Wordsworth

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William Wordsworth (7 April 1770 – 23 April 1850) was a major English Romantic poet who, with **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English literature with their joint publication **Lyrical Ballads** (1798).

Wordsworth's **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 posthumously titled and published by his wife in the year of his death, before which it was generally known as "the poem to Coleridge". Wordsworth was Britain's poet laureate from 1843 until his death from pleurisy on 23 April 1850.

By the time he wrote this poem, written in the second half of the 1790's decade, Wordsworth had graduated in 1791 and had gone to France where he became a supporter of the French Revolution and strongly believed in social reforms which mean he was concerned about social and poverty problems. In those years he had economic problems as well as he and his brothers had not been able to get their legacy from his father's employer and his uncles, who were in charge of him when his father died, did not take care of him after graduating. The war between France and England divided his feelings because he wanted to stay loyal to his country but in his inner self he thought England was fighting liberty. This war was the reason why Wordsworth missed his daughter's infancy as he could not come to France until 1802. He had ideas based on men's equality and freedom.

In 1795 he met Coleridge and their friendship grew over the next two years until they came to publish *Lyrical Ballads* in October of 1798. In these moments of his life Wordsworth was concerned about social problems and the development of civilization men were carrying out. We can see these concerns in the poem. He frames the scene in a natural environment and thinks about **what men have made of man** despite all the marvellous surroundings Nature offers us. Where Nature is the creation/creator and men are her destroying creatures.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING-

This composition by Wordsworth is in a form of a **ballad** and consists of **six quatrains**. This poem was included in the '**Preface to Lyrical Ballads**'. In this poem, Wordsworth expresses his

appreciation of the beautiful nature and his concerns regarding the path the humanity is leaning towards.

The poem is set in a landscape of beauty, a small woodland grove. Wordsworth was inspired into writing this poem when he was walking near Alford, so the setting of the poem can be associated with the beautiful scenery of Alford.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

Wordsworth wrote this poem while he went for a walk in a spot near the village of Alford, he describes the moment and the place as a natural scene in motion, branches looking for the sun trying to escape from the water where its tree had fallen and had remained as a natural bridge and water falling down a sloping rock. Through this image we can imagine the sounds and the moment described in the poem.

The speaker tells that while sitting reclined on a woodland grove, his mind was filled with several thoughts. While he finds solace in the nature's beauty, the same beauty also reminds him of bad thoughts.

Wordsworth reminds the readers of the beauty of nature, the value of enjoying and appreciating their existence and the need to protect the nature from harm.

It's the mental state provoked by his thoughts that interests him. The reader enters two parallel imaginative worlds, one mimetic and clear, the other indistinct. The poet generalises fearlessly: "pleasant thoughts" invite "sad thoughts"

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

In the second stanza the poet uses a figure of speech called personification by which he gives Nature the ability to create at her will elements, what he calls "her fair works", and make the human soul that lives in the poet feel linked with them. This is a way of humanizing Nature by giving her the feature of being a creator which could be seen as an attribution to the Nature of the concept of God, understood as that who performs reality at his own will. The speaker appreciates the nature for her god like abilities of linking a human soul to herself but he also feels grief while thinking about how cruelly man has separated himself from mother nature.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

In the third quatrain he observes Nature, at its peak, in all its splendour and beauty. He tells about its dynamic development when he describes how the periwinkle trains its branches through the grass. He also displays his implication in this development of natural events expressing his desire for the flowers to rejoice at their existence.

The speaker is highly appreciative of the nature's beauty, he finds delight in the green bowers and has faith that the beautiful flowers enjoy every ounce of the air they breathe, they are thankful for living besides the nature.

In the third and fourth verses we can see a personification again, when flowers are endowed with particular human abilities such breathing and enjoying.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:--
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

He continues to observe nature and describes the birds playing and hopping around him, he says he cannot measure their thoughts. This again shows how Wordsworth gives human attributes to the elements of Nature being the action of thinking and making elaborate thoughts part of the human condition. But it shows too, how, through his only observation, he cannot reach the knowledge of their thinking. Although by his observations he supposes his last movement was one expressing pleasure.

The speaker observes the birds which sing and hop around him, he is in awe of these creatures. Though the speaker does not understand their language and ways, he does recognize that the birds' are creating all these movements out of sheer pleasure and joy.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

Again, he provides will to events occurring in Nature: the newborn branches expand to get the air they need, and, once more, attributes to elements the capacity to feel, and enjoy their existence. These opinions derive from his long observations of this place and its nature. The breeze flowing is sweet and light, the twigs are spreading out as if to catch the sweet air and all the speaker can do is gather pleasure in their existence.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

He wonders if the will and the ability to enjoy the simple development of life by every natural element which he observes are sent from heaven, and next he considers whether it may be as well a holy plan of Nature. He gives again, as seen in the second stanza, godly attributes to Nature, as creator of life and death, as the force compelling the world. She is able to plan and, moreover, to develop a holy plan. If this holy plan is created deliberately, with its harmony and beauty, the humankind, with their wars and their unnatural activities, have moved away from what stills can be glimpsed in natural events, and it is because of this he regrets what man has made of man. The speaker questions that if this is heaven and this is the holy plan of nature then what has man made of man, that is himself and his kind, by separating from such joy.

POETIC DEVICES IN LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING-

ALLITERATION-

“What man has made of man.”
“And ’tis my faith that every flower”

HYPERBOLE

“a thousand blended notes”

PERSONIFICATION-

“To her fair works did Nature link”
“and ’tis my faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes”
“ the budding twigs spread out their fan, / To catch the breezy air”

IMAGERY-

Visual Images-

“ The birds around me hopped and played”
The grove, the green bower, the flowers – primrose and periwinkle
•Budding twigs

Auditory Image-

“I heard a thousand blended notes”

SUMMARY OF LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING-

The speaker tells that while sitting reclined on a woodland grove, his mind was filled with several thoughts. While he finds solace in the nature's beauty, the same beauty also reminds him of bad thoughts. The speaker appreciates the nature for her god like abilities of linking a human soul to herself but he also feels grief while thinking about how cruelly man has separated himself from mother nature. The speaker is highly appreciative of the nature's beauty, he finds delight in the green bowers and has faith that the beautiful flowers enjoy every ounce of the air they breathe, they are thankful for living besides the nature. The speaker observes the birds which sing and hop around him, he is in awe of these creatures. Though the speaker does not understand their language and ways, he does recognize that the birds' are creating all these movements out of sheer pleasure and joy. The breeze flowing is sweet and light, the twigs are spreading out as if to catch the sweet air and all the speaker can do is gather pleasure in their existence. The speaker questions that if this is heaven and this is the holy plan of nature then what has man made of man, that is himself and his kind, by separating from such joy.

1. What does the expression 'I sate reclined' indicate about the poet's state of mind?

.The poet is in his blissful state.

2. Why does the poet feel sad while reclining in the grove?

.There are sad thoughts in his mind.

3. How does the poet associate himself with nature?

.The human soul is linked with the fair works of nature.

4. And much it grieved/my heart to think/What man has made of man.'What do these lines convey?

.Man disputed the harmony of nature.

5. What makes the poet think that every flower enjoys its existence?

.Plants are happy to bring forth flowers and flowers enjoy the harmony of the nature.

6. What is nature's holy plan? How does man work against it?

.Nature fills everything with pleasure. Man does not realise the plan of nature.

7. "Have I not reason to lament/What man has made of man" What is the mood of the poet in these lines?

. Melancholy

8. What 'seemed a thrill of pleasure'?

.Birds hopping and playing.

9/Who hopped and played around the poet ?

. Birds

10. Identify the rhyme scheme of the poem.

. abab

11. How did the movement of the birds affect the poet?

.Even the smallest movement made by the birds in their play filled the mind of the poet with happiness and he is thrilled to see and hear them.

12. What is the lesson that man should learn from nature?

.Nature is a source of comfort and joy for man. But lost in his busy schedule he has lost sight of this and wastes his time in unholy thoughts and actions.



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