

## Tintern Abbey

- By William Wordsworth

Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, *July 13, 1798*.

Five years have past; 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.\*—Once again  
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,  
 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  
 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:  
 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  
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,  
To them I may have owed another gift,  
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,  
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  
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. 50

If this  
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,  
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-extinguish'd thought,  
With many recognitions dim and faint, 60  
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,  
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  
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, 70  
Wherever nature led; more like a man  
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  
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 80  
An appetite: a feeling and a love,  
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  
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 90  
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor 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  
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, 100  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
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  
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,\*  
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, 110

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
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,  
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  
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while 120

May I behold in thee what I was once,  
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  
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, 130

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon  
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;  
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 140

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,  
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,  
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 150  
That on the banks of this delightful stream  
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. Nor wilt thou then forget,  
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. 160