

Table of Contents

The Lives and Works of the English Romantic Poets Part I

Professor Biography	1	
Course Scope	1	
Lecture One	Romantic Beginnings	3
Lecture Two	Wordsworth and the Lyrical Ballads	6
Lecture Three	Life and Death, Past and Present	8
Lecture Four	Epic Ambitions and Autobiography	11
Lecture Five	Spots of Time and Poetic Growth	13
Lecture Six	Coleridge and the Art of Conversation	15
Lecture Seven	Hell to Heaven via Purgatory	17
Lecture Eight	Rivals and Friends	19
Lecture Nine	William Blake: Eccentric Genius	21
Lecture Ten	From Innocence to Experience	24
Lecture Eleven	Blake's Prophetic Books	26
Lecture Twelve	Women Romantic Poets	29
Poems	31	
Timeline	69	
Glossary	71	

Note: Because of production limitations, we are unable to include some of the longer selections of the Romantic poets discussed in these lectures. We urge students to seek these out on their own.

The Lives and Works of the English Romantic Poets

Scope:

This course is an introduction to the phenomenon of Romanticism and to the six major English poets who have become known as the leading representatives of a certain kind of thinking and writing that flourished around the turn of the nineteenth century. Focusing on the works of two generations of poets—William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Blake, followed by George Gordon (Lord Byron), Percy Shelley, and John Keats—the lectures will describe and analyze the distinctive artistic achievements of men who permanently altered the course of English and American poetry.

The course begins with an introduction to the meanings of Romanticism, a complex term that has many implications and covers a wide range of artistic and philosophical ideas. It is associated, above all, with the historical periods of the American and French Revolutions and the aftermath of the latter in the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. From 1789, when the French Revolution began, until the final defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, the European continent was in a state of turmoil, and Great Britain was either preparing for war or engaging in it with the forces of France. It is in this milieu that our six poets came of age.

The first generation (Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake) all shared in the excitement generated in the 1790s by the promise and hopes of the Revolution. The second generation (Byron, Shelley, and Keats), twenty years later, grew up in a political atmosphere of conservatism and repression at home. National and political events influenced all these poets, although many of their greatest works, especially those we receive today, were not political in nature. All of them were also influenced by ideas of liberation, whether conceived politically or with regard to the inner life of the individual.

The course will focus on general themes and ideas that bind the poets together. But, even more, it will focus on their literary and stylistic accomplishments. Four lectures on Wordsworth will examine his radical experiments in poetic diction (in *Lyrical Ballads*); his new psychological and inward turn (in "Tintern Abbey" and the "Imtations" ode); and his epic autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, which was not published until after his death in 1850. The following three lectures, on Wordsworth's collaborator, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, trace the rivalry and friendship of the two men. These lectures also address Coleridge's application of philosophical principles that he inherited from contemporary German thinkers whose works he read, translated, and plagiarized. The first half of the course continues with three lectures on the unique achievement of William Blake, poet, printmaker, and eccentric myth-maker, who was less appreciated in his own time than he is now. The first half of the series ends with a look at the popular women poets of the age who followed a path that was simultaneously parallel to, and separate from, that followed by their male contemporaries.

The second half of the series is dedicated to Byron, Shelley, and Keats, all of whom left England and died abroad, young. They came of age at the time of the Congress of Vienna, and the England of their youth was a time of political conservatism. Byron was the notorious aristocratic libertine of his age, and he was as famous for his life as for his work. As a gloomy Calvinist rebel and as a sophisticated, worldly ascetic, he had two sides to his temper that are reflected in his poetry. Shelley was famous during his short life as a lyrical and political poet; his reputation has undergone the most striking changes in the almost two centuries since his death by drowning. Keats, the youngest of the Romantics, was less well regarded during his life than posthumously. A perennial favorite with readers of all ages, Keats demonstrated a precocious maturity in the poetry he wrote during the three packed years of his creative life. The series ends with a look at the legacy of these poets as it has been transmitted both chronologically and geographically: we move from Victorian England to nineteenth- and twentieth-century America to examine the way the English Romantics affected the course of subsequent poetry. In many ways, we are still living in the long shadow cast by the giant presence of these poets from two centuries back.

Lecture One

Romantic Beginnings

Scope: Talking about beginnings is always difficult and is, in fact, a Romantic dilemma. This lecture will attempt to highlight the intellectual, artistic, and political phenomena that go under the heading of Romanticism and will introduce the main themes and techniques of the subsequent lectures.

Romanticism has become a code word for liberation and freedom on many levels, especially with respect to the individual and to society. The poets we shall study in this course, whatever also separates them from one another, were all influenced by the power of the French Revolution and its aftermath. Redefining the limits and styles of English poetry, they brought to literature some of the new philosophical and psychological ideas of German and French writers and thinkers. After a general introduction, the lecture concludes with a comparison of poems by Alexander Pope and William Wordsworth.

Outline

- I. This course covers the English Romantic poets.
 - A. Primarily, we will study poems by the now canonical six major poets: William Wordsworth; Samuel Taylor Coleridge; William Blake; George Gordon, Lord Byron; Percy Shelley; and John Keats.
 - B. We will devote some attention to the lives of the poets and to their historical period, but our primary focus will be on their poetic styles and innovations.
 - C. There were not the most popular poets of the day. In fact, various woman poets, who have recently been recognized by critics, were far more popular than most of these men (see Lecture Twelve).
 - D. Taste change, and canons evolve. The Romantics endured a downturn in their reputations during the first half of the twentieth century, to be revived beginning in 1930 or thereabouts.
- II. What was Romanticism?
 - A. The difficulty of ascertaining beginnings and boundaries is a Romantic dilemma and theme.
 - B. The word "Romantic" had many meanings:
 1. It was used with reference to the Middle Ages, to suggest something wild, gothic, irregular.
 2. It became a synonym for modernity (in Germany).

3. It suggests an interest in nature, which comes from the importance of landscape and changes of fashion in landscape gardening.
 4. The rise of Romanticism is associated with the rise of nationalism.
- C. One can discriminate among many "Romanticisms," all having partial pertinence.
- III. There are several central Romantic conceptions of nature and the universe.
- A. The doctrine of "organicism" is associated with Romanticism.
 1. The universe and the work of art are both like living things.
 2. This represents a change from a more mechanistic worldview.
 - B. Nature is a complex issue in Romanticism.
 1. Nature may be seen as beneficent, maternal, and nurturing.
 2. Equally, it might appear as oppressive and deceptive.
- IV. The Romantics viewed history and society in several important ways.
- A. The French Revolution was the crucial event of the period.
 - B. According to Wordsworth, in the decade of the 1790s and the early years of the Revolution, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive."
 - C. By the second generation and the decade of 1810–1820, the political mood of England (and Europe in general) had changed considerably.
 - D. After the defeat of Napoleon (1814) and the Congress of Vienna (1815), a new age of conservatism brought changes in English society.
- V. The Romantics had differing views of the self.
- A. We like to think of the Romantics as glorifying the human being, especially the individual "self." Self-consciousness is a high human good.
 - B. At the same time, there is a counter-tendency to escape from the self. Consciousness is a burden more than a glory.
- VI. The Romantics were concerned with the role of the poet and the nature of literature.
- A. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth calls the poet a "man speaking to men" and writes on behalf of the democratization of poetry's diction.
 - B. Blake, on the other hand, deified the human imagination as the supreme value, and the poet as a visionary seer.
 - C. Shelley famously announced, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."
- VII. We end with two exemplary, representative poems.
- A. Alexander Pope, "Engraved on the Collar of a Dog which I gave to his Royal Highness" (1737).
 1. The poem is witty and epigrammatic.

2. It maintains the fiction of the speaking voice.
 3. It concerns the nature of writing and reading, talking, and listening.
- B. William Wordsworth, "To a Butterfly" (1802).
1. The insect is personified.
 2. The poem deals with figures of sleep and death.
 3. The butterfly stands for the poet's own childhood.
 4. We notice the importance of the poem's form.
 5. Wordsworth broaches the nature of time and eternity.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you recognize Romantic dilemmas or themes in contemporary literature and thought?
2. What are the limits of attempting to understand poems as reflections of biographical and historical circumstances?

Lecture Two

Wordsworth and the *Lyrical Ballads*

Scope: Wordsworth was the most paroled writer of his time, because he was also the most radical. This lecture will examine some of the statements of principle from his preface to the second edition (1800) of *Lyrical Ballads*, the book he composed with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the most important volume of Romantic poetry. Wordsworth's stated aim was to democratize both the subjects and the diction of poetry to realize his poeticist that the poet "is a man speaking to man." Some of these poems are remarkably straightforward and simple, others have still waters that run very deep.

Outline

- I. William Wordsworth lived from 1770 to 1850.
 - A. Wordsworth came from a solid middle-class background.
 1. He was young when his parents died; he was separated from his siblings.
 2. His university career was not particularly distinguished.
 - B. The French Revolution changed his life.
 1. At the start, he was an enthusiast.
 2. In France, he became involved with a French widow, Annette Vallon; he may have been involved in radical political activity in France.
 3. Wordsworth suffered considerable confusion and uncertainty in the years 1793-1798.
 - C. The 1795 meeting with Coleridge influenced Wordsworth's poetic life.
 1. Their collaboration resulted in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).
 2. Coleridge helped Wordsworth in his commitment to the long philosophical poem.
 - D. Wordsworth married (1802), became a father, and settled into a comfortable middle age.
- II. We turn now to an introduction to the poetry.
 - A. It has been said that there were two Wordsworths.
 1. Simplicity is a goal in *Lyrical Ballads*.
 2. Wordsworth and Coleridge agreed on different contributions to the volume.
 3. The lyric and the ballad are different poetic forms.
 - B. The early poems involve some key exchanges.
 1. "Explanations and Reply."
 2. "The Tables Turned."

- C. But there are more complicated poems, as well.
 1. In "The Two April Mornings," Wordsworth uses metaphor, simile, repetition, and displacement to harness memory as poetic figures of speech.
 2. We see in "The Fountain" Wordsworth's enduring concern for loss.

III. We move to two examples of Wordsworth's startling originality.

- A. "Nutting" (1798).
 1. This blank verse poem deals with childhood and freedom.
 2. It deals equally with criminality.
 3. Wordsworth's diction is a key to the depth of his ideas.
 4. The poem impresses on us both the importance and the irrelevance of a moral.
- B. "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (1802).
 1. We know the exact biographical circumstances of the poem.
 2. Although this poem demonstrates Wordsworth's love of nature, we also discover rich depths of paradoxical imagery: natureless and clothed, city and nature, human beings and the city, life and death.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you trace the relationship between "simplicity" and "depth" in Wordsworth's poems?
2. How does Wordsworth confront the natural world in his work?

Lecture Three

Life and Death, Past and Present

Scope: This lecture focuses, first of all, on a small group of elegies, called the “Lucy” poems, about a fictional girl who died. Wordsworth’s poetic achievement in this sequence is remarkable because it demonstrates his interest in “border states,” the boundaries between sleep and waking, death and life, one person and another. Remarkably simple and startlingly deep, the poems tap into Wordsworth’s distinctive genius. We then move to a brief examination of two longer lyrical meditations, “Tintern Abbey” and “Ode: Intimations of Immortality,” which develop Wordsworth’s ideas about the growth of the individual soul and reflect his interest in psychology and the ways a human life involves a constant awareness of loss and compensation.

Outline

- I. This lecture deals with a series of short poems and two of Wordsworth’s great longer poems.
- II. The so-called “Lucy” poems were composed in the winter of 1794–1795, which Wordsworth spent with his sister in Goslar, Germany.
 - A. “She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways” looks simple but is actually confusing.
 1. Lucy inhabits a private realm, isolated and unrecognizable.
 2. Wordsworth’s similes are placed, significantly, in the poem’s center.
 3. The “star” and the “violet” have differing connotations and meanings when applied to the dead girl.
 4. The emotion is restrained and austere.
 - B. “Strange Fits of Passion I Have Known” is an odd poem, part narrative, part reminiscence.
 1. The poet approaches his lover’s cottage in a kind of trance.
 2. The moon seems to be supervising his dreaming.
 3. He has a premonition of her death.
 4. An original concluding stanza, now omitted, suggests a far different ending, and emotional response, for the poem than the one we currently have.
 - C. “Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower” makes Lucy into a piece of the natural world.
 1. Nature seems to be the poet’s rival for the girl’s affections.
 2. Newtonian physics has a role in her education.
 3. Lucy seems to be absorbed into the river, as it is absorbed into her own beauty.

4. A place comes to represent the person whom the poet associated with it.
- D. “A Shunter Did My Spirit Soul” is the shortest and most perplexing of the Lucy poems.
 1. The structure is important. In two stanzas, we have the girl alive, then dead; and we have the poet asleep and now awake.
 2. Was he correct or incorrect in his earlier assumption about Lucy’s immortal status?
 3. The poem is a perfect piece of ambiguity.
 - III. “Tintern Abbey” (1794) was Wordsworth’s final and climactic contribution to the volume of *Graveyard Elegiacs*.
 - A. The scene of Wordsworth’s walk was a destroyed abbey, which in 1794, was frequented by gypsies and homeless people.
 - B. The Industrial Revolution was beginning to pollute the Wye River.
 - C. Looking back, the poet announces that in his youth, five years previously, nature was to him “all in all.”
 - D. Now, he has come to appreciate “the still sad music of humanity.”
 - E. At poem’s end, he addresses his sister, standing before him. She is a mirror or repetition of what he once was.
 - F. The poem’s main theme is remembering and recollecting.
 - IV. “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” (1804) was begun in 1802, but Wordsworth got as far as the end of the fourth stanza before reaching an impasse.
 - A. Coleridge showed him the way, with his own “Dejection: An Ode” (see Lecture Eight).
 - B. A youthful feeling of wonder at nature has been lost. All objects of sense have lost the freshness of a dream with which they had been clothed in the poet’s imagination.
 - C. Now he is reminded of loss by looking at a series of single, isolated objects: a flower, a tree, a field.
 - D. He must try to figure out some compensation, some way out of his loss.
 - E. He first contemplates the Platonic myth of pre-existence and birth as the beginning of a process of forgetting.
 - F. He thinks of the child as the best philosopher.
 - G. Finally, he gives thanks for the doubts he has entertained.
 - H. These allow him to glory in the metaphorical “new-born brightness” of each day and to gain an adult perspective on the deprivations of time and the compensations of experience.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you trace the nature of grief and Wordsworth's literary treatment of it throughout the Lucy poems?
2. What changes and what matters of consistency can you discover between the 1798 "Tintern Abbey" and the 1802-1804 "Intimations" ode?
3. How does a choice of poetic form affect the poem's meaning?

Lecture Four

Epic Ambitions and Autobiography

Scope: This is the first of two lectures on Wordsworth's epic autobiography, *The Prelude*, which he worked on during his great creative decade (1793-1805), then tinkered with for the rest of his life. It is a long work that Wordsworth revised publishing during his lifetime. Its themes and styles indicate the distinctive nature of his poetic genius. Writing about himself gives him a way of writing about everyone, because he takes his own life as reflective of the human condition. In this way, he is able to satisfy his double need to "express" or explore the depths of his psychology and to say something general about human nature. He moves from his own self to a consideration of the relationship between nature and humankind.

Outline

- I. Wordsworth was renowned for his special brand of egotism.
 - A. Keats referred to the "Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime."
 - B. His coldness was one cause for his gradual detachment from Coleridge.
 - C. But his sense of "Mank's misgivings" was also a cause of his greatest poetry.
- II. Like all great poets, Wordsworth had great ambitions from the start. These involved, in his case, the writing of an epic.
 - A. The pattern of the poet's career was set in the first century B.C., by Virgil, whose work offered subsequent European poets a model for their own achievements.
 - B. From Virgil through Dante, Spenser, and Milton, the achievement and the language of epic passed down from the classics to the modern age.
- III. Wordsworth began his great work, *The Prelude*, in 1798, without knowing what direction he was heading.
 - A. He wrote the bulk of the poem by 1805 and spent the remaining years of his life fixing it up.
 - B. The poem was published posthumously, in 1850 and now exists in its original (1805) form and its first published form (1850).
- IV. Wordsworth considered *The Prelude* to be merely a preamble to a work (which he called *The Recluse*) that was never finished.
 - A. Instead, we have several fragments, plus *The Excursion* (1814), Wordsworth's longest finished poem.

- B. Without his knowing it, *The Prelude* managed to convey everything Wordsworth wished to say.

V. Wordsworth's first dilemma in the poem was his choice of subject.

- He considered following the path of Milton.
- He thought of something from English history or some incident from European history.
- In Book I of the poem, he goes through his various possibilities before drooping down in despair, in a state of isolation and confusion.
- In his manuscript, Wordsworth begins wondering whether his education in nature had led him to such a disappointment and thence back to childhood days. He begins to write autobiographically.

VI. The section known as "The Boy of Winander" (in Book V) was published separately and gives us a sense of Wordsworth's characteristic forms of memory.

- The boy was originally Wordsworth himself, as we know from the manuscript.
- He represents an ideal education in and through nature.
- The boy is an artist-in-the-making.
 - He blows "rainie hoatings" to the oaks on the other side of the lake.
 - But he dies.

VII. Wordsworth has discovered his own subject by thinking about himself. He begins to write his autobiography.

- As a genre, autobiography is distinctly modern.
- It also has connections to Christianity, because a Christian must constantly examine himself or herself in the hope of proving something about salvation.

VIII. Wordsworth uncovers the crucial moments of his youth in what he labels "spots of time."

- These all come from early childhood.
- They demonstrate the ways in which the external world impresses itself on the child and the ways in which the mind is ultimately in charge of the external world.

Questions to Consider

- Is it legitimate to label Wordsworth an egotistical poet because of his ambitions?
- Can you notice connections between religious and psychoanalytic modes of "confessing" and "remembering"?

Lecture Five

Spots of Time and Poetic Growth

Segment One of Wordsworth's great poetic claims is his insistence on memory as a human subject. In this he clearly contradicted Freud, that great Romantic at the other end of the nineteenth century. From our memories come the possibility of psychological strength and even, broadly speaking, a kind of salvation. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth deals with the "spots of time," those recollections from early childhood that provide any adult with the necessary imaginative strength to become a whole and integrated personality.

Outline

- The Prelude* is a difficult poem to read, owing to its style and its subject.
 - There is a prejudice against the very idea of a "long" poem if you think of poems as short and lyrical.
 - In fact, however, Wordsworth was a role model to many nineteenth-century readers who found in his work a model for their own and, in his sense of moral education through nature, a way to achieve their own independence and intellectual maturity.
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and George Eliot were all great admirers.
 - John Stuart Mill credits reading Wordsworth with saving him from a nervous breakdown when he was a young man.
- Wordsworth's early memories, his "spots of time," are like independent poems woven into the fabric of a longer work.
 - They often involve acts of criminality.
 - Stealing birds' nests.
 - Stealing a rowboat and rowing away from shore until the mountain seems to mount up and follow him.
 - These incidents result in a guilty conscience and a heightened sense of imagination. These are the beginning, really, of the poetic power.
- The spots of time, and much of the narrative of Wordsworth's life, center on his experiences of the "sublime," of feelings that take him beyond the normal range of human experience.
 - In the skating episode of Book I, we see a paradigm for many of Wordsworth's experiences.
 - He is with friends but is then separated from them.
 - He follows the arc of a star, stops short on his heels, and enters a state of vertigo.
 - He puts himself into a kind of trance.

- B. The last book of the entire poem ends with a major “sublime” moment, involving an epiphany, or revelation, almost an apocalyptic one.
1. Wordsworth is climbing Mount Snowdon in Wales with a friend to see the sunrise.
 2. They march together but gradually fall into their individual reveries.
 3. Looking down, Wordsworth is struck by a sudden burst of light, and he looks up to see the moon shining through the mist and clouds.
 4. He takes the moon as an emblem of a mighty mind comparing its environment.
 5. The entire episode is a like a vision of the end of the world.
- IV. The *Prelude* is both an epic, tracing Wordsworth’s restoration following his nervous breakdown when he was in his mid-twenties, and ends on an appropriately grateful note.

- A. He is grateful for his early upbringing in nature, which has given him a strong imagination.
- B. He also thanks the individuals—his wife, a friend who left him a modest legacy, and especially Coleridge, to whom the poem is officially (like a letter) “addressed”—who have been helpful to him.
 1. This proves his belief that “love of nature leads to love of man.”
 2. It also puts *The Prelude* in the line of post-Miltonic epics in English, especially by its subtle use of literary echoes to Milton’s great poem.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the differences between our expectations of a long poem and our expectations of a short one?
2. How do the individual “spots of time,” or childhood memories, operate individually and collectively?
3. What is the relationship between memory and imagination?

©2002 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Six

Coleridge and the Art of Conversation

Scope: This first of three lectures on Coleridge focuses on one kind of poem, which he labeled the “conversation” poem, a specialty of his and Wordsworth’s, in which the poet generates philosophical ideas from a contemplation of a real-life situation in a specific place and time. Coleridge himself was famous as both a great talker and a great procrastinator; his vast plans for philosophical and poetic projects were mostly unfulfilled, yet he created a major influence on the course of English poetry and English philosophical thought in the nineteenth century. “The Eolian Harp” and “This Lime Tree Bower My Prison” are among Coleridge’s most typical and successful experiments with the language of conversation in poetry.

Outline

- I. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a master of both prose and poetry, like T. S. Eliot and Matthew Arnold.
 - A. His great poems are few in number but highly influential.
 - B. He is the greatest critic in English literature.
- II. A brief summary of Coleridge’s life explains some of the obsessions and habits of his work.
 - A. He was the youngest of twelve children and was an early and voracious reader.
 - B. Early on, he developed a sense of privilege but also of isolation.
 - C. He had a strongly developed sense of original sin.
 - D. His university career was not especially distinguished.
 - E. His early marriage was a disaster and he spent much of his married life in love with Wordsworth’s sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson.
 - F. He supported himself by doing freelance journalism and public lectures.
- III. Coleridge was a man full of plans and ideas, most of which never reached fruition.
 - A. Everyone who met or heard him called him a master of talk, of the art of conversation or of holding forth.
 - B. This conversational mastery had a major impact on the kinds of poems he wrote and, consequently, on the development of English Romantic poetry.

IV. The Romantic nature lyric, of which "Tintern Abbey" is Wordsworth's most famous example, would not have been possible without Coleridge's development of the genre.

- A. "The Eolian Harp" (1795) is an early model of the type.
 1. It begins in a specific setting and is addressed to the poet's wife.
 2. It goes through several ideas about the relationship of the human mind to the outside world.
 3. The sense of unity that Coleridge longs for in the poem is his goal for both human life and the work of art.
 4. But a more conventional side of his temperament keeps him from being as intellectually adventurous as he might wish to be.
 5. The poem both praises and disparages the workings of Coleridge's own hearing, creative brain.
- B. "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" (1797) is the strongest poem of this sort, and "Tintern Abbey" would not have been possible without Coleridge's example.
 1. It begins with Coleridge left behind while Charles Lamb and other friends go out for an afternoon walk.
 2. The title image is an enclosure of both freedom and imprisonment.
 3. Coleridge vicariously imagines the sights that his friends are viewing.
 4. Consequently, he relieves himself from his depression by imagining himself into the experience of another person.
 5. The poem dramatizes what Emerson would later call the law of compensation. It does so through metaphors and other means of making connections.
- C. The Romantic nature lyric demonstrates the Romantics' interest in making connections, between people, between objects in the natural world, and between people and those objects. For Coleridge, especially, the poems represent his belief that there is a "one life within us and abroad."

Questions to Consider

1. How does your knowledge of Coleridge's life contribute to your appreciation of his poetry?
2. What similarities and differences can you notice between Wordsworth's and Coleridge's "conversation" poems?

Lecture Seven

Hell to Heaven via Purgatory

Scope: This lecture covers Coleridge's three most "gothic" poems, which represent a different kind of Romanticism from the conversation poems. He and Wordsworth teamed, in *Lyrical Ballads*, to compose poetry that was ordinary and realistic and to compose poetry that was exotic and "imaginative." "Christabel," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and "Kubla Khan" are all different stylistic experiments; all show the range and depth of Coleridge's wide reading. Most important, all are mysterious and unfinished. Coleridge, deviser of many plans, has left us with great poetic fragments, which lack the kind of conclusive ending that we often value in art.

Outline

- I. Coleridge's belief in the "esemplastic" imagination led him to design works of art that attempted to reconcile oppositions into organic unity.
 - A. His greatest trilogy of poems, "Christabel," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and "Kubla Khan," is a journey from damnation through purgatory to a version of a paradisaical world.
 - B. But all of these poems are incomplete in one way or another.
 - C. Consequently, we see a different facet of the Romantic or Coleridgean imagination: no matter how hard he tries to make finished or integrated works of art, he often comes up short, leaving his readers with fragments of the whole.
- II. The "gothic" style was extremely popular in England at this time.
 - A. Coleridge claimed that fairy tales and other romantic, exotic works help to develop a thirst for "great" and "whole" things rather than little parts.
 - B. The gothic also offered one model for poems in the *Lyrical Ballads*.
 - C. It allowed Coleridge to balance the conventional, or Christian, side of his imagination, with the more radical, or heterodox, side.
- III. "Christabel" tells a tale of crime and seduction, but it was never finished, for reasons we can only imagine.
 - A. The heroine's name combines those of two important victims, Christ and Abel.
 - B. Coleridge wanted to show here "the virtuous of this world save the wicked."
 - C. He attempted to do so in a very peculiar, not entirely original, verse form.

IV. "The Ruin of the Ancient Mariner" led off the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. It is a tale of crime and punishment, which comes to a successful artistic end (unlike "Christabel"), even though the Mariner himself is fated to go around the world forever, repeating his tale.

- A. The poem's ending preaches a Sunday school moral that is inadequate to explain the events that have occurred.
- B. The poem is a "framed" narrative, with the Mariner telling his tale to a Wedding Guest, whom he stops outside a church.
 - 1. Ordinary social and human life has been shattered.
 - 2. The Wedding Guest is affected by the tale and remains, like the Mariner, something of an outsider for the rest of his life as a result of hearing the tale.
- C. The killing of the albatross by the Mariner is an event entirely unprovoked and unexplained.
 - 1. It seems like something from a work of French colonialist literature.
 - 2. It is a gratuitous insult to the "one life within us and abroad."
 - 3. It demonstrates original sin.
 - 4. It gives the Mariner his distinctive identity.
- D. The Mariner must atone for his sin, and his blessing of the water snakes begins his penance and his forgiveness for his original crime.
- E. The poem's ending, in which the Mariner tells his tale to the Hermit and the Pilot and, afterwards, to the Wedding Guest, turns even this mysterious work into something like a "conversation" poem.

V. "Kubla Khan" is the most famous fragment poem in English and has always been printed with Coleridge's explanatory note, complaining of his inability to finish the poem owing to the arrival at his cottage of a person from Potosi who had come on business. This is generally now thought by critics to be an excuse that Coleridge attaches to the poem.

- A. Kubla's Xanadu is a version of paradise, "decreed" by its creator and miraculously containing many opposing natural details.
- B. Kubla himself becomes a version of God or of an artist.
- C. The third stanza of the poem seems to be of an entirely different order from the first. Here the poet has a second vision, this time of a female artist, who sings and plays on a dulcimer.
- D. The poem, although officially a "fragment," is in fact complete. It is a depiction of the artistic imagination at work.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What can you say about Coleridge's "moral universe"?
- 2. Can a poem be a fragment and a complete whole at the same time?

Lecture Eight Rivals and Friends

Scope: It has long been thought that Wordsworth would never have developed as he did had he not fell under the influence of Coleridge. Their creative collaboration and friendship are probably the greatest example of the complex interaction between two geniuses in all of English literature. Coleridge admired and envied Wordsworth in equal doses. We can take the measure of Coleridge's feelings by examining one poem that came out of their fled back into one of Wordsworth's: namely, "Dejection: An Ode," which Coleridge wrote after reading the first four stanzas of Wordsworth's "Immortality" ode and which then inspired Wordsworth to finish his poem. In addition, we shall look at the stronger response to Wordsworth's *Prelude*, entitled "To William Wordsworth," in which Coleridge is both awed and humbled by his friend's great achievement.

Outline

- I. Coleridge is perhaps the most immediately sympathetic of the Romantic poets because of his weaknesses, as well as his strengths.
 - A. He was extremely generous as a friend, however needy he also was.
 - B. His character was most tested in his relationship with Wordsworth, whom he helped to mold and whom he came to both love and envy.
- II. Coleridge always felt his own inadequacies most strongly in relation to Wordsworth's successes, as well as to Wordsworth's happier domestic life.
 - A. Artistically speaking, Wordsworth was able to write more quickly and with greater sense of purpose and to complete his projects.
 - B. But Coleridge was also able to see clearly his friend's defects and his artistic virtues.
 - 1. The *Biographia Literaria*, a unique and peculiar work, is the first and, in some ways, the most important literary criticism of Wordsworth.
 - 2. Coleridge thought that some of Wordsworth's claims for the poet's job were simply ludicrous.
 - 3. At the same time, he could see the beauty of Wordsworth's verse.
- III. In the poem "To William Wordsworth," Coleridge measures his own achievement against that of his friend, who had just completed *The Prelude*, his great philosophical and autobiographical poem.
 - A. As he listens to Wordsworth recite the poem, Coleridge is full of respect and self-doubts.

- B. He must wonder, "Where is my great epic poem? Why have I failed to do this?"
- IV. His greatest poem of "failure," so to speak, is "Dejection: An Ode," written in 1802 as a response to the first four stanzas of Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode.
- This is a perfect example of a Romantic nature lyric. It begins with natural details—a stream is flowing—and circles back to the outside world as the end.
 - It is also addressed to Sara Hutchinson, the woman with whom Coleridge was in love.
 - It is a poem that brilliantly depicts a state of clinical depression, which Coleridge ascribes to his own Hamlet-like character, his capacity for too much abstract thinking.
 - In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, this condition would have been called "acedia" or "accidia," a sin of spiritual torpor or dryness.
 - For Coleridge, any great pain would be preferable to this state of non-being.
 - Coleridge feels he has lost the joy that he had when a youth, a joy that is also the requirement for great creative achievement.
 - He calls this power the "shaping spirit of imagination."
 - He contrasts it to original blossoming, as opposed to original sin.
 - At the poem's end, he comes to focus solely on Sara Hutchinson, having lost all hope for himself and his own achievement.
- V. One last poem, a sonnet entitled "Work Without Hope" (1825), shows why Coleridge is really a master of failure.
- It expresses his sense of sterility and hopelessness.
 - It places the poet in contrast to everything else in the natural world.
 - Yet it does so with great creative control.
 - Coleridge sounds like T. S. Eliot's *Prufrock*, cut off from human beings, nature, and all personal gratification.

Questions to Consider

- Trace the relationship between irony and admiration in Coleridge's responses to Wordsworth.
- Analyze as closely as you can the various stages of Coleridge's "dejection."
- Consider how one can be a success at failure.

Lecture Nine

William Blake: Eccentric Genius

Scope: Blake is the classic eccentric in English literature, a man as famous in the history of printmaking (or the visual arts in general) as he is in poetry. He not only devised a new way of printing his own work, relying on a process he termed "relief etching," but he also integrated pictures and text in a way that harkens back to medieval illuminated manuscripts. Among his other achievements, Blake also invented a whole mythology in his prophetic books, with characters drawn from neither the Bible nor classical mythology. We begin our discussion of Blake's poetry by examining his wonderful *Songs of Innocence*.

Outline

- William Blake is the major eccentric in the English literary tradition.
 - He was equally important as a poet and a visual artist, primarily as an engraver of his own work.
 - His work was not conventionally printed or distributed; for these reasons, and for his symbolic obscurity, he was not widely read or known until the twentieth century.
 - His rise in popularity can be traced, in part, to the radical states in Britain and America, when he was looked on as a kind of hippie precursor.
- Blake was primarily a Londoner, born and bred.
 - He came from the urban middle classes; his father was a baker.
 - He was apprenticed to an engraver at the age of ten, after which he briefly entered the Royal Academy.
 - His sense of art and of his own purpose was at odds with the conventional aesthetic norms of the time.
 - Mostly, he worked quietly in London with his wife and lived at the center of radical political circles.
- As a radical, but also as a man of his own age and place, Blake deserves our attention in several ways.
 - In terms of religion, although he was far from a conventional Christian, he was deeply pious.
 - Not a university man, he was self-educated and created what was essentially his own highly idiosyncratic mythology in his vast epic prophetic poems.

- C. He also mastered certain verse forms that we associate with the eighteenth century, rather than the Romantic age of the nineteenth century: specifically, epic, satire, children's literature, epigrams, and lyrics.
- D. Blake was an accomplished lyric poet as a teenager, as his early song, "Have ye ever I learned from field to field," demonstrates.
- IV. *The Songs of Innocence and Experience*, published first singly, then together, is Blake's most famous work and the best introduction to his style, ideas, and techniques.
- A. He developed for these books his own new way of engraving, which was a return in part to the manuscript tradition of the pre-print Middle Ages.
1. The text of the poems and their illustrations are interwoven. It is impossible to understand one without the other.
 2. Blake would do an engraving, then print from a copper plate, afterwards hand-coloring the finished pages with pen and watercolor.
- B. The two books are meant to show "the two contrary states of the Human Soul."
1. Innocence and experience exist in a sequence, the way a child moves from the earlier to the later state.
 2. They also exist simultaneously within any human soul, as a pair of productively warring "contraries."
- V. The best way to think of Blake as an artist and thinker is as a revolutionary, a dialectician, and an ironist.
- A. He supported the American and French Revolutions and seldom wavered in his enthusiasm for radical political activities.
- B. He was also a radical in terms of his religion and his attitudes toward sexuality.
- C. As a dialectician, he is in the line established by Plato and extending through Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx.
1. For a dialectician, truth is always achieved by the warfare between, and the reconciliation of, opposing forces, whether as ideas or social classes.
 2. For Blake, "without contraries is no progression" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*).
- VI. As an ironist in the eighteenth-century tradition, Blake often makes it hard to know how we should understand or hear his poems. This is especially true with regard to the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.
- A. In "The Piper," we have a dialectical movement from laughter, to tears, to a combination of the two.

1. It is a pastoral poem that traces the move from oral performance to writing.
 2. It is also a child's nursery rhyme that is a version of historical progress.
 3. The pastoral note in many of these poems is a traditional one, combining the figures of shepherd from Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian literature (e.g., "The Shepherd").
- B. In other poems from this volume, the tone is harder to ascertain (e.g., "The Lamb," "The Ecchoing Green").
- C. Sexuality becomes a subject, even in a state of innocence (e.g., "The Blossom").
- D. Above all, in terms of social protest and irony, we have Blake's poems of outrage, which will prompt different responses from adults and children.
1. "Holy Thursday" asks us to "relish pity," but Blake clearly finds this attitude indefensible.
 2. "The Chimney Sweeper" features a speaker who mouths Christian pieties, which we are clearly meant to hear as hypocritical platitudes designed to keep the poor in their place.
 3. "The Little Black Boy" asks us to see through the establishment's use of religious faith to justify social oppression.

Questions to Consider

1. Can you think of individuals who succeed in two different art forms equally?
2. How can we ascertain the proper "tone" for any of Blake's poems?
3. Can a poet be, simultaneously, deeply religious and politically radical?

Lecture Ten

From Innocence to Experience

Scope: Blake imagined innocence and experience as “two contrary states,” which exist not just sequentially in any individual, who moves from childhood to adulthood, but also simultaneously. Each “state” has its distinctive conditions, themes, and styles. “The Tyger,” “London,” and from a different manuscript, “The Mental Traveller” are poems that exemplify the conditions and differences of experience.

Outline

- I. *The Songs of Experience* (1794) continues and deepens the themes and techniques of *The Songs of Innocence* (1789); these poems are clearly meant to be read in tandem with the earlier poems.
 - A. “The Tyger” is probably the most famous poem in the volume.
 1. It poses a serious theological question about the nature of power and evil in the universe.
 2. The illustration, however, tells a slightly different story.
 3. Ironically, but also appropriately, Blake is himself a symmetrical “traveller” in his poem.
 - B. Other poems in the volume deal with the theme of sexuality but more differently from Blake’s treatment in *Songs of Innocence*.
 1. “Ah, Sunflower” dramatizes the plight of sexual repression.
 2. “My Pretty Rose Tree” is an anecdote about sexual fidelity.
 - C. Repression and its evils become another major theme throughout Blake’s work.
 1. “The Garden of Love” shows the effects of denial and repression, especially with regard to method religion.
 2. “London,” probably the greatest poem in the volume, shows the interrelationship among political, religious, and economic forms of oppression.
 3. In all these poems, simple social outrage is complicated by Blake’s irony, his diction, and some subtle undercurrents of feeling.
- II. As he was working on the two volumes of *Songs*, Blake was also writing in other poetic forms and beginning to develop the mythologies that he would expand in his large prophetic books.
 - A. “The Crystal Cabinet” is a ballad dealing with sexual initiation and its tragic consequences.
 - B. Its hero is left upon a wild, like a sweeping babe.
 - C. The same figure appears in Blake’s ballad “The Mental Traveller.”
 1. Here we have a human, a political, and a religious fable all in one.

2. The poem alludes to such figures as Jesus, the Norse god Loki, and the Greek Prometheus, all of whom are sacrificial figures.
 3. It also portrays various cycles of birth, growth, senescence, and death, which have connotations on various levels.
- B. In “Aspirations of Innocence,” Blake tested his skill as a writer of epigrams.
 1. This series of proverbs is an example of Blake’s commitment to eighteenth-century aesthetics, in spite of his radical content.
 2. Blake preaches a doctrine of imaginative or visionary openness, which will lead him to the greater revelations and drama of his prophetic books.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the relationship between social oppression and psychological and emotional repression?
2. How many of Blake’s poems might be recommended to children?

Lecture Eleven

Blake's Prophetic Books

Scope: Blake's most important, lifelong project was the composition of vast epic poems that were virtually unused and unacknowledged until the middle of the twentieth century. We now recognize them as his major achievement. This lecture will prepare you for those "major" prophetic by looking at three shorter poems in which Blake begins to explore the themes, styles, and characters of his more ambitious epics. "The Book of Thel" is the story of a young virgin who is terrified of life; "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" is one of the first pleas for free love in English poetry; and "The Book of Urizen" gives us, in miniature, Blake's myth of the four creatures (" races") who make up any individual man. It is a story of creation and the fall, modeled on biblical stories but with Blake's own odd twist.

Outline

- I. Blake's major work was the creation of a new mythology, a project that involved his energies between 1793 and 1804 and that achieved a culmination in *The Four Zoas*, unpublished during his lifetime.
 - A. The mythology involves a quartet of brothers (" races") is the Greek word for living creatures) who exist, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in turmoil, with one another.
 - B. These figures reappear in Blake's later epics, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*.
- II. In the 1790s, Blake began working on trial runs for the larger prophetic books.
 - A. "The Book of Urizen" describes the action of the title character, who combines the traits of an Old Testament Jehovah and rationalist philosophers (whom Blake hated), such as Newton, Locke, and Bacon.
 - B. The book is a version of the biblical Genesis and Exodus.
 1. It is a tale of creation.
 2. It is also a tale of a fall from harmony into chaos and disorder, both psychologically and cosmically.
 - C. Blake was beginning to trace the dialectical movement of all revolutions: one generation's rebel becomes the next generation's orthodox ruler.
- III. "The Book of Thel" (1789) is a delicate work that traces the soul's birth into experience.
 - A. Thel (Greek for "desire") is a girl who is shown a vision of life.

- B. In a series of conversations with natural elements, she is told what life is like.
- C. Having been shown a vision of a life that leads eventually to death, Thel refuses to be born.

B. The delicate poem dramatizes the failure of the human will.

- IV. The "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" (1793) reveals Blake as a proto-feminist.
 - A. The poem dramatizes the interrelations among slavery, economics, and the sexual repression of marriage.
 - B. It is one of the earliest and most important defenses of free love.
 1. Its female protagonist, Oothoon, is raped by two men: she is raped by the slave trader Monimion, then rejected by her fearful husband, Theotormon.
 2. She is the first character in Blake to mention the name "Urizen" as the embodiment of jealous patriarchal oppression.
 3. She claims in true Blakean fashion that "everything that lives is body."
 4. But her pleas are unheard, and she sits at the end of the poem bound together with the two men. The dialectic has gone nowhere. There has been no progression.
- V. Blake's most unusual work is the prose satire *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, a prophecy of both Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.
 - A. The terms of the title are turned upside down. Everything is seen and taken ironically.
 1. Heaven refers to conventional wisdom and goodness but is really a code word for repression.
 2. Hell represents everything energetic and explosive, imaginative, and creative.
 3. The two terms or forces must always exist in a harmonious battle with one another, because no progression can be achieved without contrasts.
 - B. Blake uses the terminology and some of the philosophy of the religious mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), who predicted a restoration of a balance between good and evil.
 - C. The book is, among other things, a diary or travelogue, in which Blake reports his experiences in a new underground country.
 1. He uses many literary forms, especially the anecdote and the epigram.
 2. He recounts his meetings with angels and devils and his own participation in the experience of a new order.

3. He concludes that “opposition is true friendship,” and he paves the way for the more revolutionary Romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

Questions to Consider

1. Consider the relationship between mythology (especially original myth-making) and epic poetry.
2. Is *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* a poem? Does it have unity, or is it merely a miscellany of various episodes?

Lecture Twelve

Women Romantic Poets

Scope: At the halfway point of the series, we stop for a moment to take a brief look at some of the women poets, who were undoubtedly more popular (and commercially more successful) than the six male figures whom we now label the central figures of the age. Of these, two representative poets are Felicia Hemans (whom we now remember as the author of “Casabianca”) and Charlotte Turner Smith, both of whom were admired by their male contemporaries and influenced by them. If there is a female side to Romanticism, it contains both domestic themes and political ones.

Outline

- I. We come to the midpoint of this series of lectures, to the break between the so-called first and second generations of English Romantic poets.
 - A. Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth were all working at the top of their form in the 1790s, a decade of radical political and social activity.
 - B. The promise of the French Revolution encouraged liberal thought throughout Europe.
 - C. By the time of the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna, the forces of political reaction and social conservatism, as well as a fear and hatred of all things French, had overtaken most of Europe and Great Britain.
 - D. Byron, Shelley, and Keats came of age during the second decade of the nineteenth century, in which the Peterloo Massacre (August 16, 1819) became a symbol for repressive tyranny at home.
- II. To bridge the gap between the two generations of poets, it is appropriate to take a look at the most popular (rather than the most “influential,” in terms of literary history) writers of the day: the women poets.
 - A. Women were a mainstay of the reading public, especially with regard to fiction.
 - B. Excluded from higher education, the women who became writers were largely self-taught or had the advantages of forward-thinking parents.
 - C. The women authors were more popular and earned more money than the six Romantic poets we now teach as the core of the Romantic movement.
- III. Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793–1835) was one of the most popular authors of the century, in both Britain and America.

- A. Educated at home, she had the good fortune to have supportive parents and a prodigious memory.
- B. Her work caught the eye of young Percy Shelley.
- C. Her literary output was large and varied.
- D. Her popular poems both support and subtly criticize some Romantic and national policies.
1. "Casabianca" ("The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck") gives us a woman's view of an almost Byronian hero.
 2. The patriotic poem values loyalty and filial devotion at least as much as patriotism.
 3. "The Flowers of England" glorifies an essentially conservative worldview of the English statesman.
 4. "The Graves of a Household" keeps everything at a very general level, but it depicts the dissolution of a family through immigration and warfare.

IV. Charlotte Turner Smith (1749–1806), of a slightly older generation, had a wide cultural and artistic education but entered upon a disastrous marriage and was forced to earn a living to support herself and her many children.

- A. Her output was also wide and varied and extremely popular. Her sonnets were extraordinarily received and influenced the young Wordsworth and Coleridge.
- B. She also wrote ten novels.
- C. Her poems include experiments in several genres and prove her to have had a curious and wide-ranging intellect.
- D. Two examples of her poems demonstrate her characteristic strengths and weaknesses. The first is one of her typical sonnets.
1. "On Being Cautioned Against Walking on an Headland" is a good example of Smith's handling of sonnet conventions.
 2. It also depicts a standard Romantic character—the madman or fanatic—who is both the opposite of, and the stand-in for, the poet.
 3. The structure and syntax of the sonnet show her relationship to what Coleridge called "the one life within us and abroad."
- E. "Beady Head" (1807) proves that Smith not only influenced the young Wordsworth but was also, in turn, influenced by him.
1. It is a learned "fact-descriptive" poem.
 2. It contains vast tracts of historical, botanical, and topographical details.
 3. It blurs the boundaries between the public and private realms.

Questions to Consider:

1. What makes a poem enduring? Or good? Or popular?
2. Is there such a thing as a "female" viewpoint?

Poems

From Lecture One (Wordsworth)

To a Butterfly

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
 Self-poised upon that yellow flower.

And, little Butterfly! indeed
 I know not if you sleep or feed.
 How motionless!—not frozen was
 More motionless! and then
 What joy awaits you, when the breeze
 Hath found you out among the trees,
 And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
 My eyes they are, my Sister's
 flowers;

From Lecture Two (Wordsworth)

The Two April Mornings

We walked along, while bright and red
 Upon the morning sun;
 And Matthew stopped, he looked, and
 said,
 "The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
 With hair of glancing grey;
 As blithe a man as you could see
 On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the
 grass,
 And by the streaming rills,
 We travelled merrily, to pass
 A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun,
 Then, from thy breast what thought,
 Beneath so beautiful a sun,
 So sad a sigh has brought?"

How rest your wings when they are weary;
 Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
 Come often to us, fear no wrong;
 Sit near us on the bough!
 We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
 And summer days, when we were young;
 Sweet childish days, that were as long
 As twenty days are now.

A second time did Matthew stop;
 And fixing still his eye
 Upon the eastern mountains-top,
 To me he made reply:

"You cloud with that long purple cliff
 Brings fresh into my mind
 A day like this which I have left
 Full thirty years behind.

"And just above you slope of corn
 Such colours, and no other,
 Were in the sky, that April morn,
 Of this the very brother.

"With red and blue I saw the sport
 Which that sweet season gave,
 And, in the churchyard cove, stopped
 short
 Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And from the song—she would have
been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I'er had loved before.

"And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bore;
Her brow was smooth and white:

The Fountain

We talked with open heart, and
tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew twenty-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat,
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew" said I, "let us
munch
This water's pleasant taste
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the churchy-clock and the
chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed

Te me a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
I'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again,
And did not wash her mine!"
Matthew is in his grave, yet new,
Methinks I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a laugh
Of widdling in his hand.

The spring beneath the tree,
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of gloze:

"No chuck, no stay, this Scrambler
fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murrain us a thousand years,
And flow as new it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Minims less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they
please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do they wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws,
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need remain
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his
own,
It is the man of worth.

My days, my friend, are almost gone,

My life has been approved,
And many love me, but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he
wrogs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my life songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side,
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewitched chimne.

Naming

———It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that comes die;
When, in the exuberance of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, smiling forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulder slung,
A mauling-crook in hand, and named my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of coat-off words
Which for that service had been hunched,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame
Mistley accompaniment, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More rugged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of mantled fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear rock,
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign

Of decoration; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tawny clusters hang—
A virgin scene!—A, little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in, and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet,—at beneath the trees I sat
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A tempter known to those who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a breeze beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-brooks do murmur on
For ever, and I saw the sparkling fountains
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indelible things,
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and soiled, patiently gave up
Their quiet being; and unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Ere from the ruined tower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
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
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!

From *Lecture Three* (Wordsworth):

She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways

She dwelt among the untrodden ways Beside the springs of Dove, A Maid whom there were none to praise And very few to love;	—Fair as a star, when only one Is shining in the sky. She lived unknown, and few could know When Lucy ceased to be; But she is in her grave, and, ah, The difference to me!
A violet by a mossy stone Half-hidden from the eye!	

Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known

Strange fits of passion have I known; And I will share to tell, But in the Lover's ear alone, What once to me befell.	With quickening pace my horse drew nigh These paths so dear to me, And now we reached the orchard- plot, And, as we climbed the hill, The sinking moon to Lucy's cot Came east, and nearer still.
When she I loved looked every day Fresh as a rose in June, I to her cottage bent my way, Beneath an evening-moon.	
Upon the moon I fixed my eyes, All over the wide land,	In one of those sweet dreams I slept, Kind Nature's gentlest boon! And all the while my eyes I kept

On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped;
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower

Three years she grew in sun and
shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and
bower,
Shall live! an overruling power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And here shall be the breathing hole,
And here the silence and the calm
Of water in secret things.

"The floating clouds their state shall
lead
To her, for her the willow bend,
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears;
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;

What fond and wayward thoughts will
slide

Into a Lover's head!
"O mummy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

Grace that shall mould the Maiden's
form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rioters dance their wayward
round,
And beauty's horn of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was
done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This health, this calm, and quiet scene,
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

She neither hears nor sees;
Rotted round in earth's
diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones,
and trees.

Title: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

(excerpts)

The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

IV

O blessed Crumhorn, I have heard the call
To do each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While earth herself is adorning,
This swan May-morning,
And the Children are calling
On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

—But there's a Treen, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The Fanny at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!

See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies
Proned by the fallies of his mother's knee;
With light upon him from his father's eye!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art.

A wedding or a festival,

A mourning or a lament;

And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song!

Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;

But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside
And with new joy and pride

The little Actor comes another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to painted Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thus, whose exterior semblance doth belie
The Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!

On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, ever when the immortality
Sheds like the Day, a Mass o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly flight,
And continue in upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-digged hope still fluttering in his breast:
Not for those I raise

The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishing;

Blank misgivings of a Creature
Mingling about in worlds not real,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day;
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;

Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither battles, nor road-endrons,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy.

Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children spelt upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters railing evensore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;

In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

21

And O, ye Fountain, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any sparing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquish'd one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the lillocks which down their channels feed,
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as feet,
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
In lovely yet.

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sabbath colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality:
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

From *Lectures Four* (Wordsworth)

The Prelude Book Fifth (excerpt)

... *There was a Boy*: ye know him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,

And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blaw music's hoosings to the silent orbs,
That they might answer him; and they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, with answering peals,
And long hallooos and screams, and robust loud,
Eradicible and redoubled, concursive wild
Of jocund din; and, when a lengthen'd pause

Of silence came and baffled his best skill,
Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung

Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind,
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that mountain lake, reserved
Into the bosom of the steady breeze.

This Boy was taken from his mother, and died
In childhood, and he was full twelve years old.

The Prelude, Book Twelfth

(excerpt)

... There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-existence retain
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourish'd and invisibly repaired,
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life that give
Prevalent knowledge to what point, and how,
The mind is led and master—outward sense
The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
From our first childhood.

From *Lectures From Wordsworth*:

The Prelude (excerpts from Book First)

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Mach fostered in my birth-place, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which I stray.
We were transplanted—there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snatched
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springs o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where swallows run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from stars to stars, I pined
That anxious visitation—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the power
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toll
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of indistinguishable moans, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they tread.

Not less, when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Raved we as phantoms where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and imperious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oft when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew against,
Shuddering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange ravenous did the loud dry wind
Hive through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!...

One summer evening (led by her) I found

A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cove, its usual home.
Straight I unlashed her chain, and stepping in
Paddled from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on,
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who sees,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge.
The horizon's utmost boundary, far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace: hardly
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water (like a swim)
When, from behind that craggy steep still then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Struck after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the cover of the willow tree:
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,
And through the meadows homeward went, in gloom
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and unassisted sense
Of unknown modes of being, o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sun or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams....

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I horded not their summons, happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time ofapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Festal and shouting like an antlered horse
That cares not for his harness. All shod with steel,
We hooped along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures—the resounding horn,
The pack load clinking, and the hoarded hare,
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Sanction, the precipices sang aloud:
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy rust unmoored, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the spread I rained
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glimsced sideways, leaving the carelessness throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shaggy banks on either side
Came swooping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Here I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short, yet still the solitary cliffs
Wholed by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in volcanic train,
Forthlike and forthlike, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

The Prelude (excerpt from Book Fourteenth)

... We came, and crossed the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by store refreshment, sallied forth.

It was a close, warm, breathless summer night,
Was, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon got us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, privately we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
These musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's hatches, who, among the crags,
Hail to his joy ascended a hedgelay, teased
His cocked-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Eastward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I paced up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose converse each from each,
And I, as chance, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared no brighter,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still,
Nix was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and hot as I looked up
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upturned
Allover this still ocean, and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In boundless, tongue, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Unstepped upon far as the sight could reach,

Not so the ethereal vault; enrapturement rises
Was there, nor less; only the infinite stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon.
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A flood, ethereal, glowing, breathing-plain
Maintained the roar of waters, torrens, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Floated over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, it came thought
Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feels upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege,
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by parting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
That mutual domination which the lover
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so enclosed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That man, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.

From *Lecture 56 (Cambridge)*:

The Indian Mary

My passive Sara! thy soft cheeks reced
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our Cot, our Cot of argemone
With white-flower'd Jasmine, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,
(Most emblematic of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Scented'st thou from yon bean-field; and the world so hush'd!
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
Tells us of silence.

And that simplest Lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping ornament, hark!
How by the desolatory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraidings, as most needs
Triumph to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Bolder sweep, the long spacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pass, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing!
Of the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where,
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd;
Where the breeze warbles, and the maker still is
In Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my Love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-clos'd eye-lids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought ungodly and unchristian'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,

As wild and various as the random gales
That swirl and flutter on this subject Lore!

And what if all of animated nature
The best organic Harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as if their sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual broom,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?
That thy more serious eye a mild reproof

Thurs, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts
Diss and unshallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God,
Maak Daughter in the family of Christ!
'Twill hast thou said and boldly disdain'd
These shapings of the uncomprehen mind,
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-bobbling spring,
For never guileless may I speak of him,
The incomprehenible! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that lily-blo,
Who with his saving mercies healed me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wilden'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and these heart-boosten'd Maid!

This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Reason and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimm'd a mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never meet nor meet again,
On springs fresh, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told,
The roaring dell, a wooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun,
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge—that branchless ash,
Unsum'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
No'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friend
Behold the dark green file of long link woods,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight)
Sell red and dely beneath the dripping edge

Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friend emerge

Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
The many-scepter'd tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bank, perhaps, whose falls light up
The slip of smooth clear blue beneath two lakes
Of purple shadow! Yet they wander on
In gladness all, but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pin'd
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richer hues, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindly, thou that Ocean! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming senses, yet, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all dark seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hours
As well the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blue
Hang the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
Some broad and sunny leaf, and lo! 'd to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which wraps
These fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight; and though now the bat
Whisks silent by, and not a swallow whitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the beam-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;

No plot so narrow, but but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
"Tis well to be bereft of promise'd good,
That we may fill the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rock
Bent its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I bless'd it! deeming its black wing
(Nave a slim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had cross'd the mighty orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st in gazing; or, when all was still,
Thou creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound in thine ear which tells of Life.

From *Lecture Seven* (Cambridge)

From Christabel, Part I (Lines 244–278)

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudders, she unloos'd
The claspure from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Droop'd to her feet, and fall in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine now speaks no more;
Ah! what a striking look was here!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah woe-a-day!

Name of the Ancient Mariner (excerpt)

Part I

...He look'd him with his glittering
eye
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And livens like a three year's' child!
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner...
At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hail'd it in God's name...
In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perch'd for woe, for misery;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmer'd the white Moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee
thus!
O'Why look'st thou so?"
With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS....

Part IV
...Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony...
Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every
track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Part V
O happy living things! no longer
Their bosomy might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my
heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

Part VII
...I missed my lips—the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit.
I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the
while...
Fortwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale;
And thus it left me free.

Part VIII
Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.
I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.
He prayeth best, who loveth best

Part IX
The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck to free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.
Part VII
...I missed my lips—the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit.
I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the
while...
Fortwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale;
And thus it left me free.

Part IX
The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck to free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part VII
...I missed my lips—the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit.
I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the
while...
Fortwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale;
And thus it left me free.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the
while...
Fortwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale;
And thus it left me free.

Fortwith this frame of mine was
wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale;
And thus it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been
stunned,

And is of sane felicitous
A saddle and a wear man,
He rose the morning morn.

Kubla Khan

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Unfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill sideward a cataract cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil swelling,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift full-stommed bore
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora
Could I revive within me
Like symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Dawn! Dawn!
For that sun-flashing hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

From *Lecture Eight (Coleridge)*:

To William Wordsworth (excerpt)

...O great Bard!
Ere yet that last strain dying swayed the air,
With radiant eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is run with them,
Save as it worketh for them, that they in it,
Not less a sacred Bard, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual rank
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes saddle a linked lay of Truth.
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learned, but native, her own natural notes!
Ah! as I listened with a heart broken,

The pulses of my being beat anew,
And even as Life returns upon the drowned,
Life's joy rekindling, roused a throng of pains
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
And fears self-willed, that dimmed the eye of Hope;
And Hope that scarce would leave itself from Fear,
Sense of past Youth, and Manhood come in vain,
And Griefs given, and Knowledge won in vain,
And all which I had rolled in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out—but flowers
Strewed as my corn, and borne upon my bier
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave! . . .

And when—O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round as both
That happy vision of beloved faces.
Scarcely conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sat, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

Dejection: An Ode (excerpts)

Well! if the Dead was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of St. Patrick Spenser.
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unruffled by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which would you cloud in busy flocks,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Eolian lute,
Which better for were mute.
Far led the New-moon winter-bright
And overspread with phantom light,
(With wailing phantoms light o'erspread
But roused and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, bewailing
The coming-on of rain and squally blast,
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,

And the slain night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which all have raised me, whilst they weep,
And rent my soul a-rear,
Might now perhaps thy wonted impulse give,
Might stanch this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, so relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this sun and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder furnace woe'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green;
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And these thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
These stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen;
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, motionless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To fill the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze the ever
On that green light that lingers in the west;
I may no hope from outward forms to win
The precious and the life, whose fountains are within.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me didled with distress,
And all misfortunes were but in the staff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness;
For hope grew round me, like the twisting vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine,
But now afflictions bare me down to earth
Not care; I that they rob me of my mirth,

But oh! each visitation
Suggests what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
That to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstract research to find
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which waits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

Work without Hope

All Nature seems at work. Sighs leave their hair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter clumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor wax, nor build, nor sting.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the foot where streams of nectar flow,
Blissed, O ye amaranth! blissed for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wrinkled brows, I tread:
And would you learn the spells that dress my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

From *Lectures Nine* (Blake):

Song

How Sweet I roam'd from field to field!

How sweet I roam'd from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
'Till I the prince of love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He show'd me hills for my hair,
And blinking roses for my brows;
He led me through his garden's fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dew my wings were wet,

And Phoebus fir'd my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silver net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

Introduction

Piping Down the Valleys (1816)

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

Pipe a song about a Lamb;
So I piped with merry cheer,
Piper pipe that song again
So I piped, he swapt to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy cheer,

So I sang the same again
While he swapt with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read
So he vanish'd from my sight,
And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd it with the dew,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

The Shepherd

How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot,
From the moon to the evening he stays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.
For he hears the lambs' innocuous call,
And he hears the ewes tender reply,
He is wonderful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

The Evening Green

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies,
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring.
The sky-lark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,

To the bells cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be soon
On the Evening Green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,

Among the old folk,
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say
Such such were the joys,
When we all girls & boys,
In our youth-time were seen,
On the Echoing Green.

Till the little ones stray

No more can be merry
The sun does decrease,
And our sports have an end
Beside the laps of their mothers,
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest;
And quiet no more seen,
On the darkening Green.

The Blossom

Merry Merry Sparrow
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Sees you swirl an arrow
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my Blossom.

Pretty Pretty Robin
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Hears you sipping sabbings
Pretty Pretty Robin
Near my Blossom.

Holy Thursday

Twon on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
Grey headed bendes walked before with wands as white as snow
Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thamus waters flow

O what a multitude they sound those flowers of London town
Seated in companies they sit with tuncance all their own
The laun of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among
Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue,
Could scarcely cry weep weep weep weep,
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

Thou'st little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd, so I said,

Hush Tom never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a sleeping he had such a sight,
That thousands of sweepers Dick, Joe Ned & Jack
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free,
Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind,
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
The morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm,
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

From Lecture Ten (Blake):

The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread foot?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?

In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare thy deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their
spans
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make
these?

Tyger, Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

At Sea-Flores

At Sea-Flores! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime

Where the travellers journey is done,

Where the Youth played away with
dances,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in

silence,
Arose from their graves, and aspire,
When my Sun-flower wishes to go.

My Forty-Rose Tree

A flower was offered to me;
Such a flower as may never bore,
But I said I've a Pretty-Rose-tree,
And I passed the sweet flower o'er.

Then I went to my Pretty-Rose-tree;
To stand her by day and by night,
But my Rose turned away with
jealousy;
And her thorns were my only delight.

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were
shut,
And Thou shalt not, will over the
door;

So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers
should be;

And Priests in black gowns, were
walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys &
desires.

London

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd
Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of
woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every infante cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appals,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh,
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I
hear

How the youthful Harlots curse
Blaspheme the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the
Marriage hearse

The Crystal Cabinet

The Maiden caught me in the WIM
Where I was dancing merrily
She put me into her Cabinet
And Lock'd it me up with a golden Key

This Cabinet is Fram'd of Gold
And Pearl & Crystal shining bright
And within it opens into a World

And a little lovely Mousy Night

Another England there I saw
Another London with its Tower
Another Thames & other Hills
And another pleasant Surrey Bowser

Another Maiden like herself
Translucent lovely shining clear
Threefold each in the other clad
O what a pleasant trembling fear

O what a smile a threefold Smile

Filled me that like a flame I burn'd
I bent to Kiss the lovely Maid
And found a Threefold Kiss return'd

I strove to seize the inner Form
With ardent force & hands of flame
But burst the Crystal Cabinet
And like a Weeping Babe became

A weeping Babe upon the wild
And Weeping Woman pale reclined
And in the outward air again
I fill'd with woes the passing Wind

The Moral Traveller

I travel'd thro' a Land of Men
A Land of Men & Women too
And heard & saw such dreadful things
As cold Earth wanderers never knew

For there the Babe is born in joy
That was begotten in dire woe
Just as we reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did sow

And if the Babe is born a Boy
He's given to a Woman Old
Who nails him down upon a rock
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold

She binds iron thorns around his head
She places both his hands & feet
She cuts his heart out at his side
To make it feel both cold & heat

Her fingers number every Nerve
Just as a Miser counts his gold
She lives upon his shrieks & cries
And she grows young as he grows old

Till he becomes a bleeding youth
And she becomes a Virgin bright
Then he needs up his Manacles
And binds her down for his delight

He plants himself in all her Nerves
Just as a Husbandman his mould
And she becomes his dwelling place
And Garden fruitful sowing Gold

An april Shadow soon he fades
Wandering round an Earthly Cot
Full filled all with gems of gold
Which he by industry had got

And these are the gems of the Human
Soul

The rubies & pearls of a honest eye
The countless gold of the aching heart
The martyrs' groans & the lovers' sigh

They are his meat they are his drink
He feeds the Beggar & the Poor
And the way-faring Traveller
For ever open is his door

His grief is their eternal joy
They make the roof & walls to ring
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little Female Babe does spring

And she is all of solid fire
And gems & gold, that cover his hand

Dares stretch to touch her Baby form
Or wrap her in his swaddling-band.

But she comes to the Man she loves
If young or old or rich or poor
They soon drive out the aged Host
A Beggar at another door.

He wanders sweeping his way
Until some other take him in
Of Blind & age-bent sore distressed
Until he can a Maiden win.

And to ally his freezing Age
The Poor Man takes her in his arms
The Cottage fades before his sight
The Garden & its lovely Charms.

The Guests are scattered thro' the land
For the Eye altering alters all
The Saracen roll themselves in fire
And the fat Earth becomes a Ball.

The stars see Moon all shrink away
A desert vast without a bound.

And nothing left to eat or drink
And a dark desert all around.

The honey of her Infant lips
The bread & wine of her sweet smile
The wild game of her roving Eye
Does him to Infancy beguile.

For as he eats & drinks he grows
Younger & younger every day
And so the des art wild they both
Wander in terror & dismay.

Like the wild Stag she flees away
Her fair plants many a thicket wild
While he pursues her night & day
By various arts of Love beguiled.

By various arts of Love & Hate
Till the wide desert planted o'er
With Labyrinths of wayward Love
Where roams the Lion Wolf & Bear.

Till he becomes a wayward Babe
And she a weeping Woman Old
Then many a Lover wanders here
The Sun & Stars are scarce soild.

The trees being forth sweet Exstasy
To all who in the desert roam
Till many a City there is built
And many a pleasant Shepherd's home.

But when they find the freezing Babe
Ferne strikes thro' the region wide
They cry The Babe the Babe is Born
And flee away on Every side.

For who dares touch the freezing form
His arm is withered to its root
Lions Bears Wolves all howling faint
And every Tree does shed its fruit.

And none can touch that freezing
Born.

Except it be a Woman Old And all is done as I have told
She walks him down upon the Back

Argument of *Assurance* (excerpt)

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour
A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage
A dove house fill'd with doves & Pigeons
Shudders Hell thro all its regions
A dog starv'd at his Masters Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State...

From *Lecture Eleven (Blake)*

Book of Urizen (excerpt) Chap. I

1. Lo, a shadow of horror is risen
In Eternity! Unknown, unparallel!
Self-closed, all-repelling: what Demon
Hath form'd this abominable void
This soul-shed'd ring vacuum?—
Some said "It is Urizen", the unknown, abstracted
Brooding secret, the dark power hid.

2. Times on times he divided, & measur'd
Space by space in his ninefold darkness
Unseen, unknown! changes appear'd
In his desolate mountains rilled furious
By the black winds of perturbation.

3. For he strove in battles dim
In unseen confusions with shapes
Bred from his forsaken wilderness,
Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element
Combustion, blast, vapour and cloud.

4. Dark resolving in silent activity
Unseen in tormenting passions:
An activity unknown and horrible;

A self-contemplating shadow,
In incessant labours occupied. . .

Visions of the Daughters of Albion (excerpt)

Plate 2

...Why does my Theotimon sit swooping upon the threshold,
And Oothoon hovers by his side, perambulating him in vain;
I cry arise O Theotimon for the village dog
Barks at the breaking day, the nightingale has done lamenting,
The lark does rattle in the ripe corn, and the Eagle returns
From nightly prey, and lifts his golden beak to the pure east;
Shaking the dust from his immaterial pinions to awake
The sun that sleeps too long, Arise my Theotimon I am pure,
Because the night is gone that show'd me in its deadly black,
They told me that the night & day were all that I could see;
They told me that I had five senses to inclose me up. . .

Silent I hover all the night, and all day could be silent,
If Theotimon once would turn his loved eyes upon me,
How can I be shielded when I reflect thy image pure?
Sweetest the fruit that the warm floods on, & the cold grey'd on by we
The new wash'd lamb ting'd with the village smoke & the bright swim
By the red sands of our immortal river: I bathe my wings,
And I am white and pure to hover round Theotimon's breast. . .

O Urizen! Creator of man! mistaken Demons of heaven
Thy joys are tears! thy labours vain, to form man to false image,
How can one joy absorb another? are not different joys
Holy, eternal, infinite! and each joy is a Love. . .

Book of Thel (excerpt)

Plate 1
Thel's Motto

Does the Eagle know what is in the pit?
Or wilt thou go ask the Mole:
Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod?
Or Love in a golden bowl?

Plate 1
Thel
/

O life of this our spring! why fadest the limes of the water?

Why fadest these children of the spring? born but to smile & fall.
Ah! Thel is like a watery bow, and like a parting cloud,
Like a reflection in a glass, like shadows in the water,
Like dreams of infants, like a smile upon an infant's face,
Like the dove's voice, like transient day, like music in the air;
Ah! gentle may I lay me down, and gentle rest my head,
And gentle sleep the sleep of death, and gentle hear the voice
Of him that walketh in the garden in the evening time. . .

Plate 3
II

O little Cloud the virgin said, I charge thee tell to me,
Why thou complainest not when in one hour thou fade away:
Then we shall seek thee but not find; ah Thel is like to Thee,
I pass away, yet I complain, and no one hears my voice;
The Cloud then show'd his golden head & his bright form emerg'd,
Hissing and glittering on the air before the face of Thel. . .

Dearest thou O little Cloud? I fear that I am not like thee;
For I walk through the sales of Hay, and smell the sweetest flowers,
But I feed not the little flowers; I hear the warbling birds,
But I feed not the warbling birds, they fly and seek their food;
But Thel delights in these no more because I fade away,
And all shall say, without a see this shining woman liv'd,
Or did she only live, to be at death the food of worms. . .

From Lectures Twelve (Felicity Dorothy Hemans and Charlotte Smith)

Casabonza

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though childlike form.

The flames rolled on—he would not
go
Without his father's word;
That father, slain in death below,
His voice no longer heard.

He walked aloud—"Say, father! say
If yet my task is done!"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, father!" once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone!"
And but the booming drums replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his breast he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of
death
In still yet brave despair;

And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father! must I stay?"
While a'or him fast, through sail and
shroud,
The swathing firm made way.

The Homes of England

"Where's the reward that would not share
To fight for such a land?" Murrain.

The stately homes of England!
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land!
The deer across their greenward bend,
Through shade and sunny gleam;
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England!
Around their hearths, by night,
What gleesome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light!
There woman's voice flows forth in song,
Or childhood's tale is told,
Or lips move tenderly along
Some glorious page of old.

They wrapped the ship in splendor
wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound—
The boy—O, where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewn the sea!

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part;
But the noblest thing which perished
there
Was that young faithful heart!

The blessed homes of England!
How softly on their bosoms
Is laid the holy quietness

That breathes from Sabbath hours!
Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bell's chime
Flows through their throats at noon;
All other sounds, in that still time,
Of breeze and leaf are hush,
The cottage homes of England!
By thousands, on her plains,
They are smiling a'or the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet lanes,
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of lanes:
And fearless dare the lovely sleep,
As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free, fair homes of England!
Long, long, in hut and hall,
May hearts of native proof be reared
To guard each halloved wall!
And green forever be the groves,
And bright the firewey sod,
Where first the child's glad spirit lives
In country and in God!

The Graves of a Household

They grew in beauty, side by side,
They fill'd one home with gloom;
Their graves are seven'd, far and
wide,

By moat, and stream, and sea.
The same find mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow,
She had each folded flower in sight
When are those dreamers now?

One, 'midst the forest of the west,
By a dark stream is laid
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one
His lies where pearls lie deep;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where southern vines are
drum,
Above the noble slain:
He wrapt his colours round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one—o'er her the myrtle showers
Its leavers, by soft winds fans'd,
She lieth 'midst Italian flowers
The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who play'd
Beneath the same green tree;
Whose voices mingled as they play'd
Around one parent knee!

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheer'd with song the hearth
Alas! for love, if they went all,
And sought beyond, O earth!

*On Being Confined against Walking on an Woodland Overlooking the Sea,
Because it Was Frequented by a Lancer.*

Is there a solitary witch who flies
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or slow,
And, musing, views with wild and hollow eyes
Its distance from the waves that glide below,
Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent sighs
Chills his cold had upon the mountain turf,
With hoarse, half-sister'd lamentation, lies
Murmuring responses to the dashing surf?
In moody sadness, on the giddy brink,
I see him more with awe than with fear;
We has no nice felicitas that shrink
From giant horrors; wildly wandering bent,
He seems (pursued with reason's not to lose)
The depth or the duration of his woe.

Timeline

1749–1806	Charlotte Turner Smith
1757–1827	William Blake
1770–1850	William Wordsworth
1773–1834	Samuel Taylor Coleridge
1788–1824	George Gordon, Lord Byron
1789	Storming of the Bastille (July 14); start of the French Revolution
1789	Blake, <i>Songs of Innocence</i>
1790–1793	Blake, <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>
1792–1832	Perry Rhysa Ithell
1793	Reign of Terror in France
1793–1815	Felicia Hemans
1794	Blake, <i>Songs of Experience</i> ; Coleridge leaves Cambridge without degree, meets Robert Southey, and plans Pantisocracy
1795	Wordsworth and Coleridge meet; Schiller, <i>On Nature and Sentimental Poetry</i>
1798	First edition, <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>
1798–1799	Wordsworth in Germany with his sister; Coleridge in Germany
1800	Second edition of <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (with Wordsworth's Preface)
1802	Wordsworth marries Mary Hutchinson
1802–1803	Peace of Amiens between England and France
1803–1815	War between France and England
1809	Blake, <i>Descriptive Catalogue</i> of his one public exhibition
1811	George III declared insane and replaced by his son, the Prince of Wales; Shelley marries Harriet Westbrook
1812	Byron, <i>Childe Harold, Cantos 1 and 2</i>

1814	Shelley meets Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin
1815	Napoleon defeated at Waterloo; Byron marries Annabella Milbanke; Keats begins his medical studies in London
1816	Byron leaves England for the Continent; Shelley and Byron meet; Shelley composes "Mont Blanc" and "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"
1817	Coleridge, <i>Biographia Literaria</i> ; Byron, <i>Margaret</i> ; Keats, <i>Poems</i>
1818	Byron begins <i>Don Juan</i> ; Shelley leaves England forever; Keats, <i>Judith</i> ; Tom Keats dies (December)
1819	Pearlree Massacre (August); Keats composes "To Autumn" (September)
1820	Keats, <i>Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems</i>
1821–1827	Greek War of Independence from Turkey
1823	Byron sails for Greece
1842	Wordsworth named Poet Laureate after death of Robert Southey
1850	Wordsworth, <i>The Preface</i> (posthumous)

Glossary

Aeolian harp: A bowl-shaped musical instrument on which strings are stretched. These catch the wind, which produces various tones. Named for the Greek god of the winds, Aeolus. The harp became a symbol for the relationship between the human mind (or imagination) and external inspiration.

Autobiography: Any writing about the self. We associate this genre with the modern, that is, post-classical world, and especially with Christian habits of self-examination. Thus, the first real autobiography is the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine (354–430); modern examples would include the work of Ben Franklin, Henry David Thoreau, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*Confessions*), and Wordsworth's *Preface*.

Biographia Literaria: Coleridge's 1817 prose work that combines literary theory and criticism with autobiography, remarks on literary journalism, and considerable "borrowings" (including undocumented translations) from German Romantic writers.

Blank verse: Unrhymed iambic pentameter. Used for the first time in England by the Earl of Surrey in his 1540 translation of Wyclif's *works*, then popularized by Shakespeare in his plays and, above all, by Milton in *Paradise Lost*.

Byronic hero: The name we now conventionally assign to a dark, brooding, gloomy, and guilt-obsessed man, based to some extent on Lord Byron and some of his poetic creations.

"Conversation" poem: A term first invented by Coleridge for "The Nightingale" (1798) to refer to a long poem addressed to a real or imagined listener in which the poet thinks aloud.

Dactylic hexameter: The standard meter of Greek and Latin epics, containing six feet to a line, each consisting of one stressed (or long) syllable, followed by two unstressed (or short) ones.

Elegiac: Although the Greek word literally means "elegiac," it was used by Virgil for his ten pastoral poems (37 B.C.E.) and now refers conventionally to any pastoral poem employing the figures of shepherds.

Empathy: Rough English translation of the German *empathie* ("feeling into"), a hallmark of Romanticism. For example, we read in Keats: "If a sparrow comes before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel."

Empiricism: From the Greek word for "experience," this term covers a wide range of thinkers and philosophies. Primarily it refers to the belief that experience has primary in human knowledge and that experience begins with the knowledge of the senses. In England, it is associated with the work of John Locke (1632–1704) and his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). See *Isabella* note.

Enjambement: A run-on line, that is, one line of poetry that does not pause at its end but, instead, goes right into the following line.

Enlightenment: The philosophical views of (mostly) French, eighteenth-century thinkers, which emphasized the powers of reason and rejected traditional religious, social, and philosophical beliefs. It was both within and against Enlightenment thought that Romanticism may be said to have been conceived.

Epigram: Literally, from the Greek, something “written upon” something else (Latin equivalent is “inscription”); now equivalent to a short, pithy piece of prose or verse.

Eros/Thanatos: From the Greek for “love” and “death.” Sigmund Freud used these two terms for the primal human instincts toward life (or love, reproduction) and death.

Iambic pentameter: The standard meter for conventional verse from (roughly) the late fourteenth century until the near dominance, in the twentieth century, of “free” verse. Five feet and ten syllables per line, each foot having an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

Imagination: The mental faculty most praised by the Romantics. The word was used variously throughout the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and the faculty was thought by some rationalist thinkers to be the source of reason. For Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge (who wrote of it extensively, borrowing from his German sources, in *Biographia Literaria*), and later Keats and Shelley, “imagination” is the creative power that transcends mere sense experience and memory, moving beyond the “association” of thoughts and feelings that empirical philosophers claimed as the origins of thought. Coleridge invented the word “co-ordinating” (from Latin, “to shape into one”) to explain how imagination works creatively.

Irony: From the Greek word related to “dissembling,” irony may be defined as saying one thing and meaning another. In Romantic irony, Friedrich Schlegel and other German writers used the term with regard to drama or narrative, in which an author builds up an illusion, then breaks it down by revealing that he has created and, therefore, can manipulate his characters as he wishes. Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* and, most important, Byron’s *Don Juan*, are excellent examples.

“Lucy” poem: The five poems written by Wordsworth in 1798–1799 about an imaginary girl named Lucy, whose life and (especially) death inspired a series of elegiac experiments.

Lyricist/Anthologist: The collection of poems by Coleridge and Wordsworth (1798) that can be said to have initiated the Romantic “movement” in English poetry. The second edition, expanded and with Wordsworth’s famous Preface, was published in 1800.

Metaphor: Any figure of similarity, whether explicit (he is like a fox) or unstated (“Three years she grew in sun and shower” implies that Lucy is like a flower).

Nousness/phenomena: Although the Greek terms have a history going back to Aristotle, they are associated largely with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and refer to “things-in-themselves” (noumena), which are beyond ordinary human understanding and sense experience, and ordinary sense, “phenomena” to which we have access via our senses.

Ode: Traditionally the most elevated form of lyric poetry, the ode can be highly structured (as it was by Pindar, fifth c. B.C.E.) or tending toward something conversational. In either case, it is serious and complex.

Onomatopoeia: The use of a linguistic sound to stand for, evoke, or represent a nonverbal sound, for example, “The hissing snake.”

Organicism: The idea that works of art are analogous to living things. For example, we might say that a poem begins as a seed in the mind and grows in unpredictable ways as the writer develops it on the page. The “fusion of opposites” and “unity” are related concepts.

Oscura rima: An Italian stanzaic form, borrowed (and perfected) by both Byron and (later) William Butler Yeats: eight lines of iambic pentameter, with an “abababcc” rhyme scheme.

Prolepsis: The Greek term for “anticipation.” When used adjectivally (proleptic), it suggests any rhetorical or poetic gesture that looks forward.

The Rime: Wordsworth’s name for his vast epic project, never completed, that would contain *The Excursion* (1814), plus other serious blank verse meditations.

“Romantic nature lyric”: A term invented by the critic M. H. Abrams, to include such diverse works as Wordsworth’s “Imitation” ode and Coleridge’s “Dejection: An Ode,” as well as “This Line: True Bower My Prison” and “Tintern Abbey.” In poems of this sort, the speaker begins usually in a specific setting, addresses himself (at some points) to a present or absent person, meditates on complex themes and feelings, and returns at the end to the place (actual or metaphorical) where he began.

Sonnet: The standard fourteen-line lyric, begun in Italy and transported (and translated) to England in the sixteenth century by Wyatt and Surrey. It comes, traditionally, in two forms (with many ingenious variations): the Italian (or Petrarchan) form has an octave (eight lines), followed after a turn (or volta) by a sestet (six lines), and adheres to a rhyme scheme of “abbaabba” and some version of “cdcd.” The English (or Shakespearean) sonnet has three quatrains and a couplet, rhyming “ababacdefg.” Wordsworth wrote more sonnets than any other major English poet.

Spensateiro: The quality that defines the "Renaissance man" or any aristocratic dilettante, such as Lord Byron. The term is derived from the handbook *Il Cortegiano* (1528) by Count Baldassare Castiglione; Sir Thomas Hoby made an English translation in 1561. Although Hoby famously translates the expression as "well-rounded," a better synonym would be "cool," that is, the ability to do many things effortlessly and without sweat.

Synecdoche: The device that uses a term for one sense in relation to another; for example, in Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale": "I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs."

Tabula rasa: The belief, associated in English philosophy with the epistemology of John Locke, that the mind at birth is a "blank slate" on which sense experience makes its inscriptions.

Terza rima: Stanzas of three lines, with interlocking rhymes: "aba, bcb, cdc, ded," and so on. Used by Dante in his *Divine Comedy* and imitated by Shelley in "Ode to the West Wind."

Transcendentalism: A term associated primarily with American thinkers and writers, such as Emerson and Thoreau, but with roots in German Romantic thinking and (in England) the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is essentially a belief in the primacy of reason (for a priori knowledge of truths gained through intuition) over understanding (which gives us access to the world of appearances). See *noema/phenomena*.

Zany(s): From the Greek for animal/beast, used by Blake to refer to the four central parts of man.