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9



*Literary*

*Texts*

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Literary Texts 3.9

AYDI 2022/ T1

## HELLO EVERYONE!

Last time, we talked about William Wordsworth who is considered to be *the father of Romanticism*. He is also known as the poet of *nature, childhood and memory*. We also talked about his collaboration with the Romantic poet Samuel Coleridge, together they wrote the Lyrical Ballads which is a collection of poems written in a very simple poetic language that can be understood by ordinary people of the countryside. These ballads are about nature, the countryside, childhood, women and men working in the fields, farmers and peasants.

The Romantics loved touring and walking around from one place to another, especially in nature. They spent days in nature walking from one area to another exploring, discovering and reconnecting with Mother Nature whom they viewed as *a symbol of compassion and wildness*. By wildness we mean the uncivilized, the unrepressed or the uncontrollable.

Today's poem is a continuation of the poem that we studied last time which is Nutting.

### NUTTING

—It seems a day

(I speak of one from many singled out)  
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;  
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,  
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth  
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,  
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps  
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds  
Which for that service had been husbanded,  
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile  
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,  
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,  
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,  
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
Of devastation; but the hazels rose  
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,  
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, <sup>43</sup>  
 The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate  
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;  
 A temper known to those, who, after long  
 And weary expectation, have been blest  
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.  
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves  
 The violets of five seasons re-appear  
 And fade, unseen by any human eye;  
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on  
 For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,  
 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 indifferent 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 sullied, patiently gave up  
 Their quiet being: and, unless I now  
 Confound my present feelings with the past;  
 Ere from the mutilated bower 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.

\*

We said that nutting means collecting nuts. In this poem, there is this little boy who is looking for hazelnuts. I'll start from the beginning to refresh your memory about the meaning of the first two stanzas.

—It seems a day  
 (I speak of one from many singled out)  
 One of those heavenly days that cannot die;  
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,

I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth  
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,  
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps  
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds  
Which for that service had been husbanded,

**Professor:** who would like to remind me of the ideas that we discussed in these stanzas?

**Student:** William Wordsworth wants to tell us a story; that's why he indents the first line.

**Professor:** that's correct. We call this space *indentation*. The poet indented the first line in the form of a narrative; this is like *a narrative poem*. He is telling us a story as if he is saying "once upon a time".

**Mood:**

**Mood** means *time* and *place*: the setting. What is the setting of this poem?

✓ Place: the woods, the forest.

✓ Time: during daytime.

Who would like to tell me more about the first stanza?

**Student:** he is telling a story about himself when he was a little child. He went to the forest carrying a bag. He was very happy.

**Professor:** that's correct. Who can give more details about this day in the first stanza?

**Student:** it was a heavenly day.

**Professor:** right. It was a divine and a heavenly day that he will always remember. It was not the only day; rather it was one of many days that he could remember.

He talks about his outfit. He had a bag on his back. He dressed up in a disguise that he collected from raw objects from nature such as weeds. He was encouraged by a woman or a motherly figure that he stayed with when he was a student at grammar school as a child.

Let's move on to explain the poem.

• **By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile  
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,  
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,**

Here, he is talking about his costume and about his disguise. It is a mixture of everything. It lacks harmony. He collected all these objects from here and there from nature and put them together to make up this

disguise that he's wearing. If you look at him, you'll find him really funny. This disguise was pretty *old* and *ragged*.

• **Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,  
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
Of devastation; but the hazels rose  
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,  
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,**

**Professor:** who would like to remind me of the ideas we discussed in this stanza?

**Student:** he reached an unvisited land which was wonderful. He is describing the hazel rose.

**Professor:** that's right. He reached an unvisited space where he found all the hazelnuts that he was looking for.

How does he describe the scene? When he first encountered all the hazelnuts, how does he describe them? What kind of language does he use?

The scene is *perfect*. There's not even a single damage. It's like you are looking at a picture and you say: wow this picture is painted perfectly. The perfect scene has not been visited by any human being before. He is the first explorer to touch this land. That's why he says that it is a virgin land and he is the conqueror or the explorer.

**Professor:** how did he find the hazelnuts?

**Student:** tempting.

**Professor:** correct. He found them tempting to eat. He uses this attractive sexual language to say how the landscape was tempting him to go inside that space and invade the virginity and the holiness of that space and to collect as many hazelnuts as he could.

• **Breathing with such suppression of the heart**

*Suppress: to control, to repress, to put an end to, to prohibit.*

Why does he want to suppress his heart?

He stood there for a while. He was happy. Why would he want to suppress his heart if he is so happy?

**Student:** in order to keep enjoying the scene.

**Professor:** yes. *He basically was trying to freeze the moment by suppressing his heart.* There was so much joy that he could not believe. He was overwhelmed with joy. He wanted to freeze time by suppressing his heart. He wanted to live the moment and to slow down the time by

suppressing the heart.

His heart was really pulsing so loud. His pulsation was so loud that he could hear his heartbeats. His heart was full of joy.

- **As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint**

**Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed**

*Delight means happiness or joy. It is used here as a verb which is very interesting. "As joy delights" means "as joy keeps coming in".*

*Restraint: limit, control.*

*Voluptuous (شهوواني): lustful, pleasurable, generous.*

*Fearless of a rival: not afraid of any rivals.*

He's talking about himself. He is trying his best to control his lust for the scene. He was not afraid of anyone coming into the scene to eat all the hazelnuts. He was alone by himself. He knew that he had no rival or no competitor.

- **Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed**

**The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate**

*Eyed: saw.*

*Banquet: a feast, a very generous and impressive meal.*

*Sate: sat.*

He viewed the banquet and he was not afraid of having any rivals or competitors around. He was all alone by himself and he knew that this banquet is his banquet.

- **Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;**

He sat down under the trees and started playing with the flowers. He knew now that it was time to collect the hazelnuts and satisfy his hunger.

- **A temper known to those, who, after long**

**And weary expectation, have been blest**

**With sudden happiness beyond all hope.**

*Weary: tired.*

*Blest: blessed.*

He was blessed with sudden happiness beyond all hope. This "weary expectation" means that it took him so much time to find this clearing of hazelnuts, it took him so much sweat and blood looking everywhere for the hazelnuts. At last, he found them after all this weary expectation. His happiness is beyond all hope; his happiness is immeasurable, it cannot be measured.

- **Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves**

*Bower: a shady leafy shelter in a garden or in woods.*

A bower is a place where you protect yourself from the sun. He's

describing this clearing as a bower or a shelter where you have all the trees surrounding you protecting you from the sun and the winds.

- **The violets of five seasons re-appear**

**And fade, unseen by any human eye;**

*Violets (البنفسج) : a kind of flowers.*

*Fade: to go away, to disappear.*

Beneath the bower, you can find the five seasons of violets. He describes the flowers as unseen by any human eye. The violets that he saw in that clearing were unseen before. They would appear and disappear even before any human eye would spot them. He was the first boy to notice these violets.

**Student:** why did the poet say "five seasons"? Is he talking about the five senses?

**Professor:** no, I don't think so. This is *exaggeration*. Maybe he's talking about the stages of a man's life: childhood, adolescence (being a teenager), adulthood, middle age, old age.

*The five seasons could refer to our journey of life.*

Basically, he is saying that the violets that he saw under the trees in that bower were unseen by any human before, to the extent that these violets were almost nonexistent to any human being until the minute he noticed them. He also describes the process in which they grow and disappear without even being noticed or witnessed by anyone.

- **Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on**

**For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,**

*Murmur: (خرير الماء).*

Sparkling foam: when you look at the surface of water, you find this white substance made of bubbles; we call this substance the foam. It's sparkling because there are all these bubbles popping up.

He's now talking about fountains and streams of water running in that bower. He describes the sounds of water as murmuring on forever.

The word murmur is *onomatopoeia*. Onomatopoeia is about the sounds that we make such as whisper, splash, spray, clap, crash, bang, etc.

- **And—with my cheek on one of those green stones**

**That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,**

*Fleeced with: covered with.*

*Moss (الطحلب) : a green plant that grows in wet areas.*

*Shady (from shadow): causing shade.*

Once he spotted the water, what did he see next to it?

He saw green stones. Those stones are green because of the moss.

He put his cheek on the green stones as if they were a pillow. They were so soft because of the moss.

Out of this context, the word "fleece" refers to the wool of the sheep.

"Fleeced with moss" is a *metaphor*. The poet is comparing the stone to a flock of sheep.

- **Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—**

*Flock: herd.*

All these trees and stones surrounded him from everywhere. These stones were scattered like a flock of sheep.

There is a *simile* in this line.

- **I heard the murmur, and the murmuring sound,**

Again, we have *onomatopoeia*.

He's talking about the sound of water.

- **In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay**

**Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,**

*Pay tribute: to be grateful for someone, to be thankful to someone, to acknowledge and recognize the help and support that someone gave you.*

*Ease: to comfort.*

He was in a very sweet mood being surrounded by these green stones that looked like a flock of sheep. He was also very happy being surrounded by the comforting sound of water.

He had everything: he had pleasure, he had joy, and he had comfort.

- **The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,**

*Indifferent: silly, trivial, unimportant*

*Luxuriates: the verb from "luxury".*

The meaning of this line: the heart indulges with unimportant or silly things. These things are the stones, the murmuring of the water, the shady trees, and other things that the heart delights in. He is saying that you don't need a treasure to be happy; you can be happy by very silly objects and by very simple things.

- **Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,**

Notice how the tone changes. At first, he said that the heart indulges in simple objects and that the heart finds delight in simplicity. However, it's wasting his kindness on stocks and stones. A moment ago, he was very happy. Now, he starts changing his mind.

- **And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,**

**And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash**

*Vacant: empty.*

Notice the change now. He held a branch from the tree.



- **And merciless ravage: and the shady nook**

*Ravage: great anger, aggressiveness.*

*Nook: clearing, empty space in nature.*

He's talking about the clearing where he had the bower of hazels.

**Professor:** what happened with this little child?

**Student:** he became full of energy.

**Professor:** that's correct. What kind of energy?

**Student:** merciless and violent.

Suddenly, his emotions changed and he had all these feelings that he could not control to the extent that he damaged a tree. He took a branch and started to destroy everything that he loved a moment ago.

Why did he do that?

We don't actually know. Sometimes, you go for a picnic and you leave all your garbage when you leave. Maybe this is a similar case here.

Maybe he is just being playful. He's just a boy. One moment he wanted to collect hazelnuts and it was a wonderful moment for him. After a while, he wanted to play, so he took this branch and started to destroy the whole scene.

- **Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up**

*Sullied: defiled, stained, no longer pure.*

Earlier, he described the scene as virgin, untouched and unvisited by humans. Now, it's not pure anymore. It's not virgin; it's destroyed.

Is it a moment of awareness? Is it a moment of maturity? Is the poet describing a journey that this little child took and then he suddenly awakened to his maturity and to his adolescence? Is William Wordsworth talking about something more than just exploring nature?

- **Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up**

**Their quiet being: and, unless I now**

What was a minute ago pure, virgin, and almost divine, is no longer the way it was.

- **Confound my present feelings with the past;**

*Confound: to confuse.*

He's comparing how he felt a minute ago with how he feels now. He's now full of unexplained rage.

- **Ere from the mutilated bower I turned  
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,**

*Ere: before, earlier.*

*Exult: to be very happy.*

He's comparing his feelings a minute ago with his feelings now. He says: earlier, I turned my head from the mutilated bower. Before the damage took place, I exulted in the scene; I was richer than a king being embraced by Mother Nature in that nook all alone by myself.

Now, he is possessed by all these feelings and all these unexplainable emotions of rage, anger and aggressiveness.

- **I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—**

*Beheld: saw.*

*Intrude: (يتطفل).*

Now, he's very regretful. He has a sudden feeling of pain.

Student: why is he so confused and contradictory? How can he be happy and then suddenly he became sad and regretful?

Professor: he's just a little child. Children would love something and suddenly they think it's ugly and they don't want it anymore. Even adults, they fight to possess something, they work so hard to achieve a goal. Once we gain the thing, we look back and ask ourselves: what did I do all that for? We suddenly realize that we're no longer satisfied. This applies to anything: having a car, having a bank account, becoming a doctor or a translator, etc. Then, we look back from our present moment and we start comparing and asking: what did I go through all those battles for?

We all go through similar moments. He is regretful. He says that he felt a sense of pain when he saw the silent trees. Those trees were unable to express how full of pain they were.

- Why are the skies intruding?

Remember that he was in a bower which was surrounded by the trees. He was covered up by the trees; he couldn't even see the sun. The forest is so thick and the trees are tangled. Because he broke some branches, the sky is now intruding; he can see the sky now.

- **Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades**

**In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand**

*Maiden: a young girl. (It refers to his sister Dorothy Wordsworth)*

Suddenly, he remembers his sister. He is giving advice to his sister saying: if you come to the forest and you want to move along these shades of trees, please do so in gentleness of heart and hand touch.

Now he wants to be gentle. Probably, he wrote the poem when he was an adult. He might be sorry about what he did. He might have changed his perspective about how he acted in nature.

• **Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.**

He advises his sister to be nice and gentle to the trees. He advises her not to be like him when he was a little kid.

- Why is it significant that William Wordsworth finishes his poem with this line?

This is because he is saying that nature has a soul. It's not an empty soulless space.

He personifies the woods. It is Mother Nature for him; it's a goddess. She has a soul.

Probably the way he concludes the poem is his perspective as an adult, not necessarily as a child.

**Student:** is it true that William Wordsworth didn't believe in God?

**Professor:** this is a very interesting question. There is a poem by Wordsworth that I really would have loved to teach you. This poem starts with:

"My heart leaps up when I behold the rainbow in the sky"

He finished this poem by honoring nature as a goddess. So, for him, nature is the source of worship.

**Student:** so he doesn't believe in God?

**Professor:** I can't claim that about William Wordsworth. I can say that he is more inclined to believe in nature.

**Figures of speech:**

✓ Polysyndeton in "at thorns, and brakes, and brambles". Notice the repetition of "and".

✓ Anaphora in the following lines:

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

✓ Anastrophe in "Then up I rose". It should be "I rose up".

✓ Alliteration in (branch, bough), (maiden, move), (silent, so, sky)

✓ Personification in "the intruding sky". The sky is personified.

✓ Onomatopoeia in "murmur" and "murmuring".

✓ Alliteration in (present, past), (gentleness, gentle).

✓ Apostrophe in "dearest maiden".

**Apostrophe** is a figure of speech where the speaker directly addresses something nonhuman, be it animate or inanimate. In a line from one of Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets "With how sad steps, Oh Moon thou climb'st the skies," the poet speaks to the moon as if it were his friend.

Apostrophe is not just addressed to something nonhuman; it can be addressed to someone who is absent or even dead. In that context, "Dearest Maiden" can be seen as an apostrophe.

**Another definition of apostrophe:**

Apostrophe is a figure of speech in which the speaker directly addresses someone or something that is not present or cannot respond in reality. The entity being addressed can be absent, dead, an imaginary person, or even an inanimate object. It can be even an abstract idea like when I speak to a God or a Muse, or when I speak to a knife for example. Another example of apostrophe is when you speak to the wind saying "Oh wind of the south".

In our poem, the child is speaking to his sister who is not present; she is absent but she is there in his mind.

**Meter:**

Let's have a look at this line:

I speak | of one | from ma | ny sin | gled out |  
1 2 3 4 5 => Pentameter

One of | those hea | venly | days that | cannot | die  
1 2 3 4 5 => Pentameter.

We have an extra syllable but still it's pentameter.

When in | the ea | gerness | of boy | ish hope |  
1 2 3 4 5 => Pentameter.

**Student:** is it possible for a line of poetry not to have any meter?

**Professor:** yes of course and this is the case with free verse or blank verse. In blank verse, there's no meter and no rhyme.

## Thank You

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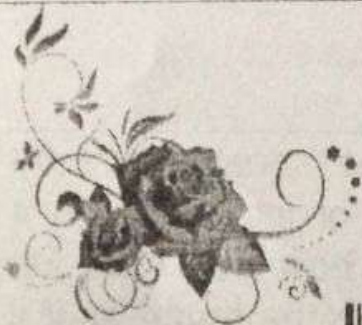


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