**English Romantic Verse** One-Page Guides

**Poet Wordsworth**

Poem Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

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| Context (biographical, Romantic attitudes, social/historical etc)  | Wordsworth was a strong believer in the power of nature, the sublime and senses and had typical Romantic ideals which are reflected strongly in this poem. He believed in an idealised world and is suggestant that man is slightly corrupt. |
| A poem about… (Interpretations, key Romantic themes, nature, mortality) | Nature being a teacher and a guide in life and how powerful and beautiful nature is. Key theme being the sublime and the senses heightened by the power of nature. Quite an intimate poem with portrayals of love. Connects nature to god. |
| Speaker (who? talking to whom? attitude to subject- ironic, reverent etc) | A significant shift in the poem, which tracks the speaker’s relationship with nature. He is reminded of his youthful relationship with nature (‘five years have past’), more instinctive and sensual (‘appetite’ etc). *Now* he sees its power to act has a moral and spiritual guide and teacher, for the speaker and for humanity. Speaker is probably a Wordsworth persona and mentions a sister (‘Dear Friend’) mid-way through the poem. Makes the end less introspective and more outward looking. Written in first person. Sense that the speaker is in awe of nature and perhaps sees it as a higher power – suggestions to worship and spiritual references, slight religious undertone. Advising the reader to take the same stance and see the power of nature. |
| Form (sonnet, ballad, verse form, rhyme and rhythm) | Blank verse with key breaks to indicate changes of focus. There is some half-rhyme throughout the poem but no set rhyme. Has iambic rhythm mostly throughout the poem- iambic pentameter. Enjambment (e.g. I see/These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines/Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,’ – run-on lines mimic ‘wild’ quality of landscape, perhaps. Repetition here mimicks speech, what Wordsworth called ‘language such as men do use’ in Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*) |
| Overall structure (shifts, changes, climax of narrative etc) | The whole poem involves nature in some sort of way. The first stanza is mainly describing the scenery: a wild, romantic scene with the mention of a Hermit! The second stanza and short third stanza shifts - more into how nature has affected the speaker – how a memory of it has acted to restore his spirits (‘sensations sweet’ – which are important like ‘acts/Of kindness and love’). In the fourth stanza he returns to the present, reflecting on the past relationship with nature (all about ‘passion’, ‘appetite’, ‘feeling’ and considering what has changed – he makes literal reference to the sublime ‘sense sublime’. The end of the fourth stanza also shifts to more religious language and how nature and god are connected talks about ‘spirit[s]’ etc. continues into the last stanza which combines all the themes together, includes the ‘Dear Friend’ and the scale seems to rise at the end as it is suggested nature is a higher power.  |
| Language (vocabulary - heightened or demotic; rhetorical features etc) | A lot of landscaping language ‘copses’ ‘houseless woods’ ‘mountains’ ‘hills’. Language also is a little religious and shows pantheism later in the poem ‘deeply interfused’ ‘spirit’ ‘mind of man’ ‘in nature and language of the sense’ |
| Sound effects (harsh and soft, onomatopoeia etc) | Mainly soft and gentle to reflect on the beauty of nature ‘wanderings’ ‘tranquil’ ‘soft inland murmur’ Can have harder sounds at times to reflect the speakers disapproval for mankind and how mankind impacts nature ‘ sad music of humanity’ ‘chasten’ ‘grating’.In sequences describing the city we have ‘din’,  |
| Imagery (metaphor, simile, images etc) | This poem has lots of imagery, mostly nature related to show how nature is everything and how it should be seen as a higher power and should be respected. ‘ pastoral farms’ ‘quiet of the sky’ ‘misty mountain winds’ ‘wild ecstasies’ ‘guardian of my heart’  |
| Patterns of language (semantic fields, repetitions, oppositions) | Has semantic fields of both nature and religion ‘ gloomy wood’ ‘lofty cliffs’ ‘banks of this delightful stream’ ‘worshipper of nature’ ‘holier love’ ‘cheerful faith’ ‘blessings’ Also can be in the semantic field of love ‘ dreary intercourse of daily life’ ‘language of my former heart’ ‘turned to thee’ ‘former pleasures’ |
| Punctuation and grammar (sentence length, end-stopping, caesura, verb mood - imperative, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory) | Stanzas are indented continuing on from each other perhaps indicating the freedom of nature and the idea one can live a life without the restrictions of mankind. Sentence lengths are varied throughout the poem. The clause ‘The hermit sits alone’ stands out and as seen as a small turning point. Stanza five has an outburst of emotion, reflected in shorter, more broken phrases and clauses, broken with, commas and semi-colons and exclamations - as if the narrator’s emotions are spilling out of him (‘rather say/With warmer love – oh! with far deeper zeal/Of holier love’).  |
| Links to other poems | ‘Ode to a Nightingale’- immortal nature ‘The Tyger’ (nature of the divine and the divine’s relationship with nature) and ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’- religion and belief, centrality and importance of nature. ‘Lines Written in Early Spring’ – vitality, purity and simplicity of nature compared unfavourably with ‘what man has made of man’ |