The speaker thinks back to a time (in childhood) when nature seemed mystical to him, and reflects that this is no longer the case.

Although the world is beautiful, the speaker feels that something has been lost.

All around him nature seems joyful, but the speaker feels melancholy. He resolves not to feel this way, declaring that the earth is full of joy.

The speaker wants to be part of the joy of nature, and yet seeing a tree, a field and then a pansy, he again has the sense that something is amiss.

The speaker asserts that, as children, we have some memory of heaven, but once we are grown into maturity, this memory and connection fades away.

The speaker reflects on the idea that, as soon as we reach earth, everything around us conspires to help us forget heaven.

The speaker sees (or imagines) a six-year-old child and foresees the rest of his life. He will learn from experience and spend most of his effort on imitation.

He speaks directly to the child; he cannot understand why the child would rush to grow up.

With a sudden rush of joy, the speaker realises that, through memory, he will always be able to connect to his childhood, and through his childhood to nature/heaven.

The speaker asks the creatures that earlier made him sad to sing out. He admits he has lost some of the glory of nature in growing out of childhood, but is comforted by the knowledge that he can rely on his memory.

The speaker reflects that nature is still the stem of everything in his life. It brings him insight, fuelling his memories and his belief that his soul is immortal.