

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

William Wordsworth

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770 -1850), one of England's greatest poets, was born in Cumberland in the Lake District and educated at Cambridge. The first of the great English Romantic poets, he rebelled against the traditional, artificial language of poetry in favour of more natural language. With *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), a collection of poems written jointly with S.T. Coleridge, he initiated the Romantic Movement in English. He brought about a revolutionary change in English poetry in both thought and style. In 1805, Wordsworth published his masterpiece, the long autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*. Fame and prosperity came slowly but he never wavered in his faith in himself and his immortality as a poet. He became the Poet Laureate in 1843. The subjects of his poetry are the beauty and mystery of Nature, the intimate relationship between Nature and man and the lives of the simple rustics. He usually looks upon Nature as teacher as he does in 'Three years She Grew' which forms the celebrated series of the Lucy poems.



A. Work in small groups and discuss the following questions:
Nature is all around you. You see its different manifestations in plants, birds, animals, rivers, lakes etc.:

1. Have you ever observed nature closely?
2. How do you feel when you see any of these manifestations?
3. Do you learn anything from them?

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

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."

5

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulses; and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
The kindle or restrain."

10

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things."

15

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy."

20

**B.1. Answer these questions briefly:**

1. Who is 'she' in the first line? Where and how long did she grow?
2. What is meant by 'A lovelier flower on earth was never sown'?
3. Who decided to take care of the girl?
4. What is meant by 'law and impulses' in line 8?
5. Where will Nature take the girl?
6. What is meant by 'overseeing power' in line 11? Who will feel it?

7. What will the girl learn from the 'fawn'?
8. What will the floating cloud lend to her?
9. Who did she learn grace from?
10. What shall mould the Maiden's form? How?

"The stars of mid-night shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face." 25 30

"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." 35

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. 40

B.2. Answer the following questions:

1. What will be dear to the girl?
2. Where will she lean her ear?
3. Where will rivulets dance?
4. What will pass into her face?
5. What effect will the 'vital feelings of delight' have on the girl?
6. What does the phrase 'such thoughts' mean in line 34?
7. Who will give such thoughts and when?
8. Who is the speaker of the poem?
9. Explain the line 'How soon my Lucy's race was run'?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

sportive: (adj) playful, joyful

fawn: (n) young deer

glee: (n) joy

the breathing balm: (n, phr) the sweet fragrance which is breathed by the objects of nature

balm: (n) sweetness, fragrance

mute: (adj) silent

insensate things: (n, phr) lifeless, inanimate

floating: (v) moving in the sky

state: (n) dignity

C. 2. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What does Nature decide about Lucy? Give details.
2. Describe the process by which Nature intends to mould Lucy's character and her outward form?
3. What are the main ideas contained in the poem?
4. What did Lucy leave to the speaker?
5. Give a critical estimate of the poem "Three Years She grew".
6. Find out instances of simile in the poem
7. Find out instances of metaphor in the poem.
8. Can you find instances of personification in the poem?

A **simile** is a figure of speech that directly compares two seemingly unlike things using a comparing word such as 'like' or 'as', e.g. 'My love is *like* a red, red rose'.

C. 2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in groups or pairs:

- a. Nature is our best teacher
- b. Nature has many things to offer

C. 3. COMPOSITION

Write a paragraph in about 100 words on the following:

- a. Nature as the storehouse of learning
- b. Bliss of solitude

D. WORD STUDY**D.1. Dictionary Use**

Ex. 1. Look up a dictionary and write two meanings of each of the following words – the one in which it is used in the lesson and the other

which is more common:

flower

impulse

darling

glade

kindle

fawn

maiden

virgin

balm

E. GRAMMAR

Ex. 1. Read the sentences picked up from the poem. Some of them are in the active voice and others in the passive one. Change the voice of the sentences given below and note the change in effect after the change in voice:

- (i) A lovelier flower on earth was never sown.
- (ii) She shall be mine.
- (iii) She will feel an overseeing power.
- (iv) Vital feelings of delight shall rear her form.
- (v) I will give such thoughts to Lucy.
- (vi) The work was done.
- (vii) How soon my Lucy's race was run!

Ex. 2. Read these lines from the poem carefully and mark the different cases of the personal pronoun 'I':

This child **I** to **myself** will take;
She shall be **mine**, and **I** will make
A Lady of **my** own.
... and with **me**

The Girl... Shall feel an **overseeing power**

Specify the instances of different cases - subjective, objective, possessive, and reflexive - in the lines above and write the different cases for other personal pronouns - we, you, he, she, it, they.

F. Activity

Ex.1. Gather five stories/ fables/ tales/ poems from any language that tell about the benign influence of nature.

Ex. 2. Find out the rhyme scheme of the poem.

