

I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud (1804)



I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
5 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
10 Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling leaves in glee;
15 A poet could not be but gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
20 In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Writing from Reading

Summarize

1 What does the speaker mean by “that inward eye / Which is the bliss of solitude”?

Analyze Craft

2 Which words are formal here (“sprightly,” “jocund,” “pensive,” and so forth) and which ones less so (“lonely,” “twinkle,” “pleasure,” and so on)?

3 How do the words chosen in the rhymes convey a casualness that supports the idea of “wandering” on a hill?

Analyze Voice

4 Why does the speaker begin by mentioning he is lonely? Where does the tone change? What is the overall tone of this poem?

Synthesize Summary and Analysis

5 Where does the speaker locate himself in the first three stanzas; where is he in the fourth?

6 How does the loneliness in Wordsworth's poem compare with that in Sappho's?

Interpret the Poem

7 Why are daffodils a consolation?