

Fourth Lecture

Wordsworth - "Daffodils" (1804)

William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) was a Romantic poet and a major influence in bringing about the 18th centuries' Romantic Age of Literature. An original poet for many different artistic qualities, his personality and emotional intelligence had made him the perfect forefather for a literary movement that would resound philosophically and poetically to this day.

Romanticism, defined by its predisposition towards nature and its deep emotional connection with the feelings of the poet, is what makes William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" such a perfect example of Romantic poetry.

• Title and Theme of the Poem 'Daffodils'

The title, 'Daffodils' is a simple word that reminds us about the arrival of the spring season, when the field is full of daffodils. Daffodils are yellow flowers, having an amazing shape and beautiful fragrance. A bunch of daffodils symbolize the joys and happiness of life.

The theme of the poem 'Daffodils' is a collection of human emotions inspired by nature that we may have neglected due to our busy lives. The daffodils imply beginning or rebirth for human beings, blessed with the grace of nature.

The poem 'Daffodils' is also known by the title 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud', a lyrical poem written by William Wordsworth in 1804. It was published in 1815 in 'Collected Poems' with four stanzas. William Wordsworth is a well-known romantic poet who believed in conveying simple and creative expressions through his poems.

He had quoted, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility". Thus, Daffodils is one of the most popular poems of the Romantic Age, unfolding the poet's excitement, love and praise for a field blossoming with daffodils.

**_ I WANDER'D 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;
_ Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
_ Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.**

In the first stanza, the poet tells us about a beautiful experience that took place in his life, and still has its positive effect on him. Once he was wandering alone like an aimless cloud flying over the valleys and the hills. Suddenly, he saw a group of beautiful yellow flowers beside a lake, under the trees. These golden flowers were tossing their heads as if they were dancing in the breeze.

By comparing himself to a cloud in the first line of the poem, the speaker signifies his close identification with the nature that surrounds him. He also demonstrates this connection by personifying the daffodils several times, even calling them a "crowd" as if they were a group of people.

**_ Continuous as the stars that shine
_ And twinkle on the Milky Way,
_ They stretch'd in never-ending line
_ Along the margin of a bay:
_ Ten thousand saw I at a glance,**

— Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

In the second stanza, the poet stresses the great number of these golden daffodils. They were as numerous and shining as the stars that twinkled in the sky. They were too many to be counted. They stretched in an endless line along the edge of bay. He saw ten thousands of them at one glance. They were dancing happily and lively.

— The waves beside them danced; but they

— Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

— A poet could not but be gay,

— In such a jocund company:

— I gazed -- and gazed -- but little thought

— What wealth the show to me had brought:

In the third stanza, the poet is comparing the daffodils with the waves flowing in the lake/ bay beside them. The waves shared the daffodils their happiness, but the latter were much happier. In such a happy company, the poet could not but be as happy as they were. The poet looked carefully, but he did not realize at that time how much happiness this beautiful sight would bring to him.

— For oft, when on my couch I lie

— 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.

In the fourth stanza, the poet stresses the theme of the poem which is the everlasting effect of Nature, represented here by the golden daffodils, on man. He says: when I lie on my bed, obsessed or care – free, I always remember the beautiful sight of the daffodils, lived in the same situation, and my heart filled with happiness.

• **Commentary**

The poem is about the everlasting effect of nature on man: the influence of nature exceeds the limits of a situation and goes far beyond that. In this poem, the poet saw a group of beautiful, yellow flowers, and he was attracted by their beauty. After leaving the scene and returning back to his ordinary life, he recollected the beautiful sight of the flowers and lived in the same situation again, which filled him with happiness.

• **Form**

The 'Daffodils' has a rhyming scheme throughout the poem. The four six-line stanzas of this poem follow a quatrain-couplet rhyme scheme: ABABCC. The rhyming scheme of the above stanza is ABAB (A - cloud and crowd; B - hills and daffodils) and ending with a rhyming couplet CC (C - trees and breeze).

1) The rhyme scheme of " Daffodils is

A- AABDD

B- AABCC

C- AABCBC

D- ABABCC

The correct answer is (D)

2)After leaving the scene and returning back to his ordinary life, Wordsworth the beautiful sight of the flowers.

A- recollected

B- forgot

C- disregard

D- overlooked

The correct answer is (A)