

SOLITARY REAPER

- WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

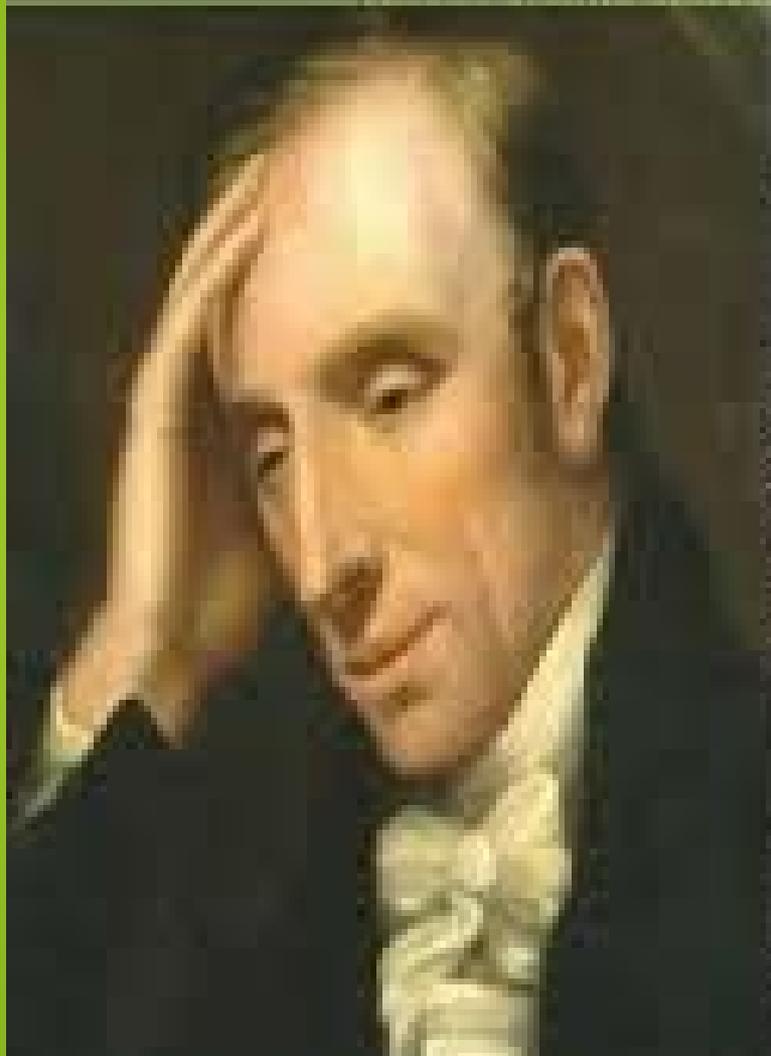
About the Author: **William Wordsworth**

- Born : 7 April 1770
- Died : 23 April 1850
- A founder of the Romantic Movement of English literature
- Known as a Lakeland Poet
- Because of the area where he lived, which is renowned for its beautiful, wild landscapes, charming pastures, and countless lakes.
- Called a Nature poet
- was named Poet Laureate of England in 1843.

The Solitary Reaper

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850



The Meaning for the title

- Solitude = Alone
- Reaper = The one who reaps the grass
- *Solitary Reaper* means the one who reaps all alone.
- A girl who belongs to Scotland is singing and reaping in this poem



*Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!*

- The poet asks the readers to behold because a young girl was '**reaping and singing by herself**' in a field
- Anyone passing by should either stop and listen or 'gently pass' without disturbing her.

MEANING

- Behold – Look at
- Highland – mountainous region in Northern Scotland
- Lass- Girl / young lady
- Strain – song
- Melancholy – sad
- Vale profound- broad , deep valley

*Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.*

- She cuts and binds the grain alone
- The song the girl sings is a **sad song**
- **Melancholy strain means ‘sad song’**
- He feels that the whole valley seems to overflow with the sound.

The Second Stanza

- *No Nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:*

Meaning

- The speaker says that the girl's singing is so wonderful that cannot be compared to the chant of a nightingale
- The author says that the song she sings is more welcome than any a nightingale might sing to weary travellers in the desert

- *A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides*
- The sound of her voice is more thrilling to hear than the cuckoo-bird in spring.
- It breaks the silence of the seas among the farthest Hebrides

Meaning

- Hebrides means a group of islands (Inner **Hebrides** and Outer **Hebrides**) off the W coast of and belonging to **Scotland**. About 2900 sq. mi. (7500 sq. km).
- Also called Western Islands.

The Third Stanza

- *Will no one tell me what she sings?--
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:*
- *The author does not know the meaning of her song*
- *He imagines that her song might be about some past sorrow, pain or loss of old, unhappy things or battles fought long ago.*

*Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?*

*Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?*

Or Perhaps...

He questions whether it is a humbler song about some present sorrow, pain, or loss, or a familiar 'matter of to-day.'

The Fourth Stanza

- *Whatever the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;--
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.*



- The poet ends the poem that whatever the theme may be the girl sings does not matter.
- He saw her singing at her work with the sickle
- He became motionless and still and listened to the song
- Her singing still **lingers** in his mind, giving him joy as he travels up the hill
- The poet says the song which **touched** his heart, lingers even today
- Long after he can no longer hear it. He could not hear such a lovely song still now.

Form

- Stanzas: It is of four- eight line stanzas
- The first sets the scene, the second offers two bird comparisons, the third wonders about the content and meaning of the song and the fourth describes the lasting effect of the song on the speaker
- Metre: Iambic Tetra Metre
- Rhyme: ababccdd

Figures of Speech

- The Poet compares the reaper with the nightingale and cuckoo respectively. He even claims that her song is more thrilling than those of the two birds.

Nightingale



Cuckoo



FIGURES OF SPEECH

Metaphor: The poet compares the reaper with the nightingale and cuckoo respectively. He even claims that her song is more thrilling and more beautiful than those of the two birds.

Apostrophe: The poem begins with an apostrophe. The apostrophe is a figure of speech in which an imaginary person or thing is addressed as if present and capable of understanding.

THANK YOU

Presentation by Dr. J. Preethi