

William Wordsworth:  
A Study of his Poetry of the Period 1798-1808  
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## Preface


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;  
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  
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 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:

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.

("Daffodils", 1804)



When Thai students who have learned English for eight years hear the name Wordsworth, they think at once of this poem. Most of them have learnt it by heart. They like it because of its sound and because it is easy to understand. It contains no difficult words and no complicated ideas. The reader can see the picture of the golden daffodils as clearly as if they were in front of him. We all love harmonious sound and beautiful imagery and we appreciate it more when it is simple in form. Wordsworth, more than any other poet of his time, believed in expressing himself in the clearest language possible.

Another of Wordsworth's principles was that poetry should bring pleasure to the reader's mind. Few works of other poets can be said to bring more pleasure than this poem "Daffodils" does. Its vivid picture can hardly be rivalled. Thai readers who have never seen a daffodil, and may not even know what shape it has, can see, in their imagination, these bright yellow flowers and their movement in the breeze. They can share the gaiety the poet felt when he watched the hundreds of daffodils flutter, dance, and toss their heads merrily. His similes : "lonely as a cloud"; or "continuous as the stars that shine and twinkle on the milky way" and metaphors: "tossing their heads in sprightly dance," "a host of golden daffodils", and "my heart with pleasure fills, and dances with the daffodils" are effective because he draws comparisons with common things which we have all seen : clouds, the twinkling stars on the milky way and dancing. Even though we have never seen a real daffodil we feel as if we had and we are carried away by the beauty of the scene and the pleasure of the poet.