

المحاضرة السادسة "Lucy" "

General Meaning

Stanza 1: The first stanza begins with the speaker describing a maiden whose identity is not yet specified. He relates how she lived in a remote place where few people ever went. The speaker emphasizes that she lived by the springs of Dove—an actual location in England. Despite the peaceful description of her surroundings, the speaker reveals that she was never praised and was unloved—a lonely figure.

Stanza 2: The speaker begins to describe the maiden in greater detail. He compares her to a violet concealed by a mossy stone that no one really cared to notice. He further compares her beauty to that of a star—particularly, a single brilliant star shining in the sky. In a few words, the speaker conveys the power of the maiden's beauty.

Stanza 3: The third stanza repeats the fact that the maiden lived unrecognized. Due to her solitude, few people could possibly know when she ceased to exist. For the first time, the speaker reveals that the maiden in question is Lucy and that she is no longer alive. This sad fact tortures the speaker, who implies throughout the poem that he loved her.

Detailed meaning

The tone of the first stanza is both melancholy and loving. The speaker begins the poem by mentioning an anonymous woman. Within the context of the Lucy Poems, the reader may surmise that the speaker is referring to Lucy. However, by beginning the poem with the pronoun "she," the speaker seems to infer that his description of the young maiden could be true for other maidens as well. Her life, in other words, mirrors those of other young women in similar circumstances. The mention of "dwelt" immediately sets the poem in the past, leading the reader to question where the maiden is at present. "Untrodden ways" highlights the location of the maiden's dwelling, emphasizing that she lived in a place where few people ever step foot. Nonetheless, the speaker mentions a real location—the river Dove in England—to specify where she lived exactly. While most scholars agree that Lucy was not based on a single woman from Wordsworth's life, the exact location lends an air of mystery to the subject's real identity while also cementing the idea that such a sad story could be true for many English women of the countryside. The word "springs" also suggests purity, casting the maiden in a virtuous light. The second half of the stanza reveals that no one ever praised this woman and that very few people ever loved her. The tone shifts to somewhat loving at this point, as the speaker appears sympathetic toward her. At the moment, it is not clear whether he loves her. Curiously, the reader is left to wonder how the speaker knows this information about the woman, especially if she

lived in a place where very few people ever go. In some way, he managed to notice her when others failed to do so.

In the second stanza, the speaker conjures images typical of Romantic poetry. By comparing the maiden to a flower, the reader immediately understands the depth of her beauty. (The comparison to the violet also parallels the speaker's comparison of Lucy to a rose in "Strange fits of passion have I known"). However, the mention of the violet by a mossy stone also implies that, like a small flower obscured from view by a mossy rock, the maiden also went unnoticed. She was "half hidden" from the eye of the public, suggesting that she was very alone despite her beauty and purity. It was easy to overlook her, like a diamond in the rough. The speaker's further comparison to a star gives the maiden a heavenly quality. This angelic depiction also has a foreboding undertone, insinuating that the maiden is too lovely for the mortal world and may not even be alive. The simile reveals that she is not only beautiful—she is the single loveliest star in the sky. Nothing else can compare.

The third stanza begins with a repetition of the fact that Lucy went unnoticed in life. This depiction of beauty and frailty going unnoticed is a prominent theme in Romantic works. Lucy's description further suggests that she went unrecognized because she was an innocent country girl and not a woman of the city—another Romantic example of the purity of nature versus the corruption of society. Because she was pure, Lucy suffered. The second half of the stanza reveals the sad truth that Lucy is in fact dead. She was so isolated that very few even noticed her passing or could tell exactly when it occurred. The sudden shift to the present tense with the mention of her grave brings the speaker to confide in the reader that, while Lucy may not have mattered to others, she mattered to him. The "difference" of her being gone now brings him to despair.

The poet intention: The poem essentially illustrates the life cycle with its early references to nature and the conclusion that Lucy is no longer alive. The ballad is therefore also an elegiac poem.