

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways

by William Wordsworth

Grades 8–10 · Common Core RL.8.4, RL.8.2, RL.8.5

Wordsworth wrote this poem in 1798; it was published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). It is one of five “Lucy poems.” No one knows if Lucy was a real person. The poem is an elegy, a poem of mourning, in three quatrains.



THE POEM

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

5 A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

10 When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

VOCABULARY

dwelt — lived**untrodden** — rarely walked on; remote**Dove** — a river in England**Maid** — a young girl or unmarried woman**mossy** — covered with moss**ceased to be** — died

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did Lucy live, and how many people knew or loved her?

2. Explain the metaphor in “A violet by a mossy stone / Half hidden from the eye!”

3. How does the star simile in lines 7–8 differ from the violet image?

4. What does “When Lucy ceased to be” mean? Why might the poet put it so gently?

5. How does the last line change the tone of the poem?

WRITING PROMPT

Write a short tribute (poem or paragraph) to someone or something that few people notice but that matters to you. Use one image from nature to describe them.

She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways — Answer Key

1. “among the untrodden ways / Beside the springs of Dove”; there “were none to praise / And very few to love.”
2. She is like a small, modest flower half hidden by a stone: beautiful but unnoticed.
3. The violet is hidden, but the single star is “shining in the sky” and stands out; to the speaker, she was the only one that mattered.
4. It means she died. The soft wording matches her quiet, unnoticed life and the speaker’s tender grief.
5. “oh, / The difference to me!” shifts from calm description to a sudden personal cry of loss: her death meant little to the world but everything to him.

Read the full poem online: poetrycatalog.com/she-dwelt-among-untrodden-ways-william-wordsworth/