

DON'T BE WORRIED BY THE LENGTH OF TINTERN ABBEY! You can divide the poem into movements between three stages that can be summarized as the **unreflecting life of childhood (or age of sensation)**; **mental and bodily activity of youth (or age of feeling)**; and the mature, sadder, life of adulthood (age of reason). Each age has its own importance and integrity that is also essential to the development of the next.

"July 13, 1798" date marks the eighth anniversary of the day Wordsworth had first set foot in France in 1790 and it was also celebrated in the revolutionary calendar as the eve of Bastille day, whose celebration Wordsworth had witnessed in 1790 and 1792 (CONTEXT) in the interlinking of Tintern to France, there is a suggestion to a combining of themes of the political and personal in ways that might lead less to repression than to the interplay of hope, loss, erosion, and possibility.

Title qualifies the unique quality of the place and time - It does not imply that this place among all places will bring revelations to every tourist who happens along, but it suggests that we might all have such a place in our lives (SUBJECTIVE LIFE/EXPERIENCE)

Tintern Abbey is a poem about the absorption into natural beauty as the antidote to mental, political and social disconnection.

Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798

Geographical and temporal specificity of setting by the River Wye, even giving the exact date of writing (July 13, 1798) - grounds the poem in lived experience

Note the **passivity** of the verb 'I repose' (+ **enjambement** to make space for mental contemplations?) that does not make any point of physical interference or intervention into the natural scene. Could this be a heeding of romantic doctrine that warned against humanity overstepping its boundaries through industrialism?

THEMES AND COMPARISONS

- Nature** – Ode to the West Wind (Shelley), Sonnet on the Sea (Keats), The Question (Shelley), Ode to a Nightingale (Keats), The Cold of Earth Slept Below (Shelley)
- Beauty** – Ode to a Nightingale (Keats), Ode to a Grecian Urn (Keats)
- Awe and the Sublime** – Ode to the West Wind (Shelley), Ode to a Nightingale (Keats)
- Imagination** – Ode to a Nightingale (Keats), Ode to a Grecian Urn (Keats), The Question (Shelley), Ode to the West Wind (Shelley)
- Time and Change** – Ode on a Grecian Urn (Keats), Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed from a Skull (Byron), On This Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year (Byron)
- Memory** – Ode on a Grecian Urn (Keats), Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed from a Skull (Byron)
- Misery** – Ode on Melancholy (Keats), Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples (Shelley), On This Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year (Byron)

Anaphora in the repetition of 'five' as he recounts the passing of time of 'Five years have past; five summers, with the length of five, long winters' – palpable weight of poet's absence in the stretch of the five years – exclamative.

Introduction to the **sublime**, 'steep and lofty cliffs' fundamental wholeness, private 'deep seclusion, and unity by the verb 'connect' to the 'quiet of the sky' - elevation of common human thought by adjective description 'lofty.' Twice he notes how his perceptions rouse his thoughts. First, he beholds "these steep and lofty cliffs, / Which on a wild secluded scene impress / thoughts of more deep seclusion," an interesting tangle of theories of perception, suggesting a struggle to understand the mind's relationship to nature or the external world - mind impresses these thoughts of seclusion, rather than the cliffs themselves.

He specifically returns to 'this season.' The natural world is seasonal and essentially timeless, but human life is time-bound, not seasonal and cyclical but headed toward age and death.

Account of the panorama he sees before him (STRUCTURE/CONTEXT) Poem is an example of the **prospect poem**, an 18th century genre in which a landscape is described and moral reflections are attached to it. However, Wordsworth takes the genre into new realms of speculation. Form leaves the descriptive element to become a meditation of epistemology – acquisition of knowledge – and psychology – how experience is stored in the memory. Never so abstract that it should lose its firm sense of location in the poet's personal experience

From the first to second stanza, the verse sections enact a strophic movement from the locodescriptive introduction depicting the natural exterior (strophe) is closely followed by an interior meditation on the relationship between the speaker's memory and the landscape (antistrophe).

Five years have past; five summers, with the length Of five long winters, and again I hear These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs With a soft inland murmur.— Once again Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, That on a wild secluded scene impress Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts, Which at this season, with their unripe fruits, Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms, Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

With some uncertain notice, as might seem Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire The Hermit sits alone.

These beautiful forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din Of towns and cities, I have owed to them, In hours of weariness, sensations sweet, Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; And passing even into my purer mind With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Recording of **present tense** in 'I hear... I behold... I see' self-consciousness in attending with 'eye and ear' to what is before him and connecting the reader to the speaker's immediate experience, reference to the **organic poetry** required of the 'spontaneous overflow of feeling.'

Poem begins in a series of 'deictic' words (words whose referents depend on the situation of the speaker, like 'these waters' 'these steep and lofty cliffs' 'these plots') – by making these pointed references to the scenery, Wordsworth seemingly wants to convey the magical power of this place as he hears and sees it at that time, as it corresponds to his memory of it.

Sensory, auditory scene in the sounds of 'water, rolling from the mountain-springs' and 'soft inland murmur' – sense of internal coherence heightened by the subtle consonance of **tr** sounds in 'rolling' and 'murmur'

Anaphora upon 'again' emphasis on re-experiencing this landscape from the five years prior – restoration, completeness, and unity in returning.

His observations have two aspects: wild and cultivated (employing 'wild' three times), 'steep and lofty cliffs' against the 'plots of cottage-ground' or 'pastoral farms' Despite the unity that the natural scene presents to Wordsworth, he can only grasp its fragmentary aspects (+ **caesurae**)

Imagery of unity and connection is strongly influenced by William Gilpin's concept of the **picturesque** as Tintern Abbey casts a similar veil over a landscape succumbing the effects of industrialization. Gilpin further documents the 'poverty and wretchedness' of the homeless taking shelter in the abbey ruins that the poem acknowledges in its mention of 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods.'

Role of the imagination in peopling the woods with 'vagrant dwellers' taking in the image of a Hermit as if Wordsworth is revisiting **Arcadia**, the idealized classical realm of poetic shepherds. Seemingly triggers his memory of 'lonely rooms,' (HELLENISM)

Industrialisation (CONTEXT) – transformation of Europe into centers of manufacturing and production, yet this scene is untouched by industry. Implication that modern, urban life is lonely, depleting, and draining. Natural world has the power to restore, revive, and nourish the human soul to lighten 'the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world.'

Even memories of nature promise 'tranquil restoration'

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life.

His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again;
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led; more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,

And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Ambiguity - General nature of 'his little nameless, unremembered, acts / Of kindness and of love' invites us to fill it with our own associations. Its abstractness lends distance; Wordsworth has retreated so far into his mind that human sadness now sounds like music as the 'eye made quiet by the power / of harmony' that lets him 'see into the life of things:' when he hears into the life of things he finds the music of humanity.

Poem seems to take it for granted that ordinary day-to-day life is likely to be characterized by misery.

Problem of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads is the abandonment and loss of those whom nature puts close to us originally, a loss that reverberates throughout human life and conditions our lives (loss of parents, children, families, and even society.' Throughout the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth resists narrative closure, or catharsis by articulating problems rather than suggesting answers.

The sublime is not specifically religious, or even belonging to God and his works, or the emotion of religion; although Wordsworth does take a religious turn later in the poem. Trancelike state ('breath of this corporeal frame and even the motion of our human blood almost suspended') he describes is akin to the transport or ecstasy of a Christian mystic, who attempts communication with God to unite with God. There is no God in this poem. The "harmony" that descends on him is not explicitly with anything, God or otherwise; it is just harmony itself, seemingly an inner state. And what he sees is not God or a type or symbol of God but "the life of things." His "living" soul is in harmony, we might say, with this "life," and nature or natural things share something living with him.

In this short section, Wordsworth seems to lose his nerve for a moment and shrink back from his surge of sublime rhetoric and to doubt his own powers. Tendency to doubting his own mind previously established, such as 'perhaps' 'I trust' 'I dare to hope' and 'I would believe.' Tone of caution, almost pedantry against otherwise bold assertions as he moves, in the next section, to a belief quite far from orthodox Christian teaching.

1. Doubt seems consciously foregrounded, not only in the conditional mood of many lines ('perchance' 'perhaps' 'I trust'), but also in a structure of assertion and qualification that repeats three times in the course of the poem, qualified by an 'if' clause where Wordsworth moves to a specific relationship capable of grounding his belief, be that the Wye river or to Dorothy, potentially signifying the shift from grounds of reason/rationality to the ground of nurture.

Ambiguity of 'sad perplexity' these fears could be described as a fear of loss of immediacy (to natural beauty), fear of mortality (Keats?), or fear of time but these doubts become more desperate towards the end of the poem in its elegiac ending.

Simile ('more like a man flying from something that he dreads, than one who sought the thing he loved') as a clue to something lurking behind or beneath the poem that Wordsworth wanted to suppress. - doubt

Claim of compensation (adult experience and memory compensating for the child's loss of immediacy). The price of thought is giving up youth's immediacy.

Many of the poem's arguments are built around negatives: 'no' 'nor' 'not' 'un'. The poem expresses moments of confidence of the natural world - the 'deep power of joy' and the 'sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused' - not mere assertions, but statements wrung from the poet in an attempt to put into a language a confrontation with experience that includes the fraught and the miserable. The tone that results suggests a man sobered by the passage of time and the wearying experiences he describes, "the fretful stir / Unprofitable, and the fever of the world," and tentative about what they all mean as he marks an anniversary on this day, but a man still given to surges of rapturous feeling and hopeful belief.

Feelings of pleasure, of something more sublime, and both feelings have moral and spiritual effects to him.

Influenced by Edmund Burke's 'Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful' (CONTEXT), it is the motion of the body, even its pulse, that is "suspended," not that of the soul, which is not astonished but serene, joyful, and "living" as it penetrates into "the life of things". The sublime was commonly contrasted with the beautiful, which categorised pleasing, gentle, inviting scenery, cultivated as opposed to wild, and feminine as opposed to the masculine sublime. These two aesthetic categories seem to govern the distinction between the "gifts" Wordsworth has received from this place.

The only apostrophe in the poem, a direct address to a nonhuman entity, the "sylvan Wye," who like Wordsworth himself five years ago, as we will see, is a "wanderer thro' the woods." Wordsworth allows that his notion of seeing into the life of things may be mistaken, but he insists he gained something from his earlier visit to this spot overlooking this river.

Resumption of deictics ('now,' 'here' 'this moment' 'these hills') as if to reorient himself before resuming his wandering meditation.

Variety of interpretations: Selfish exclusion of anything else that might impede Wordsworth's privileged vision into the 'life of things' / all-embracing, impassioned ode to joy of a speaker that has heard, embraced, and incorporated the 'still, sad music of humanity.' I think the latter interpretation could make an interesting point of comparison with Keats' Ode on Melancholy.

The poem grows sadder, more chastened, and subdued. Wordsworth claims he does not mourn or murmur, but he sounds mournful here over his "loss," and even when he claims to have found "abundant recompense" for it he murmurs another qualifying clause, "I would believe," which undermines his claim. What has he gained in recompense? Thought, to be sure, for he is no longer "thoughtless," but also a more acute power of hearing, he says, for he can hear "the still, sad music of humanity."

Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes

The still sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.—And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. **Therefore am I still**
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay;
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,

Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. **Therefore let the moon**
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;

And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee; and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

Poem reaches its climactic pause here where the persona 'felt' a 'presence' that 'disturbs' him with the 'joy' of 'elevated thoughts.' Presence, here, is vague — what he is attempting to describe is abstract, tenuous and evanescent — movement from feeling to 'thoughts' in the strange intermixture of 'joy', 'elevated' thought and disturbance. The 'sense sublime' poetically inverts noun and adjectives might threaten to fly off into improbability were it not tied down by the strange vagueness of 'something.'

Wordsworth then discusses 'presence' as a 'motion' and 'spirit' — matter of physics and divinity (metaphysics). Strength of the active verb, 'impels' bringing together the human capacity for thought with the thingness of existence and 'objects of all thought.' Energy that propels everything in the world as 'all' appears four times within these two lines. 'Rolls' is a **concrete verb** that contrasts with 'impels,' relaxed, ordinary and gentle.

Romanticism accepted the **Enlightenment critique of God** that made him the creator of the universe and its law, but not an intervenor with 'miracles' but not its cool critique; romanticism saw God as dead but his 'divinity' was bequeathed to the soul and nature. The soul and nature had something divine or holy — Wordsworth wrote '*By our own spirits are we deified.*' (CONTEXT). When we become a 'living soul,' as Wordsworth describes, we see the 'life' of nature. Enlightenment rationalism, and modern science, won the theological arguments but at the price of a dead universe. Romanticism rescues religious feeling, now no longer directed upward to God but outward to nature and inward to the soul, and it reanimates the one as it revives the other (PANTHEISM)

Wordsworth understands that he himself is both perceiving and creating nature as a beneficent, benevolent entity. It is not simply out there, waiting to be worshipped (not to be envisaged as a classical God). Poem is a willed, purposeful meditation on this act of perception mixed with creation.

Wordsworth again courts condemnation from pious Christians when he concludes this section by avowing that it is not God or the Bible that anchors his thoughts, or nurses, guides, and guards his heart, or animates his moral being, but nature and the language of the sense.

Blank verse seemed to lend itself better than all other verse forms to conversational speech, to "real" speech, and could register the shifts of subject and tone appropriate to a meditative discussion better than verse with shorter, irregular, or rhymed lines (FORM/STRUCTURE) **Dramatic monologue** to conversation poem

2. The **second structure of assertion and qualification** is built upon the 'if' clause commencing 'Nor perchance If I were not thus taught' that moves us to the present (tense) rather the past influence of memory making claims on the moral effectiveness of memory that has included the 'sad, still music of humanity' preceding it and the disturbing presence ('motion' or 'spirit') that hastens joy. It is Dorothy, his 'dear friend' that establishes the specific relationship that prevents his 'genial spirits to decay.' [This annotation references the previous stanza]

Twofold gift of nature — "beauty" and *sublimity* ("lofty thoughts"), and what these gifts protect us from. What was a general "din" and loneliness in cities, or a "fretful stir" and "fever of the world", or perhaps the "still, sad music of humanity", is now specified as selfishness and unkindness in speech.

We might have expected something worse, acts of violence or oppression, perhaps, but it is the routine experience of the city (the "world") that is uppermost in his fears, almost "daily life" itself, which threaten to wear us down, or drag us down, from our inner citadel. And this daily life manifests itself in debased uses of language, which it is the calling of poets, of course, to combat. (VISIONARY POET/ROMANTIC NOTION)

Just as he has changed in five years, he knows Dorothy will change too, as he reveals in what sounds like his last wish: "Oh! yet a little while!" is somewhat desperate note surfaces more quietly throughout the final section, and casts a somber light on both sister and brother, and on all humanity, as if it is ineluctably fated that we must all lose our genial spirits and shed our wild pleasures. Yet Nature still has power to redeem:

Desire for an enduring sense of family, a natural bond of belonging can be found in the address to Dorothy, and in that context the emphasis is not on any authorial projection but on the vital importance of the shared experience of two subjects. The sure knowledge that "we stood together" transcends death and the individual questions of identity. If that togetherness is to transcend the individual, Dorothy cannot just be a projection or a younger version of the speaker; she needs to be a thinking subject who can recognize the speaker and who is capable of thought ("wild eyes that gleam of past existence")

Single sentence, but a notable fluidity and variety of grammar: four lines are **enjambéd**, and six are **end stopped**, four **caesurae** that prevents the blank verse from falling into repetitive grammatical rhythmic patterns

Original epithets and metaphors for general aspects of nature where the 'dwelling is the light of setting suns' makes a striking movement from relatively, ordinary, nearly concrete world to an abstract and impossible conception. **Odd adjectives**. 'round ocean' 'living air' — new ways of thinking about the elements. In contrast to the superficial unity of the picturesque, the **repeating conjunctions** ('And the round ocean and the living air') as a means of fusing mind and nature in a living whole to make the 'sense sublime' that 'rolls through all things' — a pantheistic life-force.

Personification of nature as a separative active entity, potentially with godlike characteristics, the object of love and worship (PANTHEISM). **Literary device** that stretches language to express the feelings and ideas that justify this personification. Personification is based on the senses 'Of ear and ear, both what they half create and half perceive' The world is possessed by the 'ear and 'ear'; things can only exist in the activity of perception, in inter-relationships with humans who can see and hear them.

If nature and the language of the sense had not been his nurse and guide, he might still preserve his "genial spirits" because he can recapture them in his sister's voice and eyes. Because she is now what he was once, she can stand in for nature, almost as the spirit of this very place, the genius loci, at least to him. Her "wild" eyes are attuned to the "wild secluded scene" and the "sportive wood run wild" of the opening; he will return to her "wild eyes" and to her "wild ecstasies"

A more **religious vocabulary** begins indeed to enter the poem at this point: a prayer is announced, Nature instils a "faith," all is "full of blessings." In fact, "Nature" is **capitalized** for the first time and personified. In its three previous appearances it was neutral, unmetaphorical, abstract; now she steps forward as a goddess who will not betray her disciples but lead them from joy to joy, while informing, impressing, and feeding their mind

This last section combines elements of both the **sublime ode** and of the **conversation poems**.

3. A third 'if' clause begins from 'If I should be where I no more can hear thy voice' that is future-looking and hortatory (quality of claiming to exhort or urge an action that is the act of remembering or using memory as a 'dwelling-place' to revisit time spent together)

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came
 Unwearied in that service: rather say
 With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

At the end, Wordsworth seems to suggest the infinite superiority of shared experience over the individual, isolated one (memory) with the use of address, or apostrophe – a formal characteristic of the ode – note the ‘transitions’ in Tintern Abbey that are abrupt, sharp and dialectical in force due to the Pindaric ode structure. The structure of the **Pindaric ode** (characterized by lofty theme, elegant diction and versification, and alternating structure of turn (strophe) and counterturn (antistrophe), typically in praise of a person, place, or thing) enhances the scope of his argument by incorporating all previous reverberations of the poem into the next section. [STRUCTURE] This culminates in Dorothy where the importance of ‘Tintern Abbey’ lies less in achieving resolution than the sharing of a vision and experience.

Almost **elegiac ending**, as if he is about to die and is bequeathing his dearest gift to his dearest friend, helps explain the long and awkward title with its date and groping attempt to locate the spot. To make sure she does not “forget / That on the banks of this delightful stream / We stood together” he makes an entry as if into her own journal, where time and place must be recorded.

Cyclicity from the beginning of the poem: “these steep woods and lofty cliffs” echoing “these steep and lofty cliffs” and “this green pastoral landscape” restating “these pastoral farms / Green to the very door” – this recapitulation is in a minor key, a sadder tone, as the landscape is made dearer for the presence of his sister.

I like the following reading that Wordsworth’s assertion of ‘abundant recompense’ becomes more desperate, beggarly (potentially suggested by the **exclamative** ‘oh!’) and his unarticulated prayer to Dorothy, almost saying “Do not forget, or the life in me, the creative joy, will die.”

STRUCTURE

The poem is written in tightly structured **decasyllabic blank verse** and comprises verse paragraphs rather than stanzas. Categorising the poem is difficult, as it contains some elements of the **ode** and of the **dramatic monologue**. In the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth noted:

"I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification, would be found the principle requisites of that species of composition."

The **apostrophe** at its beginning is reminiscent of the 18th century **landscape-poem**, but it is now agreed that the best designation of the work would be the **conversation poem**, which is an organic development of the loco-descriptive. The silent listener in this case is Wordsworth's sister Dorothy, who is addressed in the poem's final section. Transcending the nature poetry written before that date, it employs a much more intellectual and philosophical engagement with the subject that verges on pantheism.

The poem uses blank verse, of **unrhymed iambic pentameter** that has several effects:

- Suggestive of Wordsworth’s poetic radicalism at the time where strict adherence to meter was historically the norm, the fluidity and freedom of blank verse in Tintern Abbey was revolutionary.
- By discarding the element of rhyme, the poem can better mimic the fluctuations of ordinary human speech, making it sound more conversational (as he speaks to Dorothy at the end) and almost in direct address to the reader.
- Use of iambic pentameter lifts it out of a colloquial mode into the realm of the **lyric**, associated with musicality, aligning the poem with classical tradition of tightly structured, metrical poetry giving a sense of symmetry and grandeur – correlating to the unity of the sublime
- Iambic rhythm gives a rising rhythm from the movements of the foot from an unstressed syllable to an emphasised, stressed syllable enacting a sense of hopeful progression, even against the continual trajectory of time in a cycle of life and death – ‘abundant recompense’ of aging in increased awareness and appreciation for beauty