Wordsworth a Poet of Nature

By Mystic Footstaker.
In the "Prelude" Wordsworth gives the story of his life, or growth of the poet. It is an autobiographical poem written by himself. It was begun in the year 1799 and finished in 1805.

The reason that we study the Prelude is because no other production gives us so deep and sustained a view of his feelings about nature, and of the relation which he believed to exist between nature and the soul of man.

In his mental history two periods are especially prominent: first, his school time at Hawkeshead, Esthwaite Water, eight years in all. This was the springtime of his soul, a fair springtime in which all the young impulses and intuitions were first awakened, when the
colors were laid in, and deeply engrained into every fiber of his being.

The time spent by Wordsworth at Esthwaite Lake was blameless, pure, and happy, there it was that Nature first "Reflected his mind with some sublimer and fairer" yet happy and carefree while in the game; strange feelings of Nature came to him, and at times, when in lonely places, and alone he felt from within "Swoons like the flashing of a shield to battle, and commixture of Nature spoke to him."

The "Prelude" contained nothing more instructive or beautiful, than the whole account of Wordsworth's school time, it portrays the wonderful boyhood of a wonderful boy, though not realized at that time by his friends or himself.

Gradually drew before school time...
was passed, Nature had come to have a meaning, and an attraction for him, by himself. Further he says that while for him, at that time, each individual rock, tree, and flower, had an interest of its own, he came, deeply to feel the great-living whole which Nature is; all his thoughts he says were stilled in feeling.

While at school he wrote some tasks verses on subjects inspired by the Mather, and also some voluntaries of his own. "From the Conclusion of a Poem, composed in Anticipation of Leaving School":

"A lingering light he fondly threw,  
On the dear hills where first he saw."

And another, a few lines mitten in very early sprit. Where Nature is chief theme.
"Calm is all nature as a resting wheel; it is a picture of twilight on the farm.

During his last school year, 1787, he wrote "An Evening Walk," addressed to a young lady, in which he gave a general sketch of the lake, and how the face of Nature appears when the sun declines; he described a sunset, twilight sounds, evening lights, night, moonlight, and Nature in general.

Underneath it seems more of his mind as early as his fourteenth year, to become a poet. During his later school years, he tells us that he would walk alone, under the stars, and

"Feel what the time is of forens incant
To breathe an elevated mood, by storm
Or sunshine improved; and I would stand
Beneath some tree, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth
Or make their climes abode in distant
Thence did I drink the virgin poets.

Wordsworth learned through communing
with Nature; even in boyhood, a true
and natural religion—and bird felt
his soul come into contact with
him, who is at once author and
upholder of man, and of Nature,
but in his earlier school days he
felt this power of Nature more than
he seemed to realize it.

In the year 1787 at the age of
eighteen Wordsworth went to Cambridge
to College. Here he remained three
years from 1787-91, and while
here his social nature was developed.
The order of his nature had been
this, in early boyhood animal activity
and trivial pleasures had engraspedhim
in due time these had retired, and
before school time was one. Nature stood
out preeminently, almost alone in his affective. And now see him
in the glory of his youth.

he gave a moral life to everything
rock, tree, stream, saw them feel, and linked
them to some feeling.

"The great mass lay redded in
a glistening snow, and that I beheld, impressed with inward
meaning.

Wandering seemed to forget Nature
during the first few years of his college
life. Knew so engaged with college life and "such was the tenor of this record
act in this new life." Imagination
plast, and yet not utterly,
While here at college he made
Descriptive Sketches, though they were not
printed until 1793, these sketches were taken during a tour among the Alps in which he described scenes of the mountains, and it is the only writing we have of his written at that time.

Later on in his college life he became interested in man, and shepherd life, and the “Prelude” says, “And sure it is, that this first transit from the smooth delight, and mild
outlandish walks of gentle youth to something that resembled an approach towards human business, to a privileged wild within a world,”

It seems that the shepherd trained illustrated Nature’s book of rudiments. That book upheld as with natural care when she would enter in her tender scheme of teaching comprehension with delight, and midgling playful
with patriotic thoughts. Though Wordsworth wrote several "Pastorals," they were not
written, until long after his college
days were over.

In 1791 Wordsworth took his degree
of B.A. and left Cambridge, during the
summer of that year. Wordsworth went
to France. He was then about twenty-
two years of age, and up to this
time man had been a quite subordinate
object. What Cambridge began, residence
in France had projected.

In France he heard the speeches
that were made in the Hall of the
National Assembly, he wandered about
the City viewing the ruins of war.
Here his interest in man for his
own sake, and in all the great-
problem, practical, and speculative,
connected with man, the problem of
life had been quickened into fierce intensity by the Revolution. The higher
hopes which that event awoke in
him, as in many another enthusiastic
the dreams that a new era was about
to dawn on downtrodden man, these
things are an oft-told tale. Fortunately
for Wordsworth and the world he had
recalled from France in 1792.

In 1793 he published an "Apology for
the French Revolution", in which he
railed against all the most cherished
institutions of England. Wordsworth had
embraced to the core with the contagion
of the time, and he began to meditate
feelingly on man, his suffering, his
aspirations, his artificial restraints, and
his destiny. He became so engrossed
in political matters, and was so
disappointed at the final ending of
mature that he fell into distrust, not only of Nature, but of himself, and with out with endless perplexities, he doubted all moral birth, and gave it up in despair.

With his hope for man, and his faith in man's destiny, the poetic vision of Nature which had hitherto been with him, disappeared, and his immediate converse with him, also through Nature spoke to him now for a time eclipsed.

This was the lowest depth to which he ever sank, the climax of what he himself calls 'his degradation'.

But as his faith in man, and his love of Nature, had suffered shipwreck together it was by the same influence they were restored, and the first thing to arouse him was the influence of
human affection, which came to him through the presence of his sister, she said that his true vocation was to be a poet, he was not only rested but his heart was opened to influences hereafter disregarded.

He opened his eyes to perceive in Nature a minute loneliness formally unnoticed, his heart to feel sympathy for human things hitherto unmeasured for.

The "Prelude" showed that all Wordsworth's assumptions, feelings towards Nature were mere fantastic dreams, but based on reality, on a most assured and reasonable philosophy.

Wordsworth held that it was only through the soul that the outer world is rightly apprehended — only when it is contemplated through the human emotions of admiration,
awe, and love, the light that divine
through life.