



A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal



This poem is about the death of a loved one. How does the poet feel when he thinks about her death? How does he imagine her to be, after death?

A slumber did my spirit seal—
I had no human fears.
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.
No motion has she now, no force—
She neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

GLOSSARY

diurnal: daily ("Earth's diurnal course" is earth's daily rotation on its axis.)



Thinking about the Poem

1. "A slumber did my spirit seal," says the poet. That is, a deep sleep 'closed off' his soul (or mind). How does the poet react to his loved one's death? Does he feel bitter grief? Or does he feel a great peace?
2. The passing of time will no longer affect her, says the poet. Which lines of the poem say this?
3. How does the poet imagine her to be, after death? Does he think of her as a person living in a very happy state (a 'heaven')? Or does he see her now as a part of nature? In which lines of the poem do you find your answer?

Fear No More

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Theresa Kane says that she likes this poem ... *because it is so exhilarating. It sweeps me along in the splendid, stormy words, then there is the quiet, peaceful lagoon of the last two lines of each verse. It is a wonderful poem, as hard, proud and fierce as a rock in a storm.*

[from *I Like This Poem*, ed. Kaye Webb,
1979, (International Year of the Child),
Puffin Books, p. 154, 14-year-olds]