

(1)

[description of skiddaw & lake derwent (draft, 1829)]

description of skiddaw & lake derwent

Skiddaw upon thy heights the sun shines bright
but only for a moment then gives place
Unto a playful cloud which on thy brow
Sports wantonly then floats away in air
throwing its shadow on thy towering height
And darkens for a moment thy green side
But adds unto its beauty as it makes
the sun more bright when it again appears

~~Now hear my boyish moral~~

Then in the morning on thy brow those clouds
Rest as upon a couch and give fair ~~res~~ scope
For fancys play. And airy fortresses
and towers battlements and all appear.
chasing the other off and in their turn
are chased by the others. But enough
Ive treated of the clouds. now skiddaw come
noble and beutious clothed with green
and yet but scantily and in some parts
a bare terrific cliff precipitous
descends with only here & there a root
stragglng as from the cliff grow with stone for earth
and bare and scraggy as befits the cliff

Play

~~arretez Oh arretez~~

Skiddaw majestic ~~skiddaw~~ giant natures work
~~lower~~ Far less than alps or andes ~~pyrenees~~ all much higher but
those

those giant works of art with thee compared
sink into nothing. all that art can do
is nothing beside thee The touch of man
raised pigmy mountains but gigantic tombs
the touch of nature raised mountains brow
But made no tombs at all save where the snow
the fleecy locks of winter falls around
and forms a ~~te~~ white tomb for ~~a~~ the careless swain
Who wanders far from home and meets his death
amidst the cold of winter but no more ~~on~~
on this sad subject on this happy day

Now derwent water come a looking glass
wherein reflected are the mountains heights
A straggler pushes forth its branches stiff
all

as in a mirror framed in rocks and woods
a seeming mount
a seeming tree a
seeming rivulet

~~which falls and yet does not fall on thee~~
all upon thee are painted by a hand
which not a critic can well criticise
but to disturb thee oft bluff eolus
Descends upon the mountains with his breath
thy polished surface is a boy at play
who labours at the snow to make a man
and when he's made it he knocks it down again
So when thou'st made a picture thou dost play
to tearing it to pieces trees do first
tremble as if a monstrous heart of oak
Were but an aspen leaf and then as if
it were a cobweb in the tempests blow
Thus like penelope thou weavst a ~~loom~~ web,
and then thou dost undo it thourt like her
because thourt fair and oft deceiving too
~~first seeming~~ to be calm then turning rough
~~and now penelope all good bye~~
~~my muse I need no farther use of thee~~
and thus deceiving as penelope

conclusion

sweet derwent on thy winding shore
besides they mountain forests hoar
there would I like to wander still
and drink from out the rippling rill
Which from thy ~~highest~~ head mountain doth fall
And mingles with the eagles call
While on helvellyn thunder roars
reechoed from old derwents shores
and where the lightning flashes still
reflected in the mountain rill

(2)

[first published version, divided into two poems, "On Skiddaw and Derwent-Water" and "Lines Written at the Lakes in Cumberland," publ. respectively 1829 and 1830]

ON SKIDDAW AND DERWENT-WATER

SKIDDAW! upon thy cliffs the sun shines bright;
Yet only for a moment; then gives place
Unto a playful cloud, which on thy brow
Sports wantonly, soon melting into air;
But shadowing first thy side of broken green,
And making more intense the sun's return.
Then, in the morning, on thy head, those clouds
Rest, as upon a couch, and give fair scope
To fancy's play: and airy fortresses,
Towers, banners, spears, and battlements appear,
Chasing each other off; and in their turn
Are vanquished too, dissolving like the mould

That's trampled by the foot of urchin boy;
 And, rolling down, though once so firmly bound
 By roots tenacious, while the upward spoiler
 Climbs on to invade the hidden eagle's nest.
 SKIDDAW! majestic, giant-nature's work,
 Though less than Andes, or the Alpine heights,
 Yet pyramids to thee are nothing, they at best
 Are but gigantic tombs,--the work of art.
 Proud nature makes no tombs, save where the snow
 The fleecy locks of winter fall around,
 A mausoleum for the careless swain;
 Or where the ocean swallows navies down,
 Or yawning earthquake covers cities vast,
 Shroudless, engulfed, without a knell or tear;
 Or where another Herculaneum falls;
 Or the great day of fire the general grave.
 These are the tombs she makes, and buries all
 Beneath them, but the soul; that, . . . scorns the dust.
 Now DERWENT-WATER come, a looking glass
 Wherein reflected are the mountains heights;
 For thou'rt a mirror framed in rocks and woods.
 Upon thee, seeming mounts arise, and trees,
 And seeming rivulets, that charm the eye;
 All on thee painted by a master hand,
 Which not a critic can well criticise.
 But to disturb thee oft bluff Eolus
 Descends upon thy heath-top with his breath;
 Thy polished surface is a boy at play,
 Who labours at the snow to make a man,
 And when he's made, he strikes it into ruin.
 So when thou'st made a picture, thou dost play
 At tearing it to pieces. Trees do first
 Tremble as if a monstrous heart of oak
 Were but an aspen leaf, and then, as if
 It were a cobweb in the tempest.
 Thus like Penelope thou weav'st a web,
 And then thou dost undo it; thou'rt like her
 Because thou'rt fair and full of labour too.

LINES WRITTEN AT THE LAKES IN CUMBERLAND.

Derwentwater.

Sweet DERWENT! on thy winding shore,
 Besides thy mountain forests hoar,
 There would I love to wander still;
 And drink from out the rippling rill,
 Which from thy rocky head doth fall,
 And mingles with the eagle's call;
 While from Helvellyn thunders break,
 Re-echoed from Old Derwent's lake.
 And where the lightning's flaming dart,
 Plays o'er the Poet's eye, and warms his heart:

Though such thy glories Earth, thy proudest whole,
Can never satiate the grasping soul!

(3)

[published version (1903)]

ON SKIDDAW AND DERWENT WATER

SKIDDAW! upon thy cliffs the sun shines bright;
Yet only for a moment: then gives place
Unto a playful cloud, which on thy brow
Sports wantonly, soon melting into air;
But shadowing first thy side of broken green,
And making more intense the sun's return,
Then, in the morning, on thy head those clouds
Rest, as upon a couch, and give fair scope
To fancy's play; and airy fortresses,
Towers, banners, spears and battlements appear
Chasing the others off; and in their turn
Are vanquished too, dissolving like the mould
That's trampled by the foot of urchin boy;
And, rolling down, though once so firmly bound
By roots tenacious, while the upward spoiler
Climbs on to invade the hidden eagle's nest.
Skiddaw! majestic, a giant-nature's work,
Though less than Andes, or the Alpine heights,
Yet pyramids to thee are nothing, they at best
Are but gigantic tombs,--the work of art.
Proud nature makes no tombs, save where the snow--
The fleecy locks of winter fall around,
A mausoleum for the careless swain;
Or where the ocean swallows navies down,
Or yawning earthquake covers cities vast,
Shroudless engulfed, without a knell or tear;
Or where another Herculaneum falls;
Or the great day of fire the general grave.
These are the tombs she makes, and buries all
Beneath them, but the soul; that, . . . scorns the dust.

Now Derwent Water come!--a looking-glass
Wherein reflected are the mountain's heights;
For thou'rt a mirror, framed in rocks and woods.
Upon thee, seeming mounts arise, and trees
And seeming rivulets, that charm the eye;
All on thee painted by a master hand,
Which not a critic can well criticise.
But to disturb thee oft, bluff Eolus
Descends upon thy heath-top with his breath;
Thy polished surface is a boy at play,
Who labours at the snow to make a man,
And when he's made it, he strikes it into ruin.
So when thou'st made a picture, thou dost play

At tearing it to pieces. Trees do first
Tremble, as if a monstrous heart of oak
Were but an aspen leaf, and then as if
It were a cobweb in the tempest.
Thus like Penelope thou weav'st a web,
And then thou dost undo it; thou'rt like her
Because thou'rt fair and full of labour too.

[MS V, begins tipped-in booklet, p. 10, opposite p. 144]

ON SKIDDAW AND DERWENT WATER

SKIDDAW upon thy heights the sun shines
bright

But only for a moment then gives place
Unto a playful cloud which on thy brow
Sports wantonly then floats away in air
[tipped-in p. 11, opposite p. 145, no extra space]
Throwing its shadow on thy towering height
And darkening for a moment thy green side [ride?]
But adds unto its beauty as it makes
The sun more bright when it again appears.
Then in the morning on thy brow those
clouds

Rest as upon a couch and give fair scope
For fancys play and airy fortresses
And towers battlements and all appear
Chasing each other off and in their turn
Are chased by the others. But enough
I've treated of the clouds Now Skiddaw come
Noble and grand and beauteous clothed with
green

And yet but scantily. And in some parts
A bare terrific cliff precipitate
Descends with only here and there a bush
A straggler with its roots fixed in the stone
And bare a scraggy as befits the soil.
Skiddaw majestic giant natures work

Lower than Alps or Andes. Pyrenees
Are all much higher But those works of art
Those giant works of art with thee compared

[@*@ above Aart@ referring to footnote: A* The Pyramids@]
Sink into nothing. All that art can do
Is nothing beside thee. The touch of man
[tipped-in p. 12, opposite p. 145]
Raised pigmy mountains but gigantic tombs
The touch of nature raised the mountains brow
But made no tombs at all save where the snow

The fleecy locks of winter fall around
And form a frail memorial for the sain
Who wanders far from home and meets his
death

Amidst the cold of Winter. But no more
On this sad subject on this happy day
Now Derwent Water come A looking glass
Wherein reflected are the mountains height
As in a mirror framed in rocks and woods.
So upon thee there is a seeming mount
A seeming tree a seming rivulet
All upon thee are painted by a hand
Which not a critic can well criticise
But to disturb thee oft bluf Eolus
Descends upon the mountains With his
breath

Thy polished surface is a boy at play
Who labours at the snow to make a man
And when he=s made it knocks it down
again

So when thou=st made a picture thou dost
play

[tipped-in p. 13, opposite p. 147]
At tearing it to pieces Trees do first
Tremble as if a monstrous heart of Oak
Were but an aspen leaf and then as if
It were a cobweb in the tempests blow
Thus like Penelope thou weavst a web
And then thou dost undo it. Thou=rt like her
Because thourt fair and oft deceiving too
Sweet Derwent on thy winding shore
Beside thy mountain forests hoar
There would I like to wander still
And drink from out the rippling rill
Which from thy mountain head doth fall
And mingles with the eagles call
While on Helvellyn thunder roars
Re-echoed by all Derwents shores
And where the lightning flashes still
Reflected in the mountain rill.

FINIS