



She dwelt among the untrodden ways

William Wordsworth
The Lucy Poems
 (1798-1801)

Wordsworth wrote a series of five poems called The Lucy Poems between 1798 and 1801 while he was in Germany with his sister Dorothy. They all deal with the celebration of the dead girl involving the theme of the loss of a loved one and the meeting with her in nature. It is not clear who Lucy was and there has been much speculation on the subject; Coleridge himself commented that his friend could have imagined the moment in which his sister might die.

She **dwelt** among the **untrodden** ways
 Beside the springs of Dove¹,
 A **Maid** whom there were none to **praise**
 And very few to love:

5 A violet by a mossy² 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!

1 the springs of Dove. Le fonti del Dove, fiume nelle Midlands.

2 mossy. Coperta di muschio.

READING COMPETENCE

1 READ the poem and match the highlighted words with their definitions.

- 1 died
- 2 beautiful
- 3 express admiration
- 4 tomb
- 5 not walked on
- 6 girl
- 7 lived

2 READ the poem again and do the following activities.

1 Write the words that say who 'She' in line 1 is.

- 1
- 2

2 Where and how did she live?

3 Where is she now?

4 How does the poet feel?

- A Indifferent.
- B Relieved.
- C Sad.



- 5 Decide what the rhyme scheme is. Is it regular?
- A ABAB CDCD EFEF.
B AABB CCDD EEFF.
C ABCB CDED EFGF.
- 6 Describe the layout.
- 7 What does the term 'ways' in line 1 actually mean?
- A Ways of life.
B Modes.
C Roads, well-known paths.
- 8 What connotation does the word 'untrodden' add to its meaning?
- A Busy.
B Simple, innocent.
C Unwanted.
- 9 What do the two words taken metaphorically imply about the kind of life led by Lucy?
- 10 Lines 3-4 suggest that
- A everybody liked Lucy.
B Lucy was nobody to anyone except the poet.
C Lucy did not like the poet.
- 11 Line 6 contains
- A assonance.
B onomatopoeia.
C alliteration.
- 12 In the second stanza the poet compares Lucy to
- 1
2
- 13 Does the poem end with a consoling note? Have Lucy's innocence and closeness to nature preserved her from death? Does the poem suggest that she will join God?
- 14 Complete the text with the words from the box.

praises	country	personality	object	emotions
series	straightforward	admired	perspective	unspoilt



The poem, with its short lyric form, is a typical example of Romantic poetry. It celebrates a girl (1) by the poet by associating her with the beauties of (2) nature. Its language is simple and (3) There is emphasis on the personal (4) of the speaker, together with interest in simple (5) life. The poem does not contain references to classical mythology but places Lucy in a universal (6)

This poem is part of a (7) of poems by Wordsworth where 'Lucy' represents a 'type' of character rather than an individual with a (8) of her own. She has more importance as the (9) of the poet's feelings than as a person in her own right. The poem, as the final stanza shows, is indeed as much about the speaker as it is about the young woman he (10)