

1805

"I only look'd for pain and grief"

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Recommended Citation

Wordsworth, William and Matlak, Richard, ""I only look'd for pain and grief"" (1805). *Texts relating to the Earl of Abergavenny (ship)*. 6. http://crossworks.holycross.edu/aber_doc/6

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“I only look’d for pain and grief”

I only look’d for pain and grief
And trembled as I drew more near;
But God’s unbounded love is here,
And I have found relief.
The precious Spot is all my own, 5
Save only that this Plant unknown.
A little one and lowly sweet,
Not surely now without Heaven’s grace,
First seen, and seen, too, in this place,
Is flowering at my feet. 10

The Shepherd Boy hath disappear’d;
The Buzzard, too, hath soar’d away;
And undisturb’d I now may pay
My debt to what I fear’d. 15
Sad register! but this is sure:
Peace built on suffering will endure.
But such the peace that will be ours,
Though many suns, alas! must shine
Ere tears shall cease from me and mine
To fall in bitter show’rs. 20

The Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
Thereafter, having felt the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:
Lord of the air, he took his flight; 25
Oh could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear!
For one poor moment’s space to Thee—
And all who struggle with the Sea
When safety is so near. 30

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I said (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power 35
That meets me in this unknown Flower,
Affecting type of Him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn. 40

Here did we stop, and here look'd round
 While each into himself descends
 For that last thought of parting Friends
 That is not to be found.
 Our Grasmere vale was out of sight, 45
 Our home and his, his heart's delight,
 His quiet heart's delicious home.
 But time before him melts away,
 And he hath feeling of a day
 Of blessedness to come. 50

Here did we part, and halted here
 With One he lov'd, I saw him bound
 Downwards along the rocky ground
 As if with eager cheer.
 A lovely sight as on he went, 55
 For he was bold and innocent,
 Had liv'd a life of self-command.
 Heaven, did it seem to me and her,¹
 Had laid on such a Mariner
 A consecrating hand. 60

And therefore also do we weep,
 To find that such a faith was dust,
 With sorrow, but for higher trust,
 How miserably deep!
 All vanish'd, in a single word, 65
 A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
 Sea, Ship, drown'd, shipwreck—so it came,
 The meek, the brave, the good was gone;
 He who had been our living John
 Was nothing but a name. 70

That was indeed a parting! oh,
 Glad am I, glad that it is past;
 For there were some on whom it cast
 Unutterable woe.
 But they as well as I have gains, 75
 The worthiest and the best; to pains
 Like these, there comes a mild release;
 Even here I feel it, even this Plant
 So peaceful is ministrant
 Of comfort and of peace. 80

¹ Dorothy Wordsworth.

He would have lov'd thy modest grace,
Meek flower! to Him I would have said,
"It grows upon its native bed
Beside our Parting-place;
Close to the ground like dew it lies 85
With multitude of purple eyes
Spangling a cushion green like moss;
But we will see it, joyful tide!
Some day to see it in its pride
The mountain we will cross." 90

Well, well, if ever verse of mine
Have power to make his merits known,
Then let a monumental Stone
Stand here—a sacred Shrine;
And to the few who come this way, 95
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure,
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure! 100