

# I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

by William Wordsworth  
1815 (revised version)

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
and twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
in such a \*jocund company:

I gazed - and gazed - but little thought  
what wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth's inspiration for this poem came from a walk he and his sister, Dorothy, took in 1802, around Glencoyne Bay, Ullswater, in England's Lake District. Dorothy described what they saw in her journal:

*When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow park we saw a few daffodils close to the water side, we fancied that the lake had floated the seed ashore & that the little colony had so sprung up -- But as we went along there were more & yet more & at last under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about & about them, some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness & the rest tossed and reeled and danced & seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the Lake, they looked so gay ever dancing ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here & there a little knot & a few stragglers a few yards higher up but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity & unity & life of that one busy highway -- We rested again & again. The Bays were stormy & we heard the waves at different distances & in the middle of the water like the Sea.*

—Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere Journal* Thursday, 15 April 1802

\*The word "laughing" used in the original 1804 version is substituted for "jocund" in this setting of the text.