

## Excerpt from William Wordsworth - The Prelude (1805)

Each little drop of wisdom as it falls  
Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:  
For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,  
Pity the tree.—Poor human vanity,  
Wert thou extinguished, little would be left  
Which he could truly love; but how escape?  
For, ever as a thought of purer birth  
Rises to lead him toward a better clime,  
Some intermeddler still is on the watch  
To drive him back, and pound him, like a stray,  
Within the pinfold of his own conceit.  
Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved to find  
The playthings, which her love designed for him,  
Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers  
Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.  
Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap  
Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat  
Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,  
And Sabra in the forest with St. George!  
The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap  
One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age,  
Who, with a broad highway, have overbridged  
The froward chaos of futurity,  
Tamed to their bidding; they who have the skill  
To manage books, and things, and make them act  
On infant minds as surely as the sun  
Deals with a flower; the keepers of our time,  
The guides and wardens of our faculties,  
Sages who in their prescience would control  
All accidents, and to the very road  
Which they have fashioned would confine us down,  
Like engines; when will their presumption learn,  
That in the unreasoning progress of the world  
A wiser spirit is at work for us,  
A better eye than theirs, most prodigal  
Of blessings, and most studious of our good,

Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?