

‘Strange fits of passion have I known’

Strange fits of passion I have known,
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved, was strong and gay
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea; 10
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

1st stanza - I have had strange fits of passion that I would only describe them in my lover's ear, what once happened to me.

The opening line of the poem suggests that Wordsworth has a crazy idea of his lover being dead that his mind has adjust too. Wordsworth has been a victim of his strange fits of passion and he will only describe them in his lover's ear alone. Here Wordsworth is overcome and defeated by passionate fits of thought and realizing of how horrifying it would be if she, his lover, were dead. The “strange fits”, something eccentric or unjustified, which Wordsworth is relating to is the terrible and frightening thought of his lover dying. Here we can see that Wordsworth is portraying his transcending human fears and he is relating to his own fears against immortality.

2nd stanza- When the girl I loved was strong and happy, “like a rose in June” (an image of beauty), I would go to her cottage under the evening moon.

He describe his lover as “as a rose in June”, an image of beauty. The rose traditionally represents love. He describes that love and passion is beautiful but yet terrifying in a sense, which is essentially his feelings towards the sublime. The moon upon which he sets his eyes on is a conventional symbol for a female, an image of beauty which is described in such a way that we think of his lover. It is an evening moon representing portraying a romantic image.

3rd stanza - I set my eye on the moon as I travelled through the meadow (lea); my horse walked on heavily, and we drew near to those precious paths which takes me to my lover.

As he takes the paths so dear to him Wordsworth is not only taking the path because he takes pleasure of the landscape, but it's a path which takes him to his lover. Additionally in the 3rd stanza Wordsworth explores ideas and thoughts about the intensity of passion humans can feel for each other and how these feelings are affected by nature and the world surrounding them. He shows this by expressing things around him such as the moon, the hills and the cottage, which contributes to the thoughts and passion to slide into his head. At the same time Wordsworth heightens unfamiliarity of the strange fits of passion. Wordsworth explores fear and morbid fantasy, the horror of death, of his lover place in the mortal world and the

significance of her death.

4th stanza – As we reached the orchard plot (copse or small wood area) and as we climbed over the hill, towards the roof of Lucy's cottage, the moon which we had followed slowly disappeared.

The hill that he climbs to get to her cottage can be seen as a reflection of his feelings for her creating a sense of anticipation, and perhaps elevating her metaphorically as well as literally in our eyes. As he is riding his horse towards the cottage the moon which he has followed on his way to Lucy's cottage has now descended. This can be seen as a trick in forms of perspective, called a parallax, as the sinking or disappearance of the moon, where darkness remains and loneliness arises, makes him wonder about the possibility of Lucy's own death, and in that sense disappeared as well.

**In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eye I kept
On the descending moon.**

5th stanza – Then the poet realizes that it is just a dream and points out that a dream is "nature's gentlest boon" or in other words the closest we can come to real innocence. But the poet never takes his eyes off the prize of innocence represented by the moon.

**6th stanza – My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.**

In the beginning of the 6th stanza, Wordsworth turns the focus on to the galloping speed of his horse. He mentions with great haste the fact that the horse is moving **"hoof after hoof"** thus providing us with the vision of the speaker's horse galloping with an increased rate of speed, and he would not let the horse take a break.

The information Wordsworth is giving us through half of the 6th stanza, does not only give us the vision of the horse speeding, but the purpose behind it's sudden increase of speed, it is as if Wordsworth has throughout the poem been racing against time, or against the moon, and the latter sentences in this stanza will strengthen this theory. In the second half of the stanza, Wordsworth brings up the point that the bright moon which until now has been visual, has now dropped behind the cottage of his **beloved one**. And he now fears the worst has happened.

**7th stanza – What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"**

In the last stanza of the poem, Wordsworth strengthens the readers understanding of what the speaker already fears. As the race between the lover on the horse's back and the moon was established with a victory for the moon, Wordsworth may have believed that he actually lost nature as a guide, and that this loss comes with a passage for Lucy into nature, as he in a flash saw the moon being dropped behind Lucy's cottage. The moon fell behind Lucy's cottage, and by that image

Wordsworth fears the worst as any lover would do, and the thoughts he imagines are horrible thus entering the first half of the 7th stanza where he questions himself, of what kind of horrible thought's one can imagine has happened your loved ones. It gives you the feeling that these thoughts are in contact with the sublime, they are horrific indeed, but you fear the worst for your loved ones as you care the most for them.

The speaker thereafter continues with the second half of the 7th stanza, by loudly stating the biggest fear he could imagine while crying: What if Lucy is dead?
Wordsworth then gives us a large applicable area to the sublime, the thoughts of fear to lose your loved ones.