

Star Gazers

(from *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807; reprinted here from William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill, Oxford, 1984.)

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a Barber's Pole, or Mast of little Boat,
Some little Pleasure-Skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Show-man chuses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
And he's as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient is the Crowd; each is ready with the fee,
And envies him that's looking—what an insight it must be!

Yet, Show-man, where can lie the cause? Shall thy implement have blame,
A Boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or mind? or, finally, is this resplendent Vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver Moon with all her Vales, and Hills of mightiest fame,
Do they betray us when they're seen? and are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had,
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have ris'n, and therefore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be—Men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after One they take their turns, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.