



Wordsworth, De Quincy and Dove cottage

Home at Grasmere

Simon Bainbridge

This is how William Wordsworth's poem *Home at Grasmere* begins.

Simon Bainbridge then voiceover

*Once on the brow of yonder Hill I stopped,
While I was yet a School-boy (of what age
I cannot well remember, but the hour
I well remember though the year be gone),
And with a sudden influx overcome
At sight of this seclusion, I forgot
My haste – for hasty had my footsteps been,
As boyish my pursuits – [and sighing said],
'What happy fortune were it here to live!'*

Commentator

Before arriving at this final version, Wordsworth rewrote this poem many times. We know this from the manuscripts held in the archives at Dove Cottage.

Jeff Cowton

In front of me now is a manuscript of Wordsworth's poem *Home at Grasmere*. It's a poem that Wordsworth probably began in 1800, although no manuscripts survived from that time. But there are four manuscripts of the poem and this is one of the earliest ones. This one dates probably from 1806 and it's a fascinating visual document because it is written on top of Coleridge's poem in 1796 which is interleaved with blank pages and on which Wordsworth has sometimes written between the lines of the published page and then on the other side the interleaved pages which has, if you like, the next stage of the poem.

Simon Bainbridge then voiceover

*Nowhere else is found –
No where (or is it fancy?) can be found –
The one sensation that is here; 'tis here,
Here as it found its way into my heart
In childhood, here as it abides by day,*

*By night, here only; or in chosen minds
That take it with them hence, where'er they go.*

Jeff Cowton

You can tell it's written hurriedly. It's a working draft, he's trying out ideas and then on the page that follows he repeats these lines in a more finished version. Not finished by any means but the next stage of the process.

Voiceover then Simon Bainbridge

'tis the sense

*Of majesty and beauty and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual Spot,
This small abiding-place of many men,
A termination and a last retreat,
A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A Whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself and happy in itself,
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.*