

Blogging Assignment 1: Canon, Syllabus, and Archive

(Due by class time on 11/29; replaces weekly blog post)

Use one of the digital resources we have looked at to find a text that is not in the anthology or on the syllabus. You might choose a short poem, a short piece of prose, or an excerpt from a longer work. In your post, explain why the class should read it: what does it illuminate about our readings, or what does it make you realize we have ignored? On the next page I have included one example of what a page could look like, using a poem that *was* on the syllabus, but that we did not cover as thoroughly as we might have. In any event, your blog post should include:

1. Title and Author

2. Annotations (marginal glosses and/or footnotes)

- Note the two kinds of annotations I've included: you might consider a quick marginal gloss for simple one- or two-word definitions of unfamiliar terms.
- For longer explanations, descriptions of multiple meanings or connotations, or citing the OED or other sources, you might consider a footnote.
- You should include at least one or two notes, especially if your text includes vocabulary that you are not familiar with, or that you think others may not be familiar with.

3. Note on the Text, roughly on the model of the headnotes in the *Longman Anthology*.

- **Introduction**
 - Provide a brief introduction to the author and the text. Explain where the text appeared, or how it fits into the author's corpus.
- **Editorial Practice**
 - **Identify your "Copy Text":** On what source is this edition based? A manuscript you found in a digital archive? A first or early edition you found on ECCO, Google Books, Hathi Trust, etc? In any case, name both the original source (i.e. the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*—see reverse) and where you found it (i.e. citation info/hyperlink for *Lyrical Ballads: An Electronic Scholarly Edition*).
 - **State your editorial practice:** Explain if, where, and why you have departed from that copy text. Even minimalist editors, for instance, will often modernize elements like capitalization or comma use (though this is less common in editions of poetry than prose). Your editorial practice may be as simple as choosing to reproduce the text exactly as it appeared in your source text.
- **Conclusion/Importance**
 - Again like the Longman headnotes, end with some thoughts on what elements are of particular interest, or how a reader might approach the text while reading. For our purposes, why should this text join the others on our syllabus? What conversations will it help us continue, extend, or correct? How does it provide a different vantage point from the text we have read so far? (It might help to name specific texts, or specific class conversations.)

A technical note: Remember that WordPress allows you to format your text as bold, italicized, underlined, or superscript. It may be easiest in "visual mode," though those familiar with coding html documents might find more flexibility in "text mode." Either way, you will have to add footnotes manually, unlike the way you add them in your word processor.

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal
by William Wordsworth

A slumber did my spirit seal;¹
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal* course, *daily*
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

Notes:

¹ This phrase's negative connotation—being unable to see or understand something—comes from Paul's description of "a spirit of slumber" as having "eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear." See Romans 11:8

A Note on the Text:

Wordsworth composed the "Lucy" poems, a group to which "A slumber did my spirit seal" is usually considered to pertain (despite not mentioning Lucy by name), during the 1798 trip he made to Germany with Dorothy Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge. The poem was published in the expanded 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. The present text reproduces exactly that 1800 edition (London: Longman, 1800), accessed via Bruce Graver and Ron Tetreault's digital facsimile in *Lyrical Ballads: An Electronic Scholarly Edition* (<http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/LB/>). I suggest we read this poem because it might help take our discussion of "poetry and song" in new directions. It is in the ballad stanza, but it belongs to the genre of the "epitaph," which is a poem that frames itself as something to be engraved on a tombstone. We might think about how it plays out a familiar tension between orality/sound/oral culture and the physicality of written or printed literature: a theme which is, no less, echoed in the eerily material description of the (unnamed) deceased in the second stanza.