WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S BIOGRAPHY

William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 and he died on 23 April 1850. He was a major English Romantic poet who, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English literature with the 1798 joint publication Lyrical Ballads.

Wordsworth's magnum opus is generally considered to be The Prelude, a semiautobiographical poem of his early years which he revised and expanded a number of times. It was posthumously titled and published, prior to which it was generally known as the poem "to Coleridge." Wordsworth was Britain's Poet Laureate from 1843 until his death in 1850.

The second of five children born to John Wordsworth and Ann Cookson, William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 in Wordsworth House in Cockermouth, Cumberland part of the scenic region in northwest England, the Lake District. His sister, the poet and diarist Dorothy Wordsworth, to whom he was close all his life, was born the following year, and the two were baptized together. They had three other siblings: Richard, the eldest, who became a lawyer; John, born after Dorothy, who went to sea and died in 1805 when the ship of which he was Master, Earl of Abergavenny was wrecked off the south coast of England; and Christopher, the youngest, who entered the Church and rose to be Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Their father was a legal representative of James Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale and, through his connections, lived in a large
mansion in the small town. Wordsworth, as with his siblings, had little involvement with their father, and they would be distant with him until his death in 1783.

Wordsworth's father, although rarely present, did teach him poetry, including that of Milton, Shakespeare and Spenser, in addition to allowing his son to rely on his own father's library. Along with spending time reading in Cockermouth, Wordsworth would also stay at his mother's parents house in Penrith, Cumberland. At Penrith, Wordsworth was exposed to the moors. Wordsworth could not get along with his grandparents and his uncle, and his hostile interactions with them distressed him to the point of contemplating suicide.

After the death of their mother, in 1778, John Wordsworth sent William to Hawkshead Grammar School in Lancashire and Dorothy to live with relatives in Yorkshire; she and William would not meet again for another nine years. Although Hawkshead was Wordsworth's first serious experience with education, he had been taught to read by his mother and had attended a tiny school of low quality in Cockermouth. After the Cockermouth school, he was sent to a school in Penrith for the children of upper-class families and taught by Ann Birkett, a woman who insisted on instilling in her students traditions that included pursuing both scholarly and local activities, especially the festivals around Easter, May Day, and Shrove Tuesday. Wordsworth was taught both the Bible and the Spectator, but little else. It was at the school that Wordsworth was to meet the Hutchinsons, including Mary, who would be his future wife.
Wordsworth made his debut as a writer in 1787 when he published a sonnet in The European Magazine. That same year he began attending St John's College, Cambridge, and received his B.A. degree in 1791. He returned to Hawkshead for his first two summer holidays, and often spent later holidays on walking tours, visiting places famous for the beauty of their landscape. In 1790, he took a walking tour of Europe, during which he toured the Alps extensively, and visited, nearby areas of France, Switzerland, and Italy.

In November 1791, Wordsworth visited Revolutionary France and became enthralled with the Republican movement. He fell in love with a French woman, Annette Vallon, who in 1792 gave birth to their child, Caroline. Because of lack of money and Britain's tensions with France, he returned alone to England the next year. The circumstances of his return and his subsequent behaviour raise doubts as to his declared wish to marry Annette, but he supported her and his daughter as best he could in later life. In 1802, he visited Calais with his sister Dorothy and met Annette and his daughter Caroline. The purpose of the visit was to pave the way for his forthcoming marriage to Mary Hutchinson. Afterwards he wrote the poem "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," recalling his seaside walk with his daughter, whom he had not seen for ten years. At the conception of this poem, he had never seen his daughter before. The occurring lines reveal his deep love for both child and mother. The Reign of Terror estranged him from the Republican movement, and war between France and Britain prevented him from seeing Annette and Caroline again for several years. There are strong suggestions
that Wordsworth may have been depressed and emotionally unsettled in the mid-1790s.

With the Peace of Amiens again allowing travel to France, in 1802 Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, visited Annette and Caroline in France and arrived at a mutually agreeable settlement regarding Wordsworth's obligations.

In 1802, after Wordsworth's return from his trip to France with Dorothy to visit Annette and Caroline, Lowther's heir, William Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale, paid the £4,000 debt owed to Wordsworth's father incurred through Lowther's failure to pay his aide. Later that year, Wordsworth married a childhood friend, Mary Hutchinson. Dorothy continued to live with the couple and grew close to Mary. The following year, Mary gave birth to the first of five children, three of whom predeceased William and Mary: John Wordsworth (18 June 1803–1875).

Married four times: Isabella Curwen had six children: Jane, Henry, William, John, Charles and Edward. Helen Ross has no issue. Mary Ann Dolan had one daughter Dora. Mary Gamble has no issue.


William Wordsworth died by re-aggravating a case of pleurisy on 23 April 1850, and was buried at St. Oswald's church in Grasmere. His widow Mary published his lengthy autobiographical "poem to Coleridge" as The Prelude.
several months after his death. Though this failed to arouse great interest in 1850, it has since come to be recognized as his masterpiece.