

Floating Island

By Dorothy Wordsworth

Harmonious Powers with Nature work
On sky, earth, river, lake, and sea:
Sunshine and storm, whirlwind and breeze
All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth,
By throbbing waves long undermined,
Loosed from its hold; — *how* no one knew
But all might see it float, obedient to the wind.

Might see it, from the mossy shore
Dissevered float upon the Lake,
Float, with its crest of trees adorned
On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety there they find
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;
There insects live their lives — and die:
A peopled *world* it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons' space
This little Island may survive
But Nature, though we mark her not,
Will take away — may cease to give.

Perchance when you are wandering forth
Upon some vacant sunny day
Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thither your eyes may turn — the Isle is passed away.

Buried beneath the glittering Lake!
Its place no longer to be found,
Yet the lost fragments shall remain,
To fertilize some other ground.



Born in Cumberland, British Romantic poet and prose writer Dorothy Wordsworth was the third of

five children. She remained particularly close with her brother, the poet William Wordsworth, and the siblings lived together in Dorset and Alfoxden before William married her best friend, Mary Hutchinson, in 1802. Thereafter Dorothy Wordsworth made her home with the couple. An avid naturalist, Wordsworth enjoyed daily nature walks with her brother, and images from the notes she took of these walks often recur in her brother's poems. Most of her writing explores the natural world.

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