# The Solitary Reaper by [William Wordsworth](http://allpoetry.com/William_Wordsworth)

Behold her, single in the field,  
    Yon solitary Highland Lass!  
    Reaping and singing by herself;  
    Stop here, or gently pass!  
    Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
    And sings a melancholy strain;  
    O listen! for the Vale profound  
    Is overflowing with the sound.  
  
    No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
    More welcome notes to weary bands  
    Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
    Among Arabian sands:  
    A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
    In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,  
    Breaking the silence of the seas  
    Among the farthest Hebrides.  
  
    Will no one tell me what she sings?—  
    Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
    For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
    And battles long ago:  
    Or is it some more humble lay,  
    Familiar matter of to-day?  
    Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
    That has been, and may be again?  
  
    Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang  
    As if her song could have no ending;  
    I saw her singing at her work,  
    And o'er the sickle bending;—  
    I listened, motionless and still;  
    And, as I mounted up the hill,  
    The music in my heart I bore,  
    Long after it was heard no more.

'"The Solitary Reaper" is one of Wordsworth's most famous post-*Lyrical Ballads* lyrics. The words of the reaper's song are incomprehensible to the speaker, so his attention is free to focus on the tone, expressive beauty, and the blissful mood it creates in him. The poem functions to 'praise the beauty of music and its fluid expressive beauty, the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that Wordsworth identified at the heart of poetry.'