

# PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS

The Preface to Lyrical Ballads is considered the manifesto of Romanticism, where William Wordsworth explains what the new form of poetry should be like.

The text can be divided into four sections:

- **The content of poetry**
- **The language of poetry**
- **The identity of the poet**
- **The definition of poetry**



# **The content of poetry**

- **Poetry should deal with:  
situations from simple rustic life and this  
should be transfigured by imagination.**
- **The aim of poetry should be:  
to make the incidents of common life  
interesting.**
- **Romantics were interested in:  
the relation between the mind and the  
natural world.**



# **The language of poetry**

- **Poetry should use:  
familiar simple language - "The language  
really used by men"**
- **Poets should:  
fit the real language of men to metrical  
arrangement and take it from men in a vivid  
sensation**



# **The identity of the poet**

- **The poet is a man speaking to men**
- **The poet is more lively sensibly, with a greater knowledge of human nature, a more comprehensive soul**
- **The poet is better than ordinary men**
- **The poet is pleased with his own passions and wills**
- **The poet contemplates wills and passions in the Universe**



# The definition of poetry

- Wordsworth's definition of poetry is:  
*"the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"*.
- Poetry is originated from emotion recollected in tranquillity.
- The aim of poetry is pleasure.