SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways

Beside the springs of Dove,

A Maid whom there were none to praise

And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye!

--Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be;

But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me!

ANALYSIS

The title immediately draw the reader attention on two remote words: “dwelt” and “untrodden”. The intelligent reader make two hypothesis: first that the poem was written long time ago because the narrator use the simple past tense, second that the narrator wants to draw the attention on the language itself. The text seems to refer to a “she” this might mean that she may be an old woman, a young leady or an innocent child. The reader doesn’t know yet so he became curious. In addition, the word “untrodden” which is a composed word ( un-trodden ) tells the reader that the woman lives in a hidden places. The reader wants to know “why” she live or has choose to live in a unknown places. The textual analysis could unveil the reason why the poet wrote a poem about her.

Looking at the poem, the reader understands that it is a ballad because it has a simple structure. It consist in three stanzas and twelve quatrains. There are two lines longer than the others. They are about the woman. The reader can imagine that this two stanzas may contain the massage, the reason why the poet writes this poem. The narrator speaks the 3rd person.

The first quatrain has the function to give information about the “she” we find in the title. The narrator tells the reader where the woman lives. It is a vague place. Thanks to this vagueness the reader wants to know more about this place. The poem starts to became interesting and full of mystery. In the third line the narrator tells us that the woman is unmarried (“maid”). The word “maid” is a remote word which confirm the hypothesis that the poem may be written long time ago. In the following verse the narrator explain that the girl doesn’t have many relationship. So that information may be the result of the question “why she lives in the untrodden places?”. But the narrator doesn’t tell why.

The second stanza focus the reader attention on the lady. We can find two metaphor about the woman: with flowers (violet) to underlines her beauty and her grace, later with the Sun (the most shining star in the sky) to show that he is shining also in her isolated places. The metaphors are connected by the word “hidden” which recalls the unknown place where the girl lives. We can suppose that the woman had decided to live in her hidden and that the narrator may be a part of the “few man” of the fourth line.

The last stanzas the narrator reveals the name of the lady: she is Lucy. The past tense used in this lines tells the reader that the Lucy’s life might be over. It is confirm in the followed lines where the narrator tells that the lady is dead. In this quatrain the atmosphere is full of sadness. We can suppose that also the narrator is sad because we understand that he knows Lucy. He doesn’t why Lucy lived in an hidden places, if it was her choice or in which way she died.

in my opinion, the message the narrator wants to support is that not always the people who show are worth knowing, more people who live in unknown places are full of good qualities!