Stanzas Written in Dejection—
December 1818, near Naples

The Sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon’s transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight
The winds, the birds, the Ocean-floods,
The City’s voice itself is soft, like Solitude’s.

I see the Deep’s untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone, —
The lightning of the noontide Ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure:
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o’er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,  
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,  
Insults with this untimely moan;  
They might lament—for I am one  
Whom men love not, —and yet regret,  
Unlike this day, which, when the Sun  
Shall on its stainless glory set,  
Will linger though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.