

# Lucy Gray

## William Wordsworth

"Lucy Gray" is a poem written by William Wordsworth in 1799 and published in 1800 in his Lyrical Ballads. It describes the death of a young girl named Lucy Gray, who went out one evening into a storm to bring her mother back home.

### Stanza: 1

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:

And, when I crossed the wild,

I chanced to see at break of day

The solitary child.

This stanza provides the

setting and the

foreshadowing for the rest

of the poem. I had often

heard of Lucy Gray. When I crossed the wide open valley. I happened to see the solitary child at the time of break of day. The first stanza simply strikes up curiosity about Lucy and sets her up as an important figure.

**Stanza : 2**

**No mate, no comrade  
Lucy knew;  
She dwelt on a wide  
moor,**

**–The sweetest thing that  
ever grew**

**Beside a human door!**

This stanza continues to create curiosity about Lucy. She had never enjoyed the company of any playmate or companion. She lived in an open wide valley. The last

lines say that she grew  
"beside a human door". It  
seems strange that she did  
not grow inside that door,  
since she is a human child.

### **Stanza: 3**

**You yet may spy the fawn  
at play,**

**The hare upon the green;**

**But the sweet face of**

**Lucy Gray**

**Will never more be seen.**

Here, the speaker talks  
directly to the readers and  
says that you may still see  
the young deer at play or the  
hare running about over the  
green valleys but you can  
never see anymore the  
sweetest face of Lucy Gray.  
With this stanza, the  
speaker reveals that  
something has happened to

Lucy.

### **Stanza: 4**

**To-night will be a stormy  
night–**

**You to the town must go;  
And take a lantern, Child,  
to light**

**Your mother through the  
snow**

He begins to talk from  
another's point of view.

Lucy's father told her that it  
was expected to be a stormy  
night. She must go to the  
town with a lantern and  
bring her mother back  
home.

### **Stanza : 5**

**That, Father! will I gladly  
do:**

**'Tis scarcely afternoon–  
The minster-clock has**

**just struck two,  
And yonder is the moon!**  
This also reveals that the speaker within the quotes is Lucy's father. Lucy told her father that she would gladly do so. It was hardly afternoon at that time. The church clock had struck two. The moon was still hanging low in the horizon.

**Stanza : 6**  
**At this the Father raised  
his hook,  
And snapped a faggot-  
band;  
He plied his work;—and  
Lucy took  
The lantern in her hand.**  
This stanza continues the story from the original speaker's point of view. When her father heard this,

he was satisfied. He took his sharp hook and got busy with his work of cutting the bundle of woods. He went on doing his work and Lucy took the lantern in her hand and went on.

### **Stanza: 7**

**Not blither is the  
mountain roe:  
With many a wanton  
stroke  
Her feet disperse the  
powdery snow,  
That rises up like smoke.**

Even the deer of the mountain is not so active and smart as Lucy was. This stanza describes Lucy as walking along slowly and carelessly, kicking up the "powdery snow" as she walks, and watching it rise

“like smoke”. These descriptions of Lucy help to continue to paint a picture of a sweet and innocent child.

## **Stanza : 8**

**The storm came on  
before its time:**

**She wandered up and  
down;**

**And many a hill did Lucy  
climb:**

**But never reached the  
town.**

With the first line of this stanza, the speaker reveals what will happen to Lucy.

The storm burst before its time. She wandered up and down. Although she climbed many hills yet she never reached the town.

## **Stanza :9**

**The wretched parents all  
that night  
Went shouting far and  
wide;  
But there was neither  
sound nor sight  
To serve them for a  
guide.**

This stanza reveals that at some point during the night, Lucy's mother returned home and her miserable parents came out to search for her. They shouted for her through the night far and wide. But they neither heard any sound nor saw any sight to guide them in the darkness and silence of the night.

**Stanza :10**

**At day-break on a hill  
they stood**



**That overlooked the  
moor;**

**And thence they saw the  
bridge of wood,  
A furlong from their door.**

Again, the speaker mentions day-break. They stood over a hill. From there, they could see all over the wild valley. They saw a wooden bridge at a distance of about one furlong from their door.

**Stanza : 11**

**They wept—and, turning  
homeward, cried,  
"In heaven we all shall  
meet;"**

**—When in the snow the  
mother spied  
The print of Lucy's feet.**

At this point, the parents weep and give up their search for Lucy. As they

came towards their home,  
they said that they would  
meet the poor girl in heaven.  
The mother saw the foot-  
prints of Lucy Gray in the  
snow. However, the sight of  
her footprint gives hope.

### **Stanza : 12**

**Then downwards from  
the steep hill's edge  
They tracked the  
footmarks small;  
And through the broken  
hawthorn hedge,  
And by the long stone-  
wall;**

With this, the parents begin  
to follow her footprints. They  
traced the small footprints  
downwards from the side of  
the steep hill. Those  
footprints passed through  
the broken hawthorn hedge

and went along the stone wall.

### **Stanza : 13**

**And then an open field  
they crossed:**

**The marks were still the  
same;**

**They tracked them on,  
nor ever lost;**

**And to the bridge they  
came.**

Then parents passed over  
an open field. There were  
the same marks. They went  
on tracing them. They did  
not lose them until they  
came to the bridge.

### **Stanza : 14**

**They followed from the  
snowy bank**

**Those footmarks, one  
by one,**

**Into the middle of the  
plank;  
And further there were  
none!**

This stanza invokes the feeling of intense loss. While the parents follow in the footsteps of the child, there is hope that she might be found alive at the end of those footprints. Instead, the prints led the parents to the "middle of the plank" on the bridge, and suddenly the footprints stop. The only conclusion is that Lucy fell off the bridge.

**Stanza : 15**

**Yet some maintain that to  
this day  
She is a living child;  
That you may see sweet  
Lucy Gray**

## **Upon the lonesome wild.**

Yet some people believe up to this day that she is a living child. They think they can see sweet Lucy Gray wandering over the lonely wild valley.

### **Stanza : 16**

**O'er rough and smooth  
she trips along,  
And never looks behind;  
And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind.**

She walks slightly over rough as well as smooth places, but she never looks behind. She sings a lovely song that whistles in the wind.