

**Nutting**  
**William Wordsworth (1799)**

-----IT seems a day  
(I speak of one from many singled out)  
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;  
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,  
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth  
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,  
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps  
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds  
Which for that service had been husbanded, 10  
By exhortation of my frugal Dame--  
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile  
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,--and, in truth,  
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,  
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,  
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
Of devastation; but the hazels rose 20  
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,  
A virgin scene!--A little while I stood,  
Breathing with such suppression of the heart  
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint  
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed  
The banquet;--or beneath the trees I sate  
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;  
A temper known to those, who, after long  
And weary expectation, have been blest  
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.  
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves 30  
The violets of five seasons re-appear  
And fade, unseen by any human eye;  
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on  
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,  
And--with my cheek on one of those green stones  
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,  
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep--  
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,  
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay  
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure, 40  
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,  
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,

And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,  
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook  
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up  
Their quiet being: and, unless I now  
Confound my present feelings with the past;  
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned  
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,  
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky--  
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades  
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand  
Touch--for there is a spirit in the woods.

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1799.