

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

11 *The Seven Sisters; or, the Solitude of Binnorie*

Seven daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother;
I could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland, of seven lilies wrought! 5
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully, 10
The solitude of Binnorie!

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering: 15
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn. 20
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade 25
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right —
Of your fair household, Father Knight, 30
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow, 35
With menace proud and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, "Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home; 40
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!"
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

Some close behind, some side by side, 45
Like clouds in stormy weather,
They run, and cry, "Nay, let us die,
And let us die together."
A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been; 50
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing mournfully, oh! Mournfully[,]
The solitude of Binnorie! 55

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little Islands, green and bare, 60
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those Sisters fair
By fairies are all buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully, 65
The solitude of Binnorie!

1800

(From *Poems of William Wordsworth*. Selected and Edited
by Robert Aris Willmott. London: George Routledge and
Sons, 1866)