3.11: Wordsworth, Dorothy "Daffodils" entry from Grasmere journal (1802)
This journal entry by Dorothy Wordsworth was written during an 1802 trip to the Lake District with her brother, the famed poet William Wordsworth. Wordsworth would use this journal entry as inspiration for his poem called "Daffodils" or "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (1807). While William Wordsworth achieved fame and eventually became the Poet Laureate of England, Dorothy Wordsworth is often relegated to footnotes and only recognized as Wordsworth’s sister. Some scholars question whether Wordsworth’s poem constitutes plagiarism. Compare this journal entry to Wordsworth’s poem and see what you think.

"April 15th, 1802" from the Journal Written at Grasmere

by Dorothy Wordsworth

Thursday, 15th.

It was a threatening, misty morning, but mild. We set off after dinner from Eusemere. Mrs. Clarkson went a short way with us, but turned back. The wind was furious, and we thought we must have returned. We first rested in the large boathouse, then under a furze bush opposite Mr. Clarkson's. Saw the plough going in the field. The wind seized our breath. The lake was rough. There was a boat by itself floating in the middle of the bay below Water Millock. We rested again in the Water Millock Lane. The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish, but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows—people working. A few
primroses by the roadside—wood sorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry, yellow flower which Mrs. C. calls pile wort. When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers higher up; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway. We rested again and again. The bays were stormy, and we heard the waves at different distances, and in the middle of the water, like the sea.... All was cheerless and gloomy, so we faced the storm. At Dobson's I was very kindly treated by a young woman. The landlady looked sour, but it is her way.... William was sitting by a good fire when I came downstairs. He soon made his way to the library, piled up in a corner of the window. He brought out a volume of Enfield's Speaker, another miscellany, and an odd volume of Congreve's plays. We had a glass of warm rum and water. We enjoyed ourselves, and wished for Mary. It rained and blew, when we went to bed.