



# Wordsworth's Revisitings

*Stephen S. Gill*

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## **Wordsworth's Revisitings** Stephen S. Gill

Nothing was more important to Wordsworth than tracing the evidence that affinities had been preserved between all the stages of the life of man. In this beautifully written and thoughtful book Wordsworth's biographer and editor Stephen Gill explores the ways in which the poet attempted as an artist to maintain such continuities and shows how revisitings of various kinds are at the heart of his creativity. Habitually reviewing all of his work, both published and that still in manuscript, Wordsworth painstakingly revised at the level of verbal detail or recast it more largely. New poems frequently emerged from re-engagement with old, often serving as a sequel to or commentary from the maturer poet on his own earlier creation, and acts of self-borrowing and self-reference are plentiful. These linkings provide insights into the powerful vision the poet maintained that his imaginative creation was one evolving unity and reveal much about the obsessions and drives of the great poet. Combining textual analysis, critical commentary, and biographical narrative, Gill explores what binds Wordsworth's later, less well-known poems to his earlier work. At the centre of the book is an account of the evolution of *The Prelude* from 1804 to 1839, in which it is argued that Wordsworth's masterpiece must be followed through all its versions, seen as a poem growing old alongside its creator.

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