Assignment for Friday: Choose one of the entries from Dorothy Wordsworth’s Journals and try to imitate it in your own words, describing natural phenomena or a person you care about or a stranger you observe but might or might not have talked with or your thoughts about your own creativity. Try to be as detailed as she is, but also try to capture her sense of wonder and deep sense of reflection.

Study Questions on Dorothy Wordsworth’s Journals

Certain themes circulate through DW’s journals and poetry:

*Dorothy as Poet:

Wed 3rd September 1800: funeral
Thursday, 18th March 1802: tried to be a poet

*Dorothy’s relationship with nature
Every entry

*Relationship between Dorothy and William:

Wed May 14, 1800: Resolves to write a journal for Wm
Wed 3rd Sept: family relations
Thurs 4th March 1802--bitten apple

*Descriptions of local events and characters, particularly the homeless
June 9-10, 1800

1. How is this journal an example of Romanticism? Consider all the characteristics of Romanticism we have analyzed, and choose three to examine very closely, quoting from the journal to prove your point:
   --radical politics and turn toward common people
   --fascination and experimentation with the genre of the fragment
   --longings for the lost and on desire over fulfillment
   --exploration of the subject/object relationship
   --emphasis on inner individual consciousness and imagination
   --belief that nature has divine inspirational power
   --fascination with extreme states--fantasy, ecstasy, supernatural

2. How do you explain her reactions to the impoverished, homeless travelers she describes in the journal? Is she sympathetic, empathetic, disinterested, detached; does she view them as objectively as the landscape—that is, are they mere objects for her to exercise her descriptive powers? How might these be displaced fears of her own loss and potentially future losses?
3. How do you evaluate her relationship with William?
One critic has called the world that William and Dorothy create a cult of domesticity, a "labor-intensive, task-specific view of domestic activity as an infrastructure of support for creativity" (55). Does Wordsworth "silence" Dorothy? do they mutually reinforce each other? do her journals or poems (as another critic has said) "reinforce[e] the masculine orientation of language and of the poet."

4. What is the significance of the fact that this is a journal – a nearly daily record of her experiences, observations and feelings, that was not meant to be published, but which was read by some family members.

5. Look specifically at entry for Thursday 15th April, 1802: how do her descriptions of the daffodils differ / resemble those from William’s poem “I wandered lonely as a cloud”?

6. Analyze her record of William’s wedding day. (Oct 1802) Consider here the psychological undertext of the section: that is, what does she unknowingly reveal versus what does she knowingly reveal?