

VERSE: DISCOURAGED

"Discouraged" is a lyrical poem that vividly details the journey of a stream from its modest beginnings to its eventual merge with the sea, paralleling the emotional and philosophical journey of the speaker. The poem begins with the speaker discovering a small, babbling streamlet, barely visible as it trickles through soft moss, and decides to follow it to the sea, embarking on a journey of discovery and companionship.

As the stream progresses, it becomes a mirror to various landscapes and forms of beauty, from gleaming amid the purple heather, dashing through mountain gorges like a silver thread, to eventually slowing down, as though savoring its journey amongst the rushes and an array of delicate flowers like the Willow-herb and Forget-me-nots. Each phase of the stream's journey is meticulously described, evoking a sense of movement and transformation. The stream then grows broader, becoming a haven for cattle and reflecting the sky in its serene waters.

However, as the river quickens and deepens, becoming more fierce, the speaker's initial excitement and dedication are replaced with disillusionment and despair. The rough, stony path mirrors the speaker's tiredness and mounting disappointment with the challenging journey, leading to a moment of capitulation where the speaker abandons the quest for the sea, fearing the anticipation was in vain.

In the concluding stanzas, the speaker finds solace in distraction, loitering among the meadows far from the river, attempting to escape the constant reminder of their abandoned quest. Yet, there's a lingering regret and wonder about what might have been if the journey had continued—a few more steps could have revealed the wide, infinite sea. This evokes a contemplation on giving up too soon, suggesting that true fulfillment requires perseverance through adversity. The poem elegantly captures the complex emotions of inspiration, struggle, despair, and withdrawal, urging the reader to ponder the value of pursuing one's goals despite the obstacles.