

**Sir Philip Sidney**  
**1554-1586**

**O SWEET WOODS**, the delight of solitariness,  
O how much I do like your solitariness!  
Where man's mind hath a freed consideration  
Of goodness to receive lovely direction;  
Where senses do behold th'order of heavenly host,  
And wise thoughts do behold what the creator is.  
Contemplation here holdeth his only seat,  
Bounded with no limits, borne with a wing of hope,  
Climbs even unto the stars; Nature is under it.  
Nought disturbs thy quiet; all to thy service yield;  
Each sight draws on a thought, thought mother of science;  
Sweet birds kindly do grant harmony unto thee;  
Fair trees' shade is enough fortification,  
Nor danger to thyself if be not in thyself.

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness,  
O how much I do like your solitariness!  
Here no treason is hid, veiled in innocence,  
Nor envy's snaky eye finds any harbour here,  
Nor flatterers' venomous insinuation,  
Nor cunning humorists' puddled opinions,  
Nor courteous ruin of proffered usury,  
Nor time prattled away, cradle of ignorance,  
Nor causeless duty, nor cumber of arrogance;  
Nor trifling title of vanity dazzleth us,  
Nor golden manacles stand for a paradise.  
Here wrong's name is unheard; slander a monster is.  
Keep thy sprite from abuse, here no abuse doth haunt.  
What man grafts in a tree dissimulation?

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness,  
O how well I do like your solitariness!  
Yet dear soil, if a soul closed in a mansion  
As sweet as violets, fair as a lily is,  
Straight as a cedar, a voice stains the canary birds,  
Whose shade doth hold, danger avoideth her;  
Such wisdom, that in her lives speculation;  
Such goodness, that in her simplicity triumphs;  
Where envy's snaky eye winketh or else dieth;  
slander wants a pretext, flattery gone beyond;  
O, if such a one have bent to a lonely life  
Her steps, glad we receive, glad we receive her eyes,  
And think not she doth hurt our solitariness:  
For such company decks such solitariness.