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Romantic Things: A Tree, a Rock, a Cloud

Mary Jacobus

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Our thoughts are shaped as much by what things make of us as by what we make of them. Lyric poetry is especially concerned with things and their relationship to thought, sense, and understanding. In *Romantic Things*, Mary Jacobus explores the world of objects and phenomena in nature as expressed in Romantic poetry alongside the theme of sentience and sensory deprivation in literature and art.

Jacobus discusses objects and attributes that test our perceptions and preoccupy both Romantic poetry and modern philosophy. John Clare, John Constable, Rainer Maria Rilke, W. G. Sebald, and Gerhard Richter make appearances around the central figure of William Wordsworth as Jacobus explores trees, rocks, clouds, breath, sleep, deafness, and blindness in their work. While she thinks through these things, she is assisted by the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Nancy. Helping us think more deeply about things that are at once visible and invisible, seen and unseen, felt and unfeeling, *Romantic Things* opens our eyes to what has been previously overlooked in lyric and Romantic poetry.

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