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# William Cowper (1731-1800)

(English poet, b. middle class, st. Westminster School, Middle and Inner Temple; member of Nonsense Club; frustrated marriage to his cousin; mental and physical breakdown 1763 while preparing examination for a prominent position as lawyer at the House of Lords; suicide attempts; institutionalized; converted to evangelicalism 1764; left London for Olney, nervous disorders; lived as 'tenant' with close friend Mary Unwin before and after her husband's death; friend of widowed Lady Austen; promoter of benevolence to the subaltern and animals, anti-imperialist)

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