

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **John Keats**

**- poems -**

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### **John Keats (1795-1821)**

John Keats was born on October 31, 1775 in London. His parents were Frances Jennings and Thomas Keats. John Keats was educated at Enfield School, which was known for its liberal education. While at Enfield, Keats was encouraged by Charles Cowden Clarke in his reading and writing. After the death of his parents when he was fourteen, Keats became apprenticed to a surgeon. In 1815 he became a student at Guy's Hospital. However, after qualifying to become an apothecary-surgeon, Keats gave up the practice of Medicine to become a poet. Keats had begun writing as early as 1814 and his first volume of poetry was published in 1817.

In 1818 Keats took a long walking tour in the British Isles that led to a prolonged sore throat, which was to become a first symptom of the disease that killed his mother and brother, tuberculosis. After he concluded his walking tour, Keats settled in Hampstead. Here he and Fanny Brawne met and fell in love. However, they were never able to marry because of his health and financial situation. Between the Fall of 1818 and 1820 Keats produces some of his best known works, such as *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and *Lamia*. After 1820 Keats' illness became so severe that he had to leave England for the warmer climate of Italy. In 1821 he died of tuberculosis in Rome. He is buried there in the Protestant cemetery.

## **A Dream, After Reading Dante's Episode Of Paolo And Francesca**

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,  
When lulled Argus, baffled, swooned and slept,  
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright  
So played, so charmed, so conquered, so bereft  
The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;  
And seeing it asleep, so fled away,  
Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,  
Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a day;  
But to that second circle of sad Hell,  
Where in the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw  
Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell  
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,  
Pale were the lips I kissed, and fair the form  
I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

John Keats

## **A Thing of Beauty (Endymion)**

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkn'd ways  
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

John Keats

## **Addressed To Haydon**

High-mindedness, a jealousy for good,  
A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,  
Dwells here and there with people of no name,  
In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:  
And where we think the truth least understood,  
Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"  
That ought to frighten into hooded shame  
A money-mongering, pitiable brood.  
How glorious this affection for the cause  
Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly!  
What when a stout unbending champion awes  
Envy and malice to their native sty?  
Unnumbered souls breathe out a still applause,  
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

John Keats

## **Answer To A Sonnet By J.H.Reynolds**

"Dark eyes are dearer far  
Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell."

Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven,&dash;the domain  
Of Cynthia,&dash;the wide palace of the sun,&dash;  
The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,&dash;  
The bosomer of clouds, gold, gray, and dun.  
Blue! 'Tis the life of waters:&dash;Ocean  
And all its vassal streams, pools numberless,  
May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can  
Subside, if not to dark-blue nativeness.  
Blue! gentle cousin of the forest-green,  
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers&dash;  
Forget-me-not,&dash;the blue-bell,&dash;and, that queen  
Of secrecy, the violet: what strange powers  
Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,  
When in an Eye thou art alive with fate!

John Keats

**Bards of Passion and of Mirth, written on the Blank Page before Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragi-Comedy 'The Fair Maid of the Inn'**

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Have ye souls in heaven too,  
Doubled-lived in regions new?  
Yes, and those of heaven commune  
With the spheres of sun and moon;  
With the noise of fountains wondrous,  
And the parle of voices thund'rous;  
With the whisper of heaven's trees  
And one another, in soft ease  
Seated on Elysian lawns  
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;  
Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
And the rose herself has got  
Perfume which on earth is not;  
Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth;  
Philosophic numbers smooth;  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again;  
And the souls ye left behind you  
Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
Where your other souls are joying,  
Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
To mortals, of their little week;  
Of their sorrows and delights;  
Of their passions and their spites;  
Of their glory and their shame;  
What doth strengthen and what maim.  
Thus ye teach us, every day,  
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Ye have souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new!

John Keats

## Bright Star

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art--  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors--  
No--yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

John Keats



### **Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art**

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John Keats

## Endymion (excerpts)

From BOOK I

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
That for themselves a cooling covert make  
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,  
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms  
We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
For one short hour; no, even as the trees  
That whisper round a temple become soon  
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
Haunt us till they become a cheering light  
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-cast;  
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I  
Will trace the story of Endymion.  
The very music of the name has gone  
Into my being, and each pleasant scene  
Is growing fresh before me as the green  
Of our own valleys: so I will begin  
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;  
Now while the early budders are just new,  
And run in mazes of the youngest hue  
About old forests; while the willow trails  
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails  
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year  
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer  
My little boat, for many quiet hours,  
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.  
Many and many a verse I hope to write,

Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,  
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees  
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,  
I must be near the middle of my story.  
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,  
See it half finish'd: but let Autumn bold,  
With universal tinge of sober gold,  
Be all about me when I make an end.  
And now, at once adventuresome, I send  
My herald thought into a wilderness:  
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress  
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed  
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

...

John Keats

## Endymion: A Poetic Romance (Excerpt)

### BOOK I

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
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John Keats

## Endymion: Book I

ENDYMION.

A Poetic Romance.

"THE STRETCHED METRE OF AN ANTIQUE SONG."  
INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF THOMAS CHATTERTON.

Book I

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
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My uncertain path with green, that I may speed  
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread  
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed  
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots  
Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.  
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,  
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep  
A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,  
Never again saw he the happy pens  
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,  
Over the hills at every nightfall went.  
Among the shepherds, 'twas believed ever,  
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever  
From the white flock, but pass'd unworried  
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,  
Until it came to some unfooted plains  
Where fed the herds of Pan: ay great his gains  
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,  
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,  
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly  
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see  
Stems thronging all around between the swell  
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell  
The freshness of the space of heaven above,  
Edg'd round with dark tree tops? through which a dove  
Would often beat its wings, and often too  
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness

There stood a marble altar, with a tress  
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew  
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew  
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,  
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.  
For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire  
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre  
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein  
A melancholy spirit well might win  
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine  
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine  
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;  
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run  
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;  
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass  
Of nature's lives and wonders puls'd tenfold,  
To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn  
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn  
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped  
A troop of little children garlanded;  
Who gathering round the altar, seemed to pry  
Earnestly round as wishing to espy  
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited  
For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then  
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.  
Within a little space again it gave  
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
Through copse-clad vallies,--ere their death, oer-taking  
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we  
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light  
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,  
Plainer and plainer shewing, till at last  
Into the widest alley they all past,  
Making directly for the woodland altar.  
O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue falter  
In telling of this goodly company,  
Of their old piety, and of their glee:  
But let a portion of ethereal dew  
Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,  
Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;  
Each having a white wicker over brimm'd  
With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,



A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks  
As may be read of in Arcadian books;  
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,  
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,  
Let his divinity o'er-flowing die  
In music, through the vales of Thessaly:  
Some idly trailed their sheep-hooks on the ground,  
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound  
With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,  
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,  
A venerable priest full soberly,  
Begirt with ministring looks: alway his eye  
Stedfast upon the matted turf he kept,  
And after him his sacred vestments swept.  
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,  
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;  
And in his left he held a basket full  
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:  
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still  
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.  
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,  
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth  
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd  
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud  
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,  
Up-followed by a multitude that rear'd  
Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car,  
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar  
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:  
Who stood therein did seem of great renown  
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,  
Shewing like Ganymede to manhood grown;  
And, for those simple times, his garments were  
A chieftain king's: beneath his breast, half bare,  
Was hung a silver bugle, and between  
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.  
A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd,  
To common lookers on, like one who dream'd  
Of idleness in groves Elysian:  
But there were some who feelingly could scan  
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,  
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip  
Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,  
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets cry,  
Of logs piled solemnly.--Ah, well-a-day,  
Why should our young Endymion pine away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle rang'd,  
Stood silent round the shrine: each look was chang'd  
To sudden veneration: women meek  
Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each cheek  
Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.

Endymion too, without a forest peer,  
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,  
 Among his brothers of the mountain chase.  
 In midst of all, the venerable priest  
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,  
 And, after lifting up his aged hands,  
 Thus spake he: "Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!  
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:  
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks  
 That overtop your mountains; whether come  
 From vallies where the pipe is never dumb;  
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs  
 Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze  
 Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge  
 Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,  
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn  
 By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:  
 Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare  
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;  
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up  
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup  
 Will put choice honey for a favoured youth:  
 Yea, every one attend! for in good truth  
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.  
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than  
 Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains  
 Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains  
 Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad  
 Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had  
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.  
 The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd  
 His early song against yon breezy sky,  
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire  
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;  
 Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod  
 With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
 Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

"O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;  
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress  
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;  
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds--

In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds  
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;  
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx--do thou now,  
By thy love's milky brow!  
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
Hear us, great Pan!

"O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles  
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,  
What time thou wanderest at eventide  
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side  
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom  
Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom  
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow girted bees  
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas  
Their fairest-blossom'd beans and popped corn;  
The chuckling linnets its five young unborn,  
To sing for thee; low creeping strawberries  
Their summer coolness; pent up butterflies  
Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh budding year  
All its completions--be quickly near,  
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,  
O forester divine!

"Thou, to whom every fawn and satyr flies  
For willing service; whether to surprise  
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit;  
Or upward ragged precipices flit  
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;  
Or by mysterious enticement draw  
Bewildered shepherds to their path again;  
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,  
And gather up all fancifullest shells  
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,  
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;  
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,  
The while they pelt each other on the crown  
With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown--  
By all the echoes that about thee ring,  
Hear us, O satyr king!

"O Harkener to the loud clapping shears,  
While ever and anon to his shorn peers  
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,  
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn  
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our farms,  
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:  
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,  
That come a swooning over hollow grounds,  
And wither drearily on barren moors:  
Dread opener of the mysterious doors

Leading to universal knowledge--see,  
Great son of Dryope,  
The many that are come to pay their vows  
With leaves about their brows!

Be still the unimaginable lodge  
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge  
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,  
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth  
Gives it a touch ethereal--a new birth:  
Be still a symbol of immensity;  
A firmament reflected in a sea;  
An element filling the space between;  
An unknown--but no more: we humbly screen  
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,  
And giving out a shout most heaven rending,  
Conjure thee to receive our humble Paean,  
Upon thy Mount Lycean!

Even while they brought the burden to a close,  
A shout from the whole multitude arose,  
That lingered in the air like dying rolls  
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals  
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.  
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,  
Young companies nimbly began dancing  
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.  
Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly  
To tunes forgotten--out of memory:  
Fair creatures! whose young children's children bred  
Thermopylæ; its heroes--not yet dead,  
But in old marbles ever beautiful.  
High genitors, unconscious did they cull  
Time's sweet first-fruits--they danc'd to weariness,  
And then in quiet circles did they press  
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end  
Of some strange history, potent to send  
A young mind from its bodily tenement.  
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent  
On either side; pitying the sad death  
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath  
Of Zephyr slew him,--Zephyr penitent,  
Who now, ere Phoebus mounts the firmament,  
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.  
The archers too, upon a wider plain,  
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,  
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft  
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,  
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope  
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee  
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,

Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young  
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue  
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,  
And very, very deadliness did nip  
Her motherly cheeks. Arous'd from this sad mood  
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,  
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,  
Many might after brighter visions stare:  
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze  
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,  
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,  
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,  
Spangling those million poutings of the brine  
With quivering ore: 'twas even an awful shine  
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;  
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.  
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,  
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring  
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest  
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increas'd  
The silvery setting of their mortal star.  
There they discours'd upon the fragile bar  
That keeps us from our homes ethereal;  
And what our duties there: to nightly call  
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;  
To summon all the downiest clouds together  
For the sun's purple couch; to emulate  
In ministring the potent rule of fate  
With speed of fire-tailed exhalations;  
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons  
Sweet poesy by moonlight: besides these,  
A world of other unguess'd offices.  
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,  
Into Elysium; vieing to rehearse  
Each one his own anticipated bliss.  
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss  
His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,  
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts and endows  
Her lips with music for the welcoming.  
Another wish'd, mid that eternal spring,  
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,  
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales:  
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,  
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;  
And, ever after, through those regions be  
His messenger, his little Mercury.  
Some were athirst in soul to see again  
Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign  
In times long past; to sit with them, and talk  
Of all the chances in their earthly walk;  
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores  
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,

Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,  
And shar'd their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told  
Their fond imaginations,--saving him  
Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,  
Endymion: yet hourly had he striven  
To hide the cankering venom, that had riven  
His fainting recollections. Now indeed  
His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed  
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,  
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,  
Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,  
Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:  
But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,  
Like one who on the earth had never stept.  
Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man,  
Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?  
Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,  
His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,  
And breath'd a sister's sorrow to persuade  
A yielding up, a cradling on her care.  
Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:  
She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse  
Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,  
Along a path between two little streams,--  
Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,  
From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow  
From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small;  
Until they came to where these streamlets fall,  
With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,  
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush  
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.  
A little shallop, floating there hard by,  
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;  
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,  
And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,--  
Peona guiding, through the water straight,  
Towards a bowery island opposite;  
Which gaining presently, she steered light  
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,  
Where nested was an arbour, overwove  
By many a summer's silent fingering;  
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring  
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,  
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid  
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,  
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,  
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves  
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,

And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.  
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:  
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest  
Peona's busy hand against his lips,  
And still, a sleeping, held her finger-tips  
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps  
A patient watch over the stream that creeps  
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid  
Held her in peace: so that a whispering blade  
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling  
Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling  
Among seer leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,  
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind  
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfin'd  
Restraint! imprisoned liberty! great key  
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves  
And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world  
Of silvery enchantment!--who, upfurl'd  
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
But renovates and lives?--Thus, in the bower,  
Endymion was calm'd to life again.  
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,  
He said: "I feel this thine endearing love  
All through my bosom: thou art as a dove  
Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings  
About me; and the pearliest dew not brings  
Such morning incense from the fields of May,  
As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray  
From those kind eyes,--the very home and haunt  
Of sisterly affection. Can I want  
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears?  
Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears  
That, any longer, I will pass my days  
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise  
My voice upon the mountain-heights; once more  
Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar:  
Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll  
Around the breathed boar: again I'll poll  
The fair-grown yew tree, for a chosen bow:  
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,  
Again I'll linger in a sloping mead  
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed  
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered sweet,  
And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat  
My soul to keep in its resolved course."

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,  
Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim,

And took a lute, from which there pulsing came  
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way  
 In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay  
 More subtle cadenced, more forest wild  
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;  
 And nothing since has floated in the air  
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare  
 Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;  
 For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd  
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw  
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw  
 Before the deep intoxication.  
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon  
 Her self-possession--swung the lute aside,  
 And earnestly said: "Brother, 'tis vain to hide  
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,  
 Immortal, starry; such alone could thus  
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught  
 Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught  
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent?  
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,  
 Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen  
 Her naked limbs among the alders green;  
 And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace  
 Something more high perplexing in thy face!"

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,  
 And said, "Art thou so pale, who wast so bland  
 And merry in our meadows? How is this?  
 Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss!--  
 Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change  
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange?  
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?  
 Ambition is no sluggard: 'tis no prize,  
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,  
 That I have sigh'd for: with so deadly gasp  
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.  
 So all have set my heavier grief above  
 These things which happen. Rightly have they done:  
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun  
 Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,  
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd  
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chace--  
 I, who, for very sport of heart, would race  
 With my own steed from Araby; pluck down  
 A vulture from his towery perching; frown  
 A lion into growling, loth retire--  
 To lose, at once, all my toil breeding fire,  
 And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast  
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

"This river does not see the naked sky,



Till it begins to progress silverly  
Around the western border of the wood,  
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood  
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:  
And in that nook, the very pride of June,  
Had I been used to pass my weary eyes;  
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves  
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,  
And I could witness his most kingly hour,  
When he doth lighten up the golden reins,  
And paces leisurely down amber plains  
His snorting four. Now when his chariot last  
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,  
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed  
Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:  
At which I wondered greatly, knowing well  
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;  
And, sitting down close by, began to muse  
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,  
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;  
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook  
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,  
Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth  
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,  
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;  
And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;  
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim:  
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell  
The enchantment that afterwards befel?  
Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream  
That never tongue, although it overteem  
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
Could figure out and to conception bring  
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay  
Watching the zenith, where the milky way  
Among the stars in virgin splendour pours;  
And travelling my eye, until the doors  
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,  
I became loth and fearful to alight  
From such high soaring by a downward glance:  
So kept me stedfast in that airy trance,  
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.  
When, presently, the stars began to glide,  
And faint away, before my eager view:  
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,  
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;  
And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge  
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er

A shell for Neptune's goblet: she did soar  
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul  
 Commingling with her argent spheres did roll  
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she went  
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent--  
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train  
 Of planets all were in the blue again.  
 To commune with those orbs, once more I rais'd  
 My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed  
 By a bright something, sailing down apace,  
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:  
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,  
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies!  
 Whence that completed form of all completeness?  
 Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?  
 Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O Where  
 Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?  
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;  
 Not--thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun  
 Such follying before thee--yet she had,  
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;  
 And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,  
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,  
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow;  
 The which were blended in, I know not how,  
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,  
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,  
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings  
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings  
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.  
 Unto what awful power shall I call?  
 To what high fane?--Ah! see her hovering feet,  
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet  
 Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose  
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows  
 Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;  
 'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million  
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,  
 Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,  
 Handfuls of daisies."--"Endymion, how strange!  
 Dream within dream!"--"She took an airy range,  
 And then, towards me, like a very maid,  
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,  
 And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 'twas too much;  
 Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,  
 Yet held my recollection, even as one  
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run  
 Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,  
 I felt upmounted in that region  
 Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,  
 And eagles struggle with the buffeting north  
 That balances the heavy meteor-stone;--

Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,  
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.  
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,  
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;  
Such as ay muster where grey time has scoop'd  
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side:  
There hollow sounds arous'd me, and I sigh'd  
To faint once more by looking on my bliss--  
I was distracted; madly did I kiss  
The wooing arms which held me, and did give  
My eyes at once to death: but 'twas to live,  
To take in draughts of life from the gold fount  
Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count  
The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd  
A second self, that each might be redeem'd  
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.  
Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dar'd to press  
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,  
And, at that moment, felt my body dip  
Into a warmer air: a moment more,  
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store  
Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes  
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,  
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,  
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;  
And once, above the edges of our nest,  
An arch face peep'd,--an Oread as I guess'd.

"Why did I dream that sleep o'er-power'd me  
In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,  
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,  
And stare them from me? But no, like a spark  
That needs must die, although its little beam  
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream  
Fell into nothing--into stupid sleep.  
And so it was, until a gentle creep,  
A careful moving caught my waking ears,  
And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,  
My clenched hands;--for lo! the poppies hung  
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung  
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day  
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,  
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze  
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease  
With wayward melancholy; and r thought,  
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought  
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus!--  
Away I wander'd--all the pleasant hues  
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades  
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades  
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills  
Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills

Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown  
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown  
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird  
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd  
In little journeys, I beheld in it  
A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit  
My soul with under darkness; to entice  
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:  
Therefore I eager followed, and did curse  
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,  
Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!  
These things, with all their comfortings, are given  
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,  
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea  
Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both  
Sat silent: for the maid was very loth  
To answer; feeling well that breathed words  
Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords  
Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps  
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,  
And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;  
To put on such a look as would say, Shame  
On this poor weakness! but, for all her strife,  
She could as soon have crush'd away the life  
From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,  
She said with trembling chance: "Is this the cause?  
This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!  
That one who through this middle earth should pass  
Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave  
His name upon the harp-string, should achieve  
No higher bard than simple maidenhood,  
Singing alone, and fearfully,--how the blood  
Left his young cheek; and how he used to stray  
He knew not where; and how he would say, nay,  
If any said 'twas love: and yet 'twas love;  
What could it be but love? How a ring-dove  
Let fall a sprig of yew tree in his path;  
And how he died: and then, that love doth scathe,  
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses;  
And then the ballad of his sad life closes  
With sighs, and an alas!--Endymion!  
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,--anon  
Among the winds at large--that all may hearken!  
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,  
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes  
Pictur'd in western cloudiness, that takes  
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,  
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands  
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces  
And towers of amethyst,--would I so tease

My pleasant days, because I could not mount  
Into those regions? The Morphean fount  
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,  
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams  
Into its airy channels with so subtle,  
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,  
Circl'd a million times within the space  
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,  
A tinting of its quality: how light  
Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're more slight  
Than the mere nothing that engenders them!  
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem  
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?  
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
For nothing but a dream?" Hereat the youth  
Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth  
Was in his plaited brow: yet his eyelids  
Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids  
A little breeze to creep between the fans  
Of careless butterflies: amid his pains  
He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,  
Full palatable; and a colour grew  
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

"Peona! ever have I long'd to slake  
My thirst for the world's praises: nothing base,  
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace  
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar'd--  
Though now 'tis tatter'd; leaving my bark bar'd  
And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope  
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,  
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.  
Wherein lies happiness? In that which beck  
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,  
Full alchemiz'd, and free of space. Behold  
The clear religion of heaven! Fold  
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,  
And soothe thy lips: hist, when the airy stress  
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,  
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
Eolian magic from their lucid wombs:  
Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;  
Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;  
Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave  
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot;  
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,  
Where long ago a giant battle was;  
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass  
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.  
Feel we these things?--that moment have we stept  
Into a sort of oneness, and our state

Is like a floating spirit's. But there are  
 Richer entanglements, enthrallments far  
 More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,  
 To the chief intensity: the crown of these  
 Is made of love and friendship, and sits high  
 Upon the forehead of humanity.  
 All its more ponderous and bulky worth  
 Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth  
 A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,  
 There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop  
 Of light, and that is love: its influence,  
 Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,  
 At which we start and fret; till in the end,  
 Melting into its radiance, we blend,  
 Mingle, and so become a part of it,--  
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit  
 So wingedly: when we combine therewith,  
 Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,  
 And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.  
 Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,  
 That men, who might have tower'd in the van  
 Of all the congregated world, to fan  
 And winnow from the coming step of time  
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
 Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,  
 Have been content to let occasion die,  
 Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.  
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,  
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness:  
 For I have ever thought that it might bless  
 The world with benefits unknowingly;  
 As does the nightingale, upperched high,  
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves--  
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives  
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.  
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood  
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,  
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth:  
 What I know not: but who, of men, can tell  
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell  
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,  
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,  
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,  
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,  
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,  
 If human souls did never kiss and greet?

"Now, if this earthly love has power to make  
 Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake  
 Ambition from their memories, and brim  
 Their measure of content; what merest whim,  
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,

To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim  
 A love immortal, an immortal too.  
 Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true,  
 And never can be born of atomies  
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,  
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,  
 My restless spirit never could endure  
 To brood so long upon one luxury,  
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy  
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.  
 My sayings will the less obscured seem,  
 When I have told thee how my waking sight  
 Has made me scruple whether that same night  
 Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet Peona!  
 Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,  
 Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,  
 Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows  
 Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,  
 And meet so nearly, that with wings outtraught,  
 And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide  
 Past them, but he must brush on every side.  
 Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,  
 Far as the slabbed margin of a well,  
 Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye  
 Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.  
 Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set  
 Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet  
 Edges them round, and they have golden pits:  
 'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits  
 In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,  
 When all above was faint with mid-day heat.  
 And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,  
 I'd bubble up the water through a reed;  
 So reaching back to boy-hood: make me ships  
 Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,  
 With leaves stuck in them; and the Neptune be  
 Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,  
 When love-lorn hours had left me less a child,  
 I sat contemplating the figures wild  
 Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.  
 Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew  
 A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;  
 So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver  
 The happy chance: so happy, I was fain  
 To follow it upon the open plain,  
 And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!  
 A wonder, fair as any I have told--  
 The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,  
 Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap  
 Through the cool depth.--It moved as if to flee--  
 I started up, when lo! refreshfully,  
 There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,

Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,  
 Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,  
 Bathing my spirit in a new delight.  
 Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss  
 Alone preserved me from the drear abyss  
 Of death, for the fair form had gone again.  
 Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain  
 Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth  
 On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,  
 'Tis scar'd away by slow returning pleasure.  
 How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure  
 Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,  
 By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night!  
 Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,  
 Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:  
 And a whole age of lingering moments crept  
 Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept  
 Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.  
 Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;  
 Once more been tortured with renewed life.  
 When last the wintry gusts gave over strife  
 With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies  
 Warm and serene, but yet with moistened eyes  
 In pity of the shatter'd infant buds,--  
 That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,  
 My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and smil'd,  
 Chatted with thee, and many days exil'd  
 All torment from my breast;--'twas even then,  
 Straying about, yet, coop'd up in the den  
 Of helpless discontent,--hurling my lance  
 From place to place, and following at chance,  
 At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,  
 And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck  
 In the middle of a brook,--whose silver ramble  
 Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,  
 Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,  
 Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave  
 The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,--  
 'Mong which it gurgled blythe adieus, to mock  
 Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,  
 Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread  
 Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.  
 "Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam?"  
 Said I, low voic'd: "Ah whither! 'Tis the grot  
 Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,  
 Doth her resign; and where her tender hands  
 She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:  
 Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,  
 And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
 Are gone in tender madness, and anon,  
 Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone  
 Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,



And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,  
 To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,  
 Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,  
 And weave them dyingly--send honey-whispers  
 Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers  
 May sigh my love unto her pitying!  
 O charitable echo! hear, and sing  
 This ditty to her!--tell her"--so I stay'd  
 My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,  
 Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,  
 And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.  
 Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name  
 Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came:  
 'Endymion! the cave is secreter  
 Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir  
 No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise  
 Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys  
 And trembles through my labyrinthine hair."  
 At that oppress'd I hurried in.--Ah! where  
 Are those swift moments? Whither are they fled?  
 I'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed  
 Sorrow the way to death, but patiently  
 Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;  
 And come instead demurest meditation,  
 To occupy me wholly, and to fashion  
 My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.  
 No more will I count over, link by link,  
 My chain of grief: no longer strive to find  
 A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind  
 Blustering about my ears: aye, thou shalt see,  
 Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;  
 What a calm round of hours shall make my days.  
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays  
 Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 'tis naught--  
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,  
 Already, a more healthy countenance?  
 By this the sun is setting; we may chance  
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star  
 Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand:  
 They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

John Keats

## Endymion: Book II

O Sovereign power of love! O grief! O balm!  
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,  
And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:  
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears  
Have become indolent; but touching thine,  
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,  
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.  
The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,  
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,  
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks--all dimly fades  
Into some backward corner of the brain;  
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain  
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.  
Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!  
Swart planet in the universe of deeds!  
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds  
Along the pebbled shore of memory!  
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be  
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified  
To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride,  
And golden keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.  
But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly  
About the great Athenian admiral's mast?  
What care, though striding Alexander past  
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?  
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers  
The gluttoned Cyclops, what care?--Juliet leaning  
Amid her window-flowers,--sighing,--weaning  
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,  
Doth more avail than these: the silver flow  
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,  
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,  
Are things to brood on with more ardency  
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully  
Must such conviction come upon his head,  
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,  
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,  
The path of love and poesy. But rest,  
In chaffing restlessness, is yet more drear  
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear  
Love's standard on the battlements of song.  
So once more days and nights aid me along,  
Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd-prince,  
What promise hast thou faithful guarded since  
The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows  
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?  
Alas! 'tis his old grief. For many days,  
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:  
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;  
Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes

Of the lone woodcutter; and listening still,  
Hour after hour, to each lush-leav'd rill.  
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,  
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering  
Stems the upbursting cold: a wild rose tree  
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see  
A bud which snares his fancy: lo! but now  
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water: how!  
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight;  
And, in the middle, there is softly pight  
A golden butterfly; upon whose wings  
There must be surely character'd strange things,  
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,  
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands:  
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands  
His limbs are loos'd, and eager, on he hies  
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.  
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was;  
And like a new-born spirit did he pass  
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,  
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,  
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams  
The summer time away. One track unseams  
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue  
Of ocean fades upon him; then, anew,  
He sinks adown a solitary glen,  
Where there was never sound of mortal men,  
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences  
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze  
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,  
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet  
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,  
Until it reached a splashing fountain's side  
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd  
Unto the temperate air: then high it soar'd,  
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,  
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip  
The crystal spout-head: so it did, with touch  
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch  
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.  
But, at that very touch, to disappear  
So fairy-quick, was strange! Bewildered,  
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed  
Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung  
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,  
What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest?  
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast  
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood  
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.  
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,

And anxiously began to plait and twist  
 Her ringlets round her fingers, saying: "Youth!  
 Too long, alas, hast thou starv'd on the ruth,  
 The bitterness of love: too long indeed,  
 Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed  
 Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer  
 All the bright riches of my crystal coffer  
 To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,  
 Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,  
 Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze;  
 Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws  
 A virgin light to the deep; my grotto-sands  
 Tawny and gold, ooz'd slowly from far lands  
 By my diligent springs; my level lilies, shells,  
 My charming rod, my potent river spells;  
 Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup  
 Meander gave me,--for I bubbled up  
 To fainting creatures in a desert wild.  
 But woe is me, I am but as a child  
 To gladden thee; and all I dare to say,  
 Is, that I pity thee; that on this day  
 I've been thy guide; that thou must wander far  
 In other regions, past the scanty bar  
 To mortal steps, before thou cans't be ta'en  
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,  
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.  
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:  
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewel!  
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat, she vanished from Endymion's gaze,  
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze:  
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool  
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,  
 Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,  
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill  
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,  
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr  
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down;  
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown  
 Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,  
 Thus breath'd he to himself: "Whoso encamps  
 To take a fancied city of delight,  
 O what a wretch is he! and when 'tis his,  
 After long toil and travelling, to miss  
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile:  
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil;  
 Another city doth he set about,  
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt  
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs:  
 Alas, he finds them dry; and then he foams,  
 And onward to another city speeds.

But this is human life: the war, the deeds,  
 The disappointment, the anxiety,  
 Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,  
 All human; bearing in themselves this good,  
 That they are sill the air, the subtle food,  
 To make us feel existence, and to shew  
 How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,  
 Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,  
 There is no depth to strike in: I can see  
 Nought earthly worth my compassing; so stand  
 Upon a misty, jutting head of land--  
 Alone? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,  
 When mad Eurydice is listening to 't;  
 I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,  
 With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,  
 But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,  
 Than be--I care not what. O meekest dove  
 Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair!  
 From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,  
 Glance but one little beam of temper'd light  
 Into my bosom, that the dreadful might  
 And tyranny of love be somewhat scar'd!  
 Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment spar'd,  
 Would give a pang to jealous misery,  
 Worse than the torment's self: but rather tie  
 Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out  
 My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout  
 Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,  
 Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow  
 Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.  
 O be propitious, nor severely deem  
 My madness impious; for, by all the stars  
 That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars  
 That kept my spirit in are burst--that I  
 Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!  
 How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!  
 How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep  
 Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins,  
 How lithe! When this thy chariot attains  
 Is airy goal, haply some bower veils  
 Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!--my spirit fails--  
 Dear goddess, help! or the wide-gaping air  
 Will gulph me--help!"--At this with madden'd stare,  
 And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood;  
 Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,  
 Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.  
 And, but from the deep cavern there was borne  
 A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone;  
 Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan  
 Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: "Descend,  
 Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend  
 Into the sparry hollows of the world!

Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd  
As from thy threshold, day by day hast been  
A little lower than the chilly sheen  
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms  
Into the deadening ether that still charms  
Their marble being: now, as deep profound  
As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd  
With immortality, who fears to follow  
Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,  
The silent mysteries of earth, descend!"

He heard but the last words, nor could contend  
One moment in reflection: for he fled  
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head  
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness;  
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite  
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,  
The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,  
But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;  
A dusky empire and its diadems;  
One faint eternal eventide of gems.  
Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,  
Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,  
With all its lines abrupt and angular:  
Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,  
Through a vast antre; then the metal woof,  
Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof  
Curves hugely: now, far in the deep abyss,  
It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss  
Fancy into belief: anon it leads  
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds  
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change;  
Whether to silver grots, or giant range  
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge  
Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge  
Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath  
Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth  
A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come  
But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb  
His bosom grew, when first he, far away,  
Descried an orb'd diamond, set to fray  
Old darkness from his throne: 'twas like the sun  
Uprisen o'er chaos: and with such a stun  
Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,  
He saw not fiercer wonders--past the wit  
Of any spirit to tell, but one of those  
Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,  
Will be its high remembrancers: who they?  
The mighty ones who have made eternal day  
For Greece and England. While astonishment

With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went  
 Into a marble gallery, passing through  
 A mimic temple, so complete and true  
 In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd  
 To search it inwards, whence far off appear'd,  
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,  
 And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,  
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,  
 The youth approach'd; oft turning his veil'd eye  
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old.  
 And when, more near against the marble cold  
 He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread  
 All courts and passages, where silence dead  
 Rous'd by his whispering footsteps murmured faint:  
 And long he travers'd to and fro, to acquaint  
 Himself with every mystery, and awe;  
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw  
 Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim  
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.  
 There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,  
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore  
 The journey homeward to habitual self!  
 A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,  
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,  
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,  
 Into the bosom of a hated thing.

What misery most drowningly doth sing  
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught  
 The goal of consciousness? Ah, 'tis the thought,  
 The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!  
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow  
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild  
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-pil'd,  
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,  
 Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest  
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air;  
 But far from such companionship to wear  
 An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,  
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,  
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?  
 "No!" exclaimed he, "why should I tarry here?"  
 No! loudly echoed times innumerable.  
 At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell  
 His paces back into the temple's chief;  
 Warming and glowing strong in the belief  
 Of help from Dian: so that when again  
 He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,  
 Moving more near the while. "O Haunter chaste  
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,  
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen  
 Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen,

What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?  
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos  
 Of thy departed nymphs? Through what dark tree  
 Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,  
 'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost taste  
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste  
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements;  
 But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,  
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee  
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me,  
 An exil'd mortal, sounds its pleasant name!  
 Within my breast there lives a choking flame--  
 O let me cool it among the zephyr-boughs!  
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue--  
 O let me slake it at the running springs!  
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings--  
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note!  
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float--  
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!  
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?  
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!  
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?  
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice!  
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,  
 Oh think how I should love a bed of flowers!--  
 Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!  
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep!"

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap  
 His destiny, alert he stood: but when  
 Obstinate silence came heavily again,  
 Feeling about for its old couch of space  
 And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face  
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.  
 But 'twas not long; for, sweeter than the rill  
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide  
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,  
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns  
 Up heaping through the slab: refreshment drowns  
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide--  
 Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride  
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew  
 Before his footsteps; as when heav'd anew  
 Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,  
 Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,  
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,  
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;  
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes  
 One moment with his hand among the sweets:  
 Onward he goes--he stops--his bosom beats



As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm  
Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,  
This sleepy music, forc'd him walk tiptoe:  
For it came more softly than the east could blow  
Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles;  
Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles  
Of thron'd Apollo, could breathe back the lyre  
To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,  
Who lov'd--and music slew not? 'Tis the pest  
Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;  
That things of delicate and tenderest worth  
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,  
By one consuming flame: it doth immerse  
And suffocate true blessings in a curse.  
Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,  
Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this  
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear;  
First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,  
Vanish'd in elemental passion.

And down some swart abysm he had gone,  
Had not a heavenly guide benignant led  
To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head  
Brushing, awakened: then the sounds again  
Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain  
Over a bower, where little space he stood;  
For as the sunset peeps into a wood  
So saw he panting light, and towards it went  
Through winding alleys; and lo, wonderment!  
Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,  
Cupids a slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,  
At last, with sudden step, he came upon  
A chamber, myrtle wall'd, embowered high,  
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,  
And more of beautiful and strange beside:  
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,  
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth  
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,  
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:  
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,  
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,  
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds--  
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve  
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve  
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light;  
But rather, giving them to the filled sight  
Officiously. Sideway his face repos'd  
On one white arm, and tenderly unclos'd,

By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth  
To slumb'ry pout; just as the morning south  
Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,  
Four lily stalks did their white honours wed  
To make a coronal; and round him grew  
All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,  
Together intertwin'd and trammel'd fresh:  
The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,  
Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,  
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;  
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;  
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;  
And virgin's bower, trailing airily;  
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,  
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.  
One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,  
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;  
And, ever and anon, uprose to look  
At the youth's slumber; while another took  
A willow-bough, distilling odorous dew,  
And shook it on his hair; another flew  
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise  
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,  
The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er;  
Until, impatient in embarrassment,  
He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went  
To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,  
Smiling, thus whisper'd: "Though from upper day  
Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here  
Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer!  
For 'tis the nicest touch of human honour,  
When some ethereal and high-favouring donor  
Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense;  
As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence  
Was I in no wise startled. So recline  
Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,  
Alive with sparkles--never, I aver,  
Since Ariadne was a vintager,  
So cool a purple: taste these juicy pears,  
Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears  
Were high about Pomona: here is cream,  
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam;  
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd  
For the boy Jupiter: and here, undimm'd  
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums  
Ready to melt between an infant's gums:  
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,  
In starlight, by the three Hesperides.  
Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know  
Of all these things around us." He did so,

Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre;  
 And thus: "I need not any hearing tire  
 By telling how the sea-born goddess pin'd  
 For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind  
 Him all in all unto her dotting self.  
 Who would not be so prison'd? but, fond elf,  
 He was content to let her amorous plea  
 Faint through his careless arms; content to see  
 An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet;  
 Content, O fool! to make a cold retreat,  
 When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,  
 Lay sorrowing; when every tear was born  
 Of diverse passion; when her lips and eyes  
 Were clos'd in sullen moisture, and quick sighs  
 Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.  
 Hush! no exclaim--yet, justly mightst thou call  
 Curses upon his head.--I was half glad,  
 But my poor mistress went distract and mad,  
 When the boar tusk'd him: so away she flew  
 To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew  
 Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard;  
 Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd  
 Each summer time to life. Lo! this is he,  
 That same Adonis, safe in the privacy  
 Of this still region all his winter-sleep.  
 Aye, sleep; for when our love-sick queen did weep  
 Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower  
 Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,  
 Medicined death to a lengthened drowsiness:  
 The which she fills with visions, and doth dress  
 In all this quiet luxury; and hath set  
 Us young immortals, without any let,  
 To watch his slumber through. 'Tis well nigh pass'd,  
 Even to a moment's filling up, and fast  
 She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through  
 The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew  
 Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.  
 Look! how those winged listeners all this while  
 Stand anxious: see! behold!"--This clamant word  
 Broke through the careful silence; for they heard  
 A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd  
 Pigeons and doves: Adonis something mutter'd,  
 The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh  
 Lay dormant, mov'd convuls'd and gradually  
 Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum  
 Of sudden voices, echoing, "Come! come!  
 Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd  
 Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd  
 Full soothingly to every nested finch:  
 Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the blue-bell pinch  
 To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!"  
 At this, from every side they hurried in,

Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,  
 And doubling overhead their little fists  
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive:  
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive  
 In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,  
 So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air  
 Odorous and enlivening; making all  
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call  
 For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green  
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen  
 Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,  
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,  
 Spun off a drizzling dew,--which falling chill  
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still  
 Nestle and turn uneasily about.  
 Soon were the white doves plain, with necks stretch'd out,  
 And silken traces lighten'd in descent;  
 And soon, returning from love's banishment,  
 Queen Venus leaning downward open arm'd:  
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd  
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life  
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,  
 But for her comforting! unhappy sight,  
 But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write  
 Of these first minutes? The unchariest muse  
 To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,  
 Saving love's self, who stands superb to share  
 The general gladness: awfully he stands;  
 A sovereign quell is in his waving hands;  
 No sight can bear the lightning of his bow;  
 His quiver is mysterious, none can know  
 What themselves think of it; from forth his eyes  
 There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes:  
 A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who  
 Look full upon it feel anon the blue  
 Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.  
 Endymion feels it, and no more controls  
 The burning prayer within him; so, bent low,  
 He had begun a plaining of his woe.  
 But Venus, bending forward, said: "My child,  
 Favour this gentle youth; his days are wild  
 With love--he--but alas! too well I see  
 Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.  
 Ah, smile not so, my son: I tell thee true,  
 That when through heavy hours I used to rue  
 The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',  
 This stranger ay I pitied. For upon  
 A dreary morning once I fled away  
 Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray  
 For this my love: for vexing Mars had teaz'd

Me even to tears: thence, when a little eas'd,  
 Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,  
 I saw this youth as he despairing stood:  
 Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind:  
 Those same full fringed lids a constant blind  
 Over his sullen eyes: I saw him throw  
 Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though  
 Death had come sudden; for no jot he mov'd,  
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he lov'd  
 Some fair immortal, and that his embrace  
 Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace  
 Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each cheek,  
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek;  
 And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.  
 Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:  
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends  
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.  
 'Tis a concealment needful in extreme;  
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam  
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu!  
 Here must we leave thee."--At these words up flew  
 The impatient doves, up rose the floating car,  
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar  
 The Latmian saw them minish into nought;  
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught  
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.  
 When all was darkened, with Etnean throe  
 The earth clos'd--gave a solitary moan--  
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,  
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,  
 And he in loneliness: he felt assur'd  
 Of happy times, when all he had endur'd  
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.  
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies  
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,  
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois floor,  
 Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,  
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,  
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,  
 Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence  
 Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er  
 Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,  
 Streams subterranean tease their granite beds;  
 Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads  
 Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash  
 The waters with his spear; but at the splash,  
 Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose  
 Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose  
 His diamond path with fretwork, streaming round  
 Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,

Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells  
 Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells  
 On this delight; for, every minute's space,  
 The streams with changed magic interlace:  
 Sometimes like delicatest lattices,  
 Cover'd with crystal vines; then weeping trees,  
 Moving about as in a gentle wind,  
 Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refin'd,  
 Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,  
 Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries  
 Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair.  
 Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare;  
 And then the water, into stubborn streams  
 Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,  
 Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,  
 Of those dusk places in times far aloof  
 Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell  
 To these founts Protean, passing gulph, and dell,  
 And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,  
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and griesly gapes,  
 Blackening on every side, and overhead  
 A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread  
 With starlight gems: aye, all so huge and strange,  
 The solitary felt a hurried change  
 Working within him into something dreary,--  
 Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary,  
 And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.  
 But he revives at once: for who beholds  
 New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough?  
 Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,  
 Came mother Cybele! alone--alone--  
 In sombre chariot; dark foldings thrown  
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,  
 With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale  
 The sluggish wheels; solemn their toothed maws,  
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws  
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails  
 Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails  
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away  
 In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,  
 Young traveller, in such a mournful place?  
 Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace  
 The diamond path? And does it indeed end  
 Abrupt in middle air? Yet earthward bend  
 Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne  
 Call ardently! He was indeed wayworn;  
 Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost;  
 To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost  
 Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,  
 Without one impious word, himself he flings,

Committed to the darkness and the gloom:  
Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,  
Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell  
Through unknown things; till exhaled asphodel,  
And rose, with spicy fannings interbreath'd,  
Came swelling forth where little caves were wreath'd  
So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd  
Large honey-combs of green, and freshly teem'd  
With airs delicious. In the greenest nook  
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown  
With golden moss. His every sense had grown  
Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head  
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread  
Was Hesperean; to his capable ears  
Silence was music from the holy spheres;  
A dewy luxury was in his eyes;  
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs  
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell  
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell  
Of sudden exaltation: but, "Alas!  
Said he, "will all this gush of feeling pass  
Away in solitude? And must they wane,  
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,  
Without an echo? Then shall I be left  
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft!  
Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,  
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,  
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?  
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,  
Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters,  
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?  
Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,  
Weaving a coronal of tender scions  
For very idleness? Where'er thou art,  
Methinks it now is at my will to start  
Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,  
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main  
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off  
From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff  
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee mid fresh leaves.  
No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives  
Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.  
O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee  
To her entrancements: hither sleep awhile!  
Hither most gentle sleep! and soothing foil  
For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued  
With power to dream deliciously; so wound  
Through a dim passage, searching till he found

The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where  
 He threw himself, and just into the air  
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!  
 A naked waist: "Fair Cupid, whence is this?"  
 A well-known voice sigh'd, "Sweetest, here am I!"  
 At which soft ravishment, with doating cry  
 They trembled to each other.--Helicon!  
 O fountain'd hill! Old Homer's Helicon!  
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er  
 These sorry pages; then the verse would soar  
 And sing above this gentle pair, like lark  
 Over his nested young: but all is dark  
 Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount  
 Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count  
 Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll  
 Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll  
 Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes  
 Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:  
 The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,  
 Although the sun of poesy is set,  
 These lovers did embrace, and we must weep  
 That there is no old power left to steep  
 A quill immortal in their joyous tears.  
 Long time in silence did their anxious fears  
 Question that thus it was; long time they lay  
 Fondling and kissing every doubt away;  
 Long time ere soft caressing sobs began  
 To mellow into words, and then there ran  
 Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.  
 "O known Unknown! from whom my being sips  
 Such darling essence, wherefore may I not  
 Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot  
 Pillow my chin for ever? ever press  
 These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?  
 Why not for ever and for ever feel  
 That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal  
 Away from me again, indeed, indeed--  
 Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed  
 My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair!  
 Is--is it to be so? No! Who will dare  
 To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own will,  
 Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still  
 Let me entwine thee surer, surer--now  
 How can we part? Elysium! who art thou?  
 Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,  
 Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere?  
 Enchantress! tell me by this soft embrace,  
 By the most soft completion of thy face,  
 Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling eyes,  
 And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties--  
 These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,  
 The passion"-----"O lov'd Ida the divine!



Endymion! dearest! Ah, unhappy me!  
 His soul will 'scape us--O felicity!  
 How he does love me! His poor temples beat  
 To the very tune of love--how sweet, sweet, sweet.  
 Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die;  
 Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by  
 In tranced dulness; speak, and let that spell  
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell  
 Its heavy pressure, and will press at least  
 My lips to thine, that they may richly feast  
 Until we taste the life of love again.  
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!  
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;  
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave  
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:  
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence  
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own  
 Myself to thee. Ah, dearest, do not groan  
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy,  
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I  
 Had done it already; that the dreadful smiles  
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,  
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,  
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight  
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!  
 And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone  
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:  
 Yet must I be a coward!--Horror rushes  
 Too palpable before me--the sad look  
 Of Jove--Minerva's start--no bosom shook  
 With awe of purity--no Cupid pinion  
 In reverence veiled--my crystalline dominion  
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!  
 But what is this to love? O I could fly  
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,  
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,  
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once  
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce--  
 Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown--  
 O I do think that I have been alone  
 In chastity: yes, Pallas has been sighing,  
 While every eve saw me my hair uptying  
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love,  
 I was as vague as solitary dove,  
 Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss--  
 Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,  
 An immortality of passion's thine:  
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine  
 Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade  
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;  
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,  
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.

My happy love will overwing all bounds!  
O let me melt into thee; let the sounds  
Of our close voices marry at their birth;  
Let us entwine hoveringly--O dearth  
Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!  
Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach  
Thine honied tongue--lute-breathings, which I gasp  
To have thee understand, now while I clasp  
Thee thus, and weep for fondness--I am pain'd,  
Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd  
In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life?"--  
Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife  
Melted into a languor. He return'd  
Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd  
With too much passion, will here stay and pity,  
For the mere sake of truth; as 'tis a ditty  
Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told  
By a cavern wind unto a forest old;  
And then the forest told it in a dream  
To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam  
A poet caught as he was journeying  
To Phoebus' shrine; and in it he did fling  
His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,  
And after, straight in that inspired place  
He sang the story up into the air,  
Giving it universal freedom. There  
Has it been ever sounding for those ears  
Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers  
Yon centinel stars; and he who listens to it  
Must surely be self-doomed or he will rue it:  
For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,  
Made fiercer by a fear lest any part  
Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.  
As much as here is penn'd doth always find  
A resting place, thus much comes clear and plain;  
Anon the strange voice is upon the wane--  
And 'tis but echo'd from departing sound,  
That the fair visitant at last unwound  
Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.--  
Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers.--  
Endymion awoke, that grief of hers  
Sweet paining on his ear: he sickly guess'd  
How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd  
His empty arms together, hung his head,  
And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed  
Sat silently. Love's madness he had known:  
Often with more than tortured lion's groan  
Moanings had burst from him; but now that rage

Had pass'd away: no longer did he wage  
A rough-voic'd war against the dooming stars.  
No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars:  
The lyre of his soul Eolian tun'd  
Forgot all violence, and but commun'd  
With melancholy thought: O he had swoon'd  
Drunken from pleasure's nipple; and his love  
Henceforth was dove-like.--Loth was he to move  
From the imprinted couch, and when he did,  
'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid  
In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd  
Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd  
Alecto's serpents; ravishments more keen  
Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean  
Over eclipsing eyes: and at the last  
It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,  
O'er studded with a thousand, thousand pearls,  
And crimson mouthed shells with stubborn curls,  
Of every shape and size, even to the bulk  
In which whales arbour close, to brood and sulk  
Against an endless storm. Moreover too,  
Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,  
Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder  
Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder  
On all his life: his youth, up to the day  
When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,  
He stept upon his shepherd throne: the look  
Of his white palace in wild forest nook,  
And all the revels he had lorded there:  
Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,  
With every friend and fellow-woodlander--  
Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur  
Of the old bards to mighty deeds: his plans  
To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans:  
That wondrous night: the great Pan-festival:  
His sister's sorrow; and his wanderings all,  
Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd:  
Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd  
High with excessive love. "And now," thought he,  
"How long must I remain in jeopardy  
Of blank amazements that amaze no more?  
Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core  
All other depths are shallow: essences,  
Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,  
Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,  
And make my branches lift a golden fruit  
Into the bloom of heaven: other light,  
Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight  
The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,  
Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark!  
My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells;  
Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells

Of noises far away?--list!"--Hereupon  
 He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone  
 Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,  
 On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,  
 A copious spring; and both together dash'd  
 Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd  
 Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,  
 Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot  
 Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise  
 As of some breathless racers whose hopes poize  
 Upon the last few steps, and with spent force  
 Along the ground they took a winding course.  
 Endymion follow'd--for it seem'd that one  
 Ever pursued, the other strove to shun--  
 Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh  
 He had left thinking of the mystery,--  
 And was now rapt in tender hoverings  
 Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it sings  
 His dream away? What melodies are these?  
 They sound as through the whispering of trees,  
 Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear!

"O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear  
 Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,  
 Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I  
 Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,  
 Circling about her waist, and striving how  
 To entice her to a dive! then stealing in  
 Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.  
 O that her shining hair was in the sun,  
 And I distilling from it thence to run  
 In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!  
 To linger on her lily shoulders, warm  
 Between her kissing breasts, and every charm  
 Touch raptur'd!--See how painfully I flow:  
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.  
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead,  
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead  
 Where all that beauty snar'd me."--"Cruel god,  
 Desist! or my offended mistress' nod  
 Will stagnate all thy fountains:--tease me not  
 With syren words--Ah, have I really got  
 Such power to madden thee? And is it true--  
 Away, away, or I shall dearly rue  
 My very thoughts: in mercy then away,  
 Kindest Alpheus for should I obey  
 My own dear will, 'twould be a deadly bane."--  
 "O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a pain  
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn  
 And be a criminal."--"Alas, I burn,  
 I shudder--gentle river, get thee hence.  
 Alpheus! thou enchanter! every sense

Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.  
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,  
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave;  
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave  
 In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow  
 Grew strong within me: wherefore serve me so,  
 And call it love? Alas, 'twas cruelty.  
 Not once more did I close my happy eyes  
 Amid the thrush's song. Away! Avaunt!  
 O 'twas a cruel thing."--"Now thou dost taunt  
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think  
 If thou wast playing on my shady brink,  
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid!  
 Stifle thine heart no more;--nor be afraid  
 Of angry powers: there are deities  
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs  
 'Tis almost death to hear: O let me pour  
 A dewy balm upon them!--fear no more,  
 Sweet Arethusa! Dian's self must feel  
 Sometimes these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal  
 Blushing into my soul, and let us fly  
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.  
 I will delight thee all my winding course,  
 From the green sea up to my hidden source  
 About Arcadian forests; and will shew  
 The channels where my coolest waters flow  
 Through mossy rocks; where, 'mid exuberant green,  
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen  
 Than Saturn in his exile; where I brim  
 Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim  
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees  
 Buzz from their honied wings: and thou shouldst please  
 Thyself to choose the richest, where we might  
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.  
 Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,  
 And let us be thus comforted; unless  
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream  
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,  
 And pour to death along some hungry sands."--  
 "What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands  
 Severe before me: persecuting fate!  
 Unhappy Arethusa! thou wast late  
 A huntress free in"--At this, sudden fell  
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.  
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,  
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er  
 The name of Arethusa. On the verge  
 Of that dark gulph he wept, and said: "I urge  
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,  
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,  
 If thou art powerful, these lovers pains;  
 And make them happy in some happy plains.

He turn'd--there was a whelming sound--he stept,  
There was a cooler light; and so he kept  
Towards it by a sandy path, and lo!  
More suddenly than doth a moment go,  
The visions of the earth were gone and fled--  
He saw the giant sea above his head.

John Keats

### Endymion: Book III

There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men  
With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen  
Their baaing vanities, to browse away  
The comfortable green and juicy hay  
From human pastures; or, O torturing fact!  
Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd  
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe  
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one tinge  
Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight  
Able to face an owl's, they still are dight  
By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,  
And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,  
Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount  
To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,  
Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones--  
Amid the fierce intoxicating tones  
Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,  
And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,  
In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone--  
Like thunder clouds that spake to Babylon,  
And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.--  
Are then regalities all gilded masks?  
No, there are throned seats unscalable  
But by a patient wing, a constant spell,  
Or by ethereal things that, unconfin'd,  
Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,  
And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents  
To watch the abysm-birth of elements.  
Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate  
A thousand Powers keep religious state,  
In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;  
And, silent as a consecrated urn,  
Hold sphery sessions for a season due.  
Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few!  
Have bared their operations to this globe--  
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe  
Our piece of heaven--whose benevolence  
Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every sense  
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,  
As bees gorge full their cells. And, by the feud  
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,  
Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair  
Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.  
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,  
She unobserved steals unto her throne,  
And there she sits most meek and most alone;  
As if she had not pomp subservient;  
As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent  
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;  
As if the ministring stars kept not apart,  
Waiting for silver-footed messages.  
O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees

Feel palpitations when thou lookest in:  
 O Moon! old boughs lisp forth a holier din  
 The while they feel thine airy fellowship.  
 Thou dost bless every where, with silver lip  
 Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,  
 Couched in thy brightness, dream of fields divine:  
 Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,  
 Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes;  
 And yet thy benediction passeth not  
 One obscure hiding-place, one little spot  
 Where pleasure may be sent: the nested wren  
 Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,  
 And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf  
 Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief  
 To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps  
 Within its pearly house.--The mighty deeps,  
 The monstrous sea is thine--the myriad sea!  
 O Moon! far-spooning Ocean bows to thee,  
 And Tellus feels his forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia! where art thou now? What far abode  
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine  
 Such utmost beauty? Alas, thou dost pine  
 For one as sorrowful: thy cheek is pale  
 For one whose cheek is pale: thou dost bewail  
 His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost thou sigh?  
 Ah! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,  
 Or what a thing is love! 'Tis She, but lo!  
 How chang'd, how full of ache, how gone in woe!  
 She dies at the thinnest cloud; her loveliness  
 Is wan on Neptune's blue: yet there's a stress  
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,  
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please  
 The curly foam with amorous influence.  
 O, not so idle: for down-glancing thence  
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about  
 O'erwhelming water-courses; scaring out  
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning  
 Their savage eyes with unaccustomed lightning.  
 Where will the splendor be content to reach?  
 O love! how potent hast thou been to teach  
 Strange journeyings! Wherever beauty dwells,  
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,  
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,  
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.  
 Amid his toil thou gav'st Leander breath;  
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death;  
 Thou madest Pluto bear thin element;  
 And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast sent  
 A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,  
 To find Endymion.



On gold sand impearl'd  
With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,  
Poor Cynthia greeted him, and sooth'd her light  
Against his pallid face: he felt the charm  
To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm  
Of his heart's blood: 'twas very sweet; he stay'd  
His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid  
His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,  
To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads,  
Lashed from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.  
And so he kept, until the rosy veils  
Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand  
Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd  
Into sweet air; and sober'd morning came  
Meekly through billows:--when like taper-flame  
Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,  
He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare  
Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,  
With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd  
Above, around, and at his feet; save things  
More dead than Morpheus' imaginings:  
Old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large  
Of gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targe;  
Rudders that for a hundred years had lost  
The sway of human hand; gold vase emboss'd  
With long-forgotten story, and wherein  
No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin  
But those of Saturn's vintage; mouldering scrolls,  
Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls  
Who first were on the earth; and sculptures rude  
In ponderous stone, developing the mood  
Of ancient Nox;--then skeletons of man,  
Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,  
And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw  
Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe  
These secrets struck into him; and unless  
Dian had chaced away that heaviness,  
He might have died: but now, with cheered feel,  
He onward kept; wooing these thoughts to steal  
About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

"What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst move  
My heart so potently? When yet a child  
I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smil'd.  
Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we went  
From eve to morn across the firmament.  
No apples would I gather from the tree,  
Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously:  
No tumbling water ever spake romance,  
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance:

No woods were green enough, no bower divine,  
 Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine:  
 In sowing time ne'er would I dibble take,  
 Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake;  
 And, in the summer tide of blossoming,  
 No one but thee hath heard me blithly sing  
 And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.  
 No melody was like a passing spright  
 If it went not to solemnize thy reign.  
 Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain  
 By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;  
 And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend  
 With all my ardours: thou wast the deep glen;  
 Thou wast the mountain-top--the sage's pen--  
 The poet's harp--the voice of friends--the sun;  
 Thou wast the river--thou wast glory won;  
 Thou wast my clarion's blast--thou wast my steed--  
 My goblet full of wine--my topmost deed:--  
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!  
 O what a wild and harmonized tune  
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful!  
 On some bright essence could I lean, and lull  
 Myself to immortality: I prest  
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.  
 But, gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss--  
 My strange love came--Felicity's abyss!  
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away--  
 Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway  
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.  
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power  
 Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind,  
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind  
 My sovereign vision.--Dearest love, forgive  
 That I can think away from thee and live!--  
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize  
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!  
 How far beyond!" At this a surpris'd start  
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;  
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear  
 How his own goddess was past all things fair,  
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea  
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.  
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,  
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat  
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;  
 And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,  
 A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,  
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans  
 Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form  
 Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,  
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar  
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape

That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.  
The gulping whale was like a dot in the spell,  
Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell  
To its huge self; and the minutest fish  
Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,  
And show his little eye's anatomy.  
Then there was pictur'd the regality  
Of Neptune; and the sea nymphs round his state,  
In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.  
Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,  
And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd  
So stedfastly, that the new denizen  
Had time to keep him in amazed ken,  
To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man rais'd his hoary head and saw  
The wilder'd stranger--seeming not to see,  
His features were so lifeless. Suddenly  
He woke as from a trance; his snow-white brows  
Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs  
Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,  
Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,  
Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.  
Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil  
Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,  
Who had not from mid-life to utmost age  
Eas'd in one accent his o'er-burden'd soul,  
Even to the trees. He rose: he grasp'd his stole,  
With convuls'd clenches waving it abroad,  
And in a voice of solemn joy, that aw'd  
Echo into oblivion, he said:--

"Thou art the man! Now shall I lay my head  
In peace upon my watery pillow: now  
Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.  
O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!  
O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc'd and stung  
With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,  
When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe?--  
I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen  
Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;  
Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,  
That writhes about the roots of Sicily:  
To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,  
And mount upon the snortings of a whale  
To some black cloud; thence down I'll madly sweep  
On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,  
Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd  
With rapture to the other side of the world!  
O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,  
I bow full hearted to your old decree!  
Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,

For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.  
 Thou art the man!" Endymion started back  
 Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack  
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,  
 Mutter'd: "What lonely death am I to die  
 In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,  
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?  
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,  
 And leave a black memorial on the sand?  
 Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,  
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw  
 His magian fish through hated fire and flame?  
 O misery of hell! resistless, tame,  
 Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,  
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!--  
 O Tartarus! but some few days ago  
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on  
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:  
 Her lips were all my own, and--ah, ripe sheaves  
 Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,  
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop  
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love! love, farewell!  
 Is there no hope from thee? This horrid spell  
 Would melt at thy sweet breath.--By Dian's hind  
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind  
 I see thy streaming hair! and now, by Pan,  
 I care not for this old mysterious man!"

He spake, and walking to that aged form,  
 Look'd high defiance. Lo! his heart 'gan warm  
 With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.  
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?  
 Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought  
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human thought,  
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years?  
 He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.  
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt  
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt  
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake:

"Arise, good youth, for sacred Phoebus' sake!  
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel  
 A very brother's yearning for thee steal  
 Into mine own: for why? thou openest  
 The prison gates that have so long opprest  
 My weary watching. Though thou know'st it not,  
 Thou art commission'd to this fated spot  
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more;  
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore:  
 Aye, hadst thou never lov'd an unknown power  
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour  
 But even now most miserable old,

I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold  
Gave mighty pulses: in this tottering case  
Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays  
As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,  
For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,  
Now as we speed towards our joyous task."

So saying, this young soul in age's mask  
Went forward with the Carian side by side:  
Resuming quickly thus; while ocean's tide  
Hung swollen at their backs, and jewel'd sands  
Took silently their foot-prints. "My soul stands  
Now past the midway from mortality,  
And so I can prepare without a sigh  
To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.  
I was a fisher once, upon this main,  
And my boat danc'd in every creek and bay;  
Rough billows were my home by night and day,--  
The sea-gulls not more constant; for I had  
No housing from the storm and tempests mad,  
But hollow rocks,--and they were palaces  
Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease:  
Long years of misery have told me so.  
Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.  
One thousand years!--Is it then possible  
To look so plainly through them? to dispel  
A thousand years with backward glance sublime?  
To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime  
From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,  
And one's own image from the bottom peep?  
Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,  
My long captivity and moanings all  
Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,  
The which I breathe away, and thronging come  
Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

"I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures:  
I was a lonely youth on desert shores.  
My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars,  
And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive cry  
Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.  
Dolphins were still my playmates; shapes unseen  
Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,  
Nor be my desolation; and, full oft,  
When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft  
Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe  
To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe  
My life away like a vast sponge of fate,  
Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,  
Has dived to its foundations, gulph'd it down,  
And left me tossing safely. But the crown  
Of all my life was utmost quietude:

More did I love to lie in cavern rude,  
Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,  
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!  
There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer  
My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear  
The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,  
Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep:  
And never was a day of summer shine,  
But I beheld its birth upon the brine:  
For I would watch all night to see unfold  
Heaven's gates, and Aethon snort his morning gold  
Wide o'er the swelling streams: and constantly  
At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,  
My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.  
The poor folk of the sea-country I blest  
With daily boon of fish most delicate:  
They knew not whence this bounty, and elate  
Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

"Why was I not contented? Wherefore reach  
At things which, but for thee, O Latmian!  
Had been my dreary death? Fool! I began  
To feel distemper'd longings: to desire  
The utmost privilege that ocean's sire  
Could grant in benediction: to be free  
Of all his kingdom. Long in misery  
I wasted, ere in one extremest fit  
I plung'd for life or death. To interknit  
One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff  
Might seem a work of pain; so not enough  
Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,  
And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt  
Whole days and days in sheer astonishment;  
Forgetful utterly of self-intent;  
Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.  
Then, like a new fledg'd bird that first doth shew  
His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,  
I tried in fear the pinions of my will.  
'Twas freedom! and at once I visited  
The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.  
No need to tell thee of them, for I see  
That thou hast been a witness--it must be  
For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth,  
By the melancholy corners of that mouth.  
So I will in my story straightway pass  
To more immediate matter. Woe, alas!  
That love should be my bane! Ah, Scylla fair!  
Why did poor Glaucus ever--ever dare  
To sue thee to his heart? Kind stranger-youth!  
I lov'd her to the very white of truth,  
And she would not conceive it. Timid thing!  
She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,

Round every isle, and point, and promontory,  
From where large Hercules wound up his story  
Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew  
The more, the more I saw her dainty hue  
Gleam delicately through the azure clear:  
Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear;  
And in that agony, across my grief  
It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief--  
Cruel enchantress! So above the water  
I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phoebus' daughter.  
Aeaea's isle was wondering at the moon:--  
It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon  
Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

"When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower;  
Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,  
Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.  
How sweet, and sweeter! for I heard a lyre,  
And over it a sighing voice expire.  
It ceased--I caught light footsteps; and anon  
The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon  
Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove!  
With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove  
A net whose thraldom was more bliss than all  
The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall  
The dew of her rich speech: "Ah! Art awake?  
O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake!  
I am so oppress'd with joy! Why, I have shed  
An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead;  
And now I find thee living, I will pour  
From these devoted eyes their silver store,  
Until exhausted of the latest drop,  
So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop  
Here, that I too may live: but if beyond  
Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond  
Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme;  
If thou art ripe to taste a long love dream;  
If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,  
Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,  
O let me pluck it for thee." Thus she link'd  
Her charming syllables, till indistinct  
Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul;  
And then she hover'd over me, and stole  
So near, that if no nearer it had been  
This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

"Young man of Latmos! thus particular  
Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far  
This fierce temptation went: and thou may'st not  
Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot?

"Who could resist? Who in this universe?

She did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse  
My fine existence in a golden clime.  
She took me like a child of suckling time,  
And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,  
The current of my former life was stemm'd,  
And to this arbitrary queen of sense  
I bow'd a tranced vassal: nor would thence  
Have mov'd, even though Amphion's harp had woo'd  
Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.  
For as Apollo each eve doth devise  
A new appareling for western skies;  
So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour  
Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.  
And I was free of haunts umbrageous;  
Could wander in the mazy forest-house  
Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,  
And birds from coverts innermost and drear  
Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow--  
To me new born delights!

"Now let me borrow,  
For moments few, a temperament as stern  
As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn  
These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell  
How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

"One morn she left me sleeping: half awake  
I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake  
My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts;  
But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts  
Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,  
That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.  
Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom  
Damp awe assail'd me; for there 'gan to boom  
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,  
Sepulchral from the distance all around.  
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled  
That fierce complain to silence: while I stumbled  
Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.  
I came to a dark valley.--Groanings swell'd  
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,  
The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,  
That glar'd before me through a thorny brake.  
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,  
Bewitch'd me towards; and I soon was near  
A sight too fearful for the feel of fear:  
In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene--  
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,  
Seated upon an uptorn forest root;  
And all around her shapes, wizard and brute,  
Laughing, and wailing, groveling, serpentine,  
Shewing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting!



O such deformities! Old Charon's self,  
 Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,  
 And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,  
 It could not be so phantasied. Fierce, wan,  
 And tyrannizing was the lady's look,  
 As over them a gnarled staff she shook.  
 Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,  
 And from a basket emptied to the rout  
 Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick  
 And roar'd for more; with many a hungry lick  
 About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,  
 Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,  
 And emptied on't a black dull-gurgling phial:  
 Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial  
 Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.  
 She lifted up the charm: appealing groans  
 From their poor breasts went sueing to her ear  
 In vain; remorseless as an infant's bier  
 She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.  
 Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,  
 Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,  
 Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage;  
 Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat  
 And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat:  
 Then was appalling silence: then a sight  
 More wildering than all that hoarse affright;  
 For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,  
 Went through the dismal air like one huge Python  
 Antagonizing Boreas,--and so vanish'd.  
 Yet there was not a breath of wind: she banish'd  
 These phantoms with a nod. Lo! from the dark  
 Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,  
 With dancing and loud revelry,--and went  
 Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.--  
 Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd  
 Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud  
 In human accent: "Potent goddess! chief  
 Of pains resistless! make my being brief,  
 Or let me from this heavy prison fly:  
 Or give me to the air, or let me die!  
 I sue not for my happy crown again;  
 I sue not for my phalanx on the plain;  
 I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife;  
 I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,  
 My children fair, my lovely girls and boys!  
 I will forget them; I will pass these joys;  
 Ask nought so heavenward, so too--too high:  
 Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,  
 Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,  
 From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,  
 And merely given to the cold bleak air.  
 Have mercy, Goddess! Circe, feel my prayer!"

That curst magician's name fell icy numb  
 Upon my wild conjecturing: truth had come  
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.  
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart;  
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,  
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night.  
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate  
 My waking must have been! disgust, and hate,  
 And terrors manifold divided me  
 A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee  
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood:  
 I fled three days--when lo! before me stood  
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,  
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,  
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.  
 "Ha! ha! Sir Dainty! there must be a nurse  
 Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,  
 To cradle thee my sweet, and lull thee: yes,  
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:  
 My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.  
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies  
 Unheard of yet; and it shall still its cries  
 Upon some breast more lily-feminine.  
 Oh, no--it shall not pine, and pine, and pine  
 More than one pretty, trifling thousand years;  
 And then 'twere pity, but fate's gentle shears  
 Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt!  
 Young dove of the waters! truly I'll not hurt  
 One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,  
 That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.  
 And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.  
 Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,  
 Let me sob over thee my last adieus,  
 And speak a blessing: Mark me! thou hast thews  
 Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:  
 But such a love is mine, that here I chase  
 Eternally away from thee all bloom  
 Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.  
 Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast;  
 And there, ere many days be overpast,  
 Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then  
 Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;  
 But live and wither, cripple and still breathe  
 Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeath  
 Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.  
 Adieu, sweet love, adieu!"--As shot stars fall,  
 She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung  
 And poisoned was my spirit: despair sung  
 A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.  
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel  
 My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes

Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise  
Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam  
I found me; by my fresh, my native home.  
Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,  
Came salutary as I waded in;  
And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave  
Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave  
Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd  
Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

"Young lover, I must weep--such hellish spite  
With dry cheek who can tell? While thus my might  
Proving upon this element, dismay'd,  
Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid;  
I look'd--'twas Scylla! Cursed, cursed Circe!  
O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy?  
Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,  
But thou must nip this tender innocent  
Because I lov'd her?--Cold, O cold indeed  
Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed  
The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was  
I clung about her waist, nor ceas'd to pass  
Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,  
Until there shone a fabric crystalline,  
Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.  
Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl  
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold!  
'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;  
And all around--But wherefore this to thee  
Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?--  
I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.  
My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread  
Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became  
Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

"Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,  
Without one hope, without one faintest trace  
Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble  
Of colour'd phantasy; for I fear 'twould trouble  
Thy brain to loss of reason: and next tell  
How a restoring chance came down to quell  
One half of the witch in me. On a day,  
Sitting upon a rock above the spray,  
I saw grow up from the horizon's brink  
A gallant vessel: soon she seem'd to sink  
Away from me again, as though her course  
Had been resum'd in spite of hindering force--  
So vanish'd: and not long, before arose  
Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.  
Old Eolus would stifle his mad spleen,  
But could not: therefore all the billows green  
Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.

The tempest came: I saw that vessel's shrouds  
 In perilous bustle; while upon the deck  
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck;  
 The final gulphing; the poor struggling souls:  
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls.  
 O they had all been sav'd but crazed eld  
 Annull'd my vigorous cravings: and thus quell'd  
 And curb'd, think on't, O Latmian! did I sit  
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit  
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,  
 By one and one, to pale oblivion;  
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,  
 With many a scalding tear and many a groan,  
 When at my feet emerg'd an old man's hand,  
 Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.  
 I knelt with pain--reached out my hand--had grasp'd  
 These treasures--touch'd the knuckles--they unclasp'd--  
 I caught a finger: but the downward weight  
 O'erpowered me--it sank. Then 'gan abate  
 The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst  
 The comfortable sun. I was athirst  
 To search the book, and in the warming air  
 Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.  
 Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on  
 My soul page after page, till well-nigh won  
 Into forgetfulness; when, stupefied,  
 I read these words, and read again, and tried  
 My eyes against the heavens, and read again.  
 O what a load of misery and pain  
 Each Atlas-line bore off!--a shine of hope  
 Came gold around me, cheering me to cope  
 Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!  
 For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

"In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,  
 Doom'd with enfeebled carcass to outstretch  
 His loath'd existence through ten centuries,  
 And then to die alone. Who can devise  
 A total opposition? No one. So  
 One million times ocean must ebb and flow,  
 And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,  
 These things accomplish'd:--If he utterly  
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds  
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;  
 If he explores all forms and substances  
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;  
 He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,  
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief  
 Most piously;--all lovers tempest-tost,  
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,  
 He shall deposit side by side, until  
 Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:

Which done, and all these labours ripened,  
A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,  
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct  
How to consummate all. The youth elect  
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd."--

"Then," cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,  
"We are twin brothers in this destiny!  
Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high  
Is, in this restless world, for me reserv'd.  
What! if from thee my wandering feet had swerv'd,  
Had we both perish'd?"--"Look!" the sage replied,  
"Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,  
Of divers brilliances? 'tis the edifice  
I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies;  
And where I have enshrined piously  
All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die  
Throughout my bondage." Thus discoursing, on  
They went till unobscur'd the porches shone;  
Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight.  
Sure never since king Neptune held his state  
Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.  
Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars  
Has legion'd all his battle; and behold  
How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold  
His even breast: see, many steeled squares,  
And rigid ranks of iron--whence who dares  
One step? Imagine further, line by line,  
These warrior thousands on the field supine:--  
So in that crystal place, in silent rows,  
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.--  
The stranger from the mountains, breathless, trac'd  
Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd;  
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips  
All ruddy,--for here death no blossom nips.  
He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw their hair  
Put sleekly on one side with nicest care;  
And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,  
Put cross-wise to its heart.

"Let us commence,  
Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, even now."  
He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,  
Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,  
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.  
He tore it into pieces small as snow  
That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow;  
And having done it, took his dark blue cloak  
And bound it round Endymion: then struck  
His wand against the empty air times nine.--  
"What more there is to do, young man, is thine:  
But first a little patience; first undo

This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.  
Ah, gentle! 'tis as weak as spider's skein;  
And shouldst thou break it--What, is it done so clean?  
A power overshadows thee! Oh, brave!  
The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.  
Here is a shell; 'tis pearly blank to me,  
Nor mark'd with any sign or character--  
Canst thou read aught? O read for pity's sake!  
Olympus! we are safe! Now, Carian, break  
This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal."

'Twas done: and straight with sudden swell and fall  
Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd  
A lullaby to silence.--"Youth! now strew  
These minced leaves on me, and passing through  
Those files of dead, scatter the same around,  
And thou wilt see the issue."--'Mid the sound  
Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,  
Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,  
And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.  
How lightning-swift the change! a youthful wight  
Smiling beneath a coral diadem,  
Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,  
Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,  
Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force  
Press'd its cold hand, and wept--and Scylla sigh'd!  
Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied--  
The nymph arose: he left them to their joy,  
And onward went upon his high employ,  
Showering those powerful fragments on the dead.  
And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,  
As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.  
Death felt it to his inwards; 'twas too much:  
Death fell a weeping in his charnel-house.  
The Latmian persever'd along, and thus  
All were re-animated. There arose  
A noise of harmony, pulses and throes  
Of gladness in the air--while many, who  
Had died in mutual arms devout and true,  
Sprang to each other madly; and the rest  
Felt a high certainty of being blest.  
They gaz'd upon Endymion. Enchantment  
Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.  
Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,  
Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers  
Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine.  
The two deliverers tasted a pure wine  
Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.  
Speechless they eyed each other, and about  
The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,  
Distracted with the richest overflow  
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

----"Away!"

Shouted the new-born god; "Follow, and pay  
Our piety to Neptunus supreme!"--  
Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,  
They led on first, bent to her meek surprise,  
Through portal columns of a giant size,  
Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.  
Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,  
Down marble steps; pouring as easily  
As hour-glass sand--and fast, as you might see  
Swallows obeying the south summer's call,  
Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,  
Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,  
Just within ken, they saw descending thick  
Another multitude. Whereat more quick  
Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,  
And of those numbers every eye was wet;  
For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,  
Like what was never heard in all the throes  
Of wind and waters: 'tis past human wit  
To tell; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host  
Mov'd on for many a league; and gain'd, and lost  
Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in array,  
And from the rear diminishing away,--  
Till a faint dawn surpris'd them. Glaucus cried,  
"Behold! behold, the palace of his pride!  
God Neptune's palaces!" With noise increas'd,  
They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east.  
At every onward step proud domes arose  
In prospect,--diamond gleams, and golden glows  
Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.  
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,  
Still onward; still the splendour gradual swell'd.  
Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld  
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts  
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts  
Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more near:  
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere  
As marble was there lavish, to the vast  
Of one fair palace, that far far surpass'd,  
Even for common bulk, those olden three,  
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow  
Of Iris, when unfading it doth shew  
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch  
Through which this Paphian army took its march,

Into the outer courts of Neptune's state:  
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,  
To which the leaders sped; but not half raught  
Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,  
And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes  
Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.  
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze  
Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,  
And then, behold! large Neptune on his throne  
Of emerald deep: yet not exalt alone;  
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on  
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast  
Can see all round upon the calmed vast,  
So wide was Neptune's hall: and as the blue  
Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew  
Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,  
Aw'd from the throne aloof;--and when storm-rent  
Disclos'd the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air;  
But sooth'd as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,  
Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering  
Death to a human eye: for there did spring  
From natural west, and east, and south, and north,  
A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth  
A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.  
Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread  
As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe  
Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through  
The delicatest air: air verily,  
But for the portraiture of clouds and sky:  
This palace floor breath-air,--but for the amaze  
Of deep-seen wonders motionless,--and blaze  
Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,  
Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams  
Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang;  
The Nereids danc'd; the Syrens faintly sang;  
And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.  
Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed  
On all the multitude a nectarous dew.  
The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew  
Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;  
And when they reach'd the throned eminence  
She kist the sea-nymph's cheek,--who sat her down  
A toying with the doves. Then,--"Mighty crown  
And sceptre of this kingdom!" Venus said,  
"Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid:  
Behold!--Two copious tear-drops instant fell  
From the God's large eyes; he smil'd delectable,  
And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.--



"Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands  
Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour  
I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power  
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet  
Escap'd from dull mortality's harsh net?  
A little patience, youth! 'twill not be long,  
Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,  
A humid eye, and steps luxurious,  
Where these are new and strange, are ominous.  
Aye, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,  
When others were all blind; and were I given  
To utter secrets, haply I might say  
Some pleasant words:--but Love will have his day.  
So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,  
Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,  
Visit my Cytherea: thou wilt find  
Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;  
And pray persuade with thee--Ah, I have done,  
All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!"--  
Thus the fair goddess: while Endymion  
Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began  
Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran  
In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd;  
And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd  
New growth about each shell and pendent lyre;  
The which, in disentangling for their fire,  
Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture  
For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,  
Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng  
Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,  
And garlanding grew wild; and pleasure reign'd.  
In harmless tendrils they each other chain'd,  
And strove who should be smother'd deepest in  
Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin  
For one so weak to venture his poor verse  
In such a place as this. O do not curse,  
High Muses! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending  
Of dulcet instruments came charmingly;  
And then a hymn.

"KING of the stormy sea!  
Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor  
Of elements! Eternally before  
Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,  
At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock  
Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.

All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home  
Of thy capacious bosom ever flow.  
Thou frownest, and old Eolus thy foe  
Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint  
Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint  
When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam  
Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team  
Gulphs in the morning light, and scuds along  
To bring thee nearer to that golden song  
Apollo singeth, while his chariot  
Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not  
For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou;  
And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,  
As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit  
To blend and interknit  
Subdued majesty with this glad time.  
O shell-borne King sublime!  
We lay our hearts before thee evermore--  
We sing, and we adore!

"Breathe softly, flutes;  
Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;  
Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain;  
Not flowers budding in an April rain,  
Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow,--  
No, nor the Eolian twang of Love's own bow,  
Can mingle music fit for the soft ear  
Of goddess Cytherea!  
Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes  
On our souls' sacrifice.

"Bright-winged Child!  
Who has another care when thou hast smil'd?  
Unfortunates on earth, we see at last  
All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast  
Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.  
O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!  
God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,  
And panting bosoms bare!  
Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser  
Of light in light! delicious poisoner!  
Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until  
We fill--we fill!  
And by thy Mother's lips----"

Was heard no more  
For clamour, when the golden palace door  
Opened again, and from without, in shone  
A new magnificence. On oozy throne  
Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,  
To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold,

Before he went into his quiet cave  
To muse for ever--Then a lucid wave,  
Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,  
Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty  
Of Doris, and the Egean seer, her spouse--  
Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,  
Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:  
His fingers went across it--All were mute  
To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,  
And Thetis pearly too.--

The palace whirls  
Around giddy Endymion; seeing he  
Was there far strayed from mortality.  
He could not bear it--shut his eyes in vain;  
Imagination gave a dizzier pain.  
"O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay!  
Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!  
I die--I hear her voice--I feel my wing--"  
At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring  
Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife  
To usher back his spirit into life:  
But still he slept. At last they interwove  
Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey  
Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,  
To his inward senses these words spake aloud;  
Written in star-light on the dark above:  
Dearest Endymion! my entire love!  
How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 'tis done--  
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.  
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch  
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch  
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!

The youth at once arose: a placid lake  
Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,  
Cooler than all the wonders he had seen,  
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.  
How happy once again in grassy nest!

John Keats

## Endymion: Book IV

Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse!  
O first-born on the mountains! by the hues  
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:  
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,  
While yet our England was a wolfish den;  
Before our forests heard the talk of men;  
Before the first of Druids was a child;--  
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild  
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.  
There came an eastern voice of solemn mood:--  
Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,  
Apollo's garland:--yet didst thou divine  
Such home-bred glory, that they cry'd in vain,  
"Come hither, Sister of the Island!" Plain  
Spake fair Ausonia; and once more she spake  
A higher summons:--still didst thou betake  
Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won  
A full accomplishment! The thing is done,  
Which undone, these our latter days had risen  
On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison  
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets  
Our spirit's wings: despondency besets  
Our pillows; and the fresh to-morrow morn  
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn  
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.  
Long have I said, how happy he who shrives  
To thee! But then I thought on poets gone,  
And could not pray:--nor can I now--so on  
I move to the end in lowliness of heart.----

"Ah, woe is me! that I should fondly part  
From my dear native land! Ah, foolish maid!  
Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade  
Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields!  
To one so friendless the clear freshet yields  
A bitter coolness, the ripe grape is sour:  
Yet I would have, great gods! but one short hour  
Of native air--let me but die at home."

Endymion to heaven's airy dome  
Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,  
When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows  
His head through thorny-green entanglement  
Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,  
Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

"Is no one near to help me? No fair dawn  
Of life from charitable voice? No sweet saying  
To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing?  
No hand to toy with mine? No lips so sweet  
That I may worship them? No eyelids meet  
To twinkle on my bosom? No one dies

Before me, till from these enslaving eyes  
Redemption sparkles!--I am sad and lost."

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost  
Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,  
Warm mountaineer! for canst thou only bear  
A woman's sigh alone and in distress?  
See not her charms! Is Phoebe passionless?  
Phoebe is fairer far--O gaze no more:--  
Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,  
Behold her panting in the forest grass!  
Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass  
For tenderness the arms so idly lain  
Amongst them? Feelest not a kindred pain,  
To see such lovely eyes in swimming search  
After some warm delight, that seems to perch  
Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond  
Their upper lids?--Hist! "O for Hermes' wand  
To touch this flower into human shape!  
That woodland Hyacinthus could escape  
From his green prison, and here kneeling down  
Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown!  
Ah me, how I could love!--My soul doth melt  
For the unhappy youth--Love! I have felt  
So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender  
To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,  
That but for tears my life had fled away!--  
Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,  
And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,  
There is no lightning, no authentic dew  
But in the eye of love: there's not a sound,  
Melodious howsoever, can confound  
The heavens and earth in one to such a death  
As doth the voice of love: there's not a breath  
Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,  
Till it has panted round, and stolen a share  
Of passion from the heart!"--

Upon a bough  
He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now  
Thirst for another love: O impious,  
That he can even dream upon it thus!--  
Thought he, "Why am I not as are the dead,  
Since to a woe like this I have been led  
Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?  
Goddess! I love thee not the less: from thee  
By Juno's smile I turn not--no, no, no--  
While the great waters are at ebb and flow.--  
I have a triple soul! O fond pretence--  
For both, for both my love is so immense,  
I feel my heart is cut in twain for them."

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.  
 The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see  
 Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.  
 He sprang from his green covert: there she lay,  
 Sweet as a muskrose upon new-made hay;  
 With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes  
 Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries.  
 "Fair damsel, pity me! forgive that I  
 Thus violate thy bower's sanctity!  
 O pardon me, for I am full of grief--  
 Grief born of thee, young angel! fairest thief!  
 Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith  
 I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith  
 Thou art my executioner, and I feel  
 Loving and hatred, misery and weal,  
 Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,  
 And all my story that much passion slew me;  
 Do smile upon the evening of my days:  
 And, for my tortur'd brain begins to craze,  
 Be thou my nurse; and let me understand  
 How dying I shall kiss that lily hand.--  
 Dost weep for me? Then should I be content.  
 Scowl on, ye fates! until the firmament  
 Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth  
 Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth  
 Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst  
 To meet oblivion."--As her heart would burst  
 The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied:  
 "Why must such desolation betide  
 As that thou speakest of? Are not these green nooks  
 Empty of all misfortune? Do the brooks  
 Utter a gorgon voice? Does yonder thrush,  
 Schooling its half-fledg'd little ones to brush  
 About the dewy forest, whisper tales?--  
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails  
 Will slime the rose to night. Though if thou wilt,  
 Methinks 'twould be a guilt--a very guilt--  
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away  
 The light--the dusk--the dark--till break of day!"  
 "Dear lady," said Endymion, "'tis past:  
 I love thee! and my days can never last.  
 That I may pass in patience still speak:  
 Let me have music dying, and I seek  
 No more delight--I bid adieu to all.  
 Didst thou not after other climates call,  
 And murmur about Indian streams?"--Then she,  
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,  
 For pity sang this roundelay-----

"O Sorrow,  
 Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?--  
    To give maiden blushes  
    To the white rose bushes?  
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

"O Sorrow,  
    Why dost borrow  
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?--  
    To give the glow-worm light?  
    Or, on a moonless night,  
To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry?

"O Sorrow,  
    Why dost borrow  
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?--  
    To give at evening pale  
    Unto the nightingale,  
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

"O Sorrow,  
    Why dost borrow  
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?--  
    A lover would not tread  
    A cowslip on the head,  
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day--  
    Nor any drooping flower  
    Held sacred for thy bower,  
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

"To Sorrow  
    I bade good-morrow,  
And thought to leave her far away behind;  
    But cheerly, cheerly,  
    She loves me dearly;  
She is so constant to me, and so kind:  
    I would deceive her  
    And so leave her,  
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,  
I sat a weeping: in the whole world wide  
There was no one to ask me why I wept,--  
    And so I kept  
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears  
    Cold as my fears.

"Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,  
I sat a weeping: what enamour'd bride,  
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,  
    But hides and shrouds  
Beneath dark palm trees by a river side?

"And as I sat, over the light blue hills  
There came a noise of revellers: the rills  
Into the wide stream came of purple hue--  
    'Twas Bacchus and his crew!  
The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills  
From kissing cymbals made a merry din--  
    'Twas Bacchus and his kin!  
Like to a moving vintage down they came,  
Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;  
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,  
    To scare thee, Melancholy!  
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!  
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly  
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,  
Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon:--  
    I rush'd into the folly!

"Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,  
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,  
    With sidelong laughing;  
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued  
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white  
    For Venus' pearly bite;  
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,  
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass  
    Tipsily quaffing.

"Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye!  
So many, and so many, and such glee?  
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,  
    Your lutes, and gentler fate?--  
'We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing?  
    A conquering!  
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,  
We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide:--  
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
    To our wild minstrelsy!'

"Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye!  
So many, and so many, and such glee?  
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left  
    Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?--  
'For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;  
For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,  
    And cold mushrooms;  
For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth;  
Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth!--  
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be  
    To our mad minstrelsy!'

"Over wide streams and mountains great we went,  
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,



Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,  
With Asian elephants:  
Onward these myriads--with song and dance,  
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,  
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,  
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,  
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil  
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:  
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,  
Nor care for wind and tide.

"Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,  
From rear to van they scour about the plains;  
A three days' journey in a moment done:  
And always, at the rising of the sun,  
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,  
On spleenful unicorn.

"I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown  
Before the vine-wreath crown!  
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing  
To the silver cymbals' ring!  
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce  
Old Tartary the fierce!  
The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail,  
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;  
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,  
And all his priesthood moans;  
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.--  
Into these regions came I following him,  
Sick hearted, weary--so I took a whim  
To stray away into these forests drear  
Alone, without a peer:  
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

"Young stranger!  
I've been a ranger  
In search of pleasure throughout every clime:  
Alas! 'tis not for me!  
Bewitch'd I sure must be,  
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

"Come then, Sorrow!  
Sweetest Sorrow!  
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:  
I thought to leave thee  
And deceive thee,  
But now of all the world I love thee best.

"There is not one,  
No, no, not one  
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;

Thou art her mother,  
And her brother,  
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade."

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,  
And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!  
Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her;  
And listened to the wind that now did stir  
About the crisped oaks full drearily,  
Yet with as sweet a softness as might be  
Remember'd from its velvet summer song.  
At last he said: "Poor lady, how thus long  
Have I been able to endure that voice?  
Fair Melody! kind Syren! I've no choice;  
I must be thy sad servant evermore:  
I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.  
Alas, I must not think--by Phoebe, no!  
Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be so?  
Say, beautifullest, shall I never think?  
O thou could'st foster me beyond the brink  
Of recollection! make my watchful care  
Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!  
Do gently murder half my soul, and I  
Shall feel the other half so utterly!--  
I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;  
O let it blush so ever! let it soothe  
My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm  
With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.--  
This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is;  
And this is sure thine other softling--this  
Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!  
Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!  
And whisper one sweet word that I may know  
This is this world--sweet dewy blossom!"--Woe!  
Woe! Woe to that Endymion! Where is he?--  
Even these words went echoing dismally  
Through the wide forest--a most fearful tone,  
Like one repenting in his latest moan;  
And while it died away a shade pass'd by,  
As of a thunder cloud. When arrows fly  
Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth  
Their timid necks and tremble; so these both  
Leant to each other trembling, and sat so  
Waiting for some destruction--when lo,  
Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime  
Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time  
Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropt  
Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopt  
One moment from his home: only the sword  
He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward  
Swifter than sight was gone--even before  
The teeming earth a sudden witness bore

Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear  
 Above the crystal circlings white and clear;  
 And catch the cheated eye in wild surprise,  
 How they can dive in sight and unseen rise--  
 So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,  
 Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.  
 The youth of Caria plac'd the lovely dame  
 On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame  
 The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,  
 High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew  
 Exhal'd to Phoebus' lips, away they are gone,  
 Far from the earth away--unseen, alone,  
 Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,  
 The buoyant life of song can floating be  
 Above their heads, and follow them untir'd.--  
 Muse of my native land, am I inspir'd?  
 This is the giddy air, and I must spread  
 Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread  
 Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance  
 Precipitous: I have beneath my glance  
 Those towering horses and their mournful freight.  
 Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await  
 Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid?--  
 There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade  
 From some approaching wonder, and behold  
 Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold  
 Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,  
 Dying to embers from their native fire!

There curl'd a purple mist around them; soon,  
 It seem'd as when around the pale new moon  
 Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow:  
 'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow.  
 For the first time, since he came nigh dead born  
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn  
 Had he left more forlorn; for the first time,  
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime--  
 Because into his depth Cimmerian  
 There came a dream, shewing how a young man,  
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery skin,  
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win  
 An immortality, and how espouse  
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.  
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,  
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait  
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then  
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again.  
 His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,  
 Diversely ting'd with rose and amethyst,  
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought;  
 And scarcely for one moment could be caught  
 His sluggish form reposing motionless.

Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress  
Of vision search'd for him, as one would look  
Athwart the shallows of a river nook  
To catch a glance at silver throated eels,--  
Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals  
His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,  
With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale  
Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are  
Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop  
Their full-veined ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop;  
Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread  
Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,--  
And on those pinions, level in mid air,  
Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.  
Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle  
Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile  
The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks  
On heaven's pavement; brotherly he talks  
To divine powers: from his hand full fain  
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain:  
He tries the nerve of Phoebus' golden bow,  
And asketh where the golden apples grow:  
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,  
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield  
A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings  
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings  
And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,  
And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,  
Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand.  
He blows a bugle,--an ethereal band  
Are visible above: the Seasons four,--  
Green-kyrtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store  
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,  
Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still the blast,  
In swells unmitigated, still doth last  
To sway their floating morris. "Whose is this?  
Whose bugle?" he inquires: they smile--"O Dis!  
Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know  
Its mistress' lips? Not thou?--'Tis Dian's: lo!  
She rises crescented!" He looks, 'tis she,  
His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,  
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;  
Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring  
Towards her, and awakes--and, strange, o'erhead,  
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,  
Beheld awake his very dream: the gods  
Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;  
And Phoebe bends towards him crescented.  
O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,  
Too well awake, he feels the panting side

Of his delicious lady. He who died  
 For soaring too audacious in the sun,  
 Where that same treacherous wax began to run,  
 Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.  
 His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,  
 To that fair shadow'd passion puls'd its way--  
 Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well a day!  
 So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,  
 He could not help but kiss her: then he grew  
 Awhile forgetful of all beauty save  
 Young Phoebe's, golden hair'd; and so 'gan crave  
 Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look  
 At the sweet sleeper,--all his soul was shook,--  
 She press'd his hand in slumber; so once more  
 He could not help but kiss her and adore.  
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.  
 The Latmian started up: "Bright goddess, stay!  
 Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own tongue,  
 I have no d&aelig;dale heart: why is it wrung  
 To desperation? Is there nought for me,  
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?"

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:  
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses  
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawned from underneath.  
 "Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe  
 This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st  
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st  
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.  
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery!--  
 Yet did she merely weep--her gentle soul  
 Hath no revenge in it: as it is whole  
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love!  
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,  
 Even when I feel as true as innocence?  
 I do, I do.--What is this soul then? Whence  
 Came it? It does not seem my own, and I  
 Have no self-passion or identity.  
 Some fearful end must be: where, where is it?  
 By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit  
 Alone about the dark--Forgive me, sweet:  
 Shall we away?" He rous'd the steeds: they beat  
 Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,  
 Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,  
 And Vesper, risen star, began to throe  
 In the dusk heavens silvery, when they  
 Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.  
 Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange--  
 Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,  
 In such wise, in such temper, so aloof

Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,  
So witless of their doom, that verily  
'Tis well nigh past man's search their hearts to see;  
Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or griev'd, or toy'd--  
Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,  
The moon put forth a little diamond peak,  
No bigger than an unobserved star,  
Or tiny point of fairy scymetar;  
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie  
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously  
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.  
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,  
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,  
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd  
This beauty in its birth--Despair! despair!  
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare  
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seiz'd her wrist;  
It melted from his grasp: her hand he kiss'd,  
And, horror! kiss'd his own--he was alone.  
Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then  
Dropt hawkwise to the earth.       There lies a den,  
Beyond the seeming confines of the space  
Made for the soul to wander in and trace  
Its own existence, of remotest glooms.  
Dark regions are around it, where the tombs  
Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce  
One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce  
Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart:  
And in these regions many a venom'd dart  
At random flies; they are the proper home  
Of every ill: the man is yet to come  
Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.  
But few have ever felt how calm and well  
Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.  
There anguish does not sting; nor pleasure pall:  
Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,  
Yet all is still within and desolate.  
Beset with painful gusts, within ye hear  
No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier  
The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none  
Who strive therefore: on the sudden it is won.  
Just when the sufferer begins to burn,  
Then it is free to him; and from an urn,  
Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught--  
Young Semele such richness never quaff  
In her maternal longing. Happy gloom!  
Dark Paradise! where pale becomes the bloom  
Of health by due; where silence dreariest  
Is most articulate; where hopes infest;  
Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep

Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.  
O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!  
Pregnant with such a den to save the whole  
In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian!  
For, never since thy griefs and woes began,  
Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud  
Hath let thee to this Cave of Quietude.  
Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne  
With dangerous speed: and so he did not mourn  
Because he knew not whither he was going.  
So happy was he, not the aerial blowing  
Of trumpets at clear parley from the east  
Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.  
They stung the feather'd horse: with fierce alarm  
He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no charm  
Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd  
A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude,--  
And silvery was its passing: voices sweet  
Warbling the while as if to lull and greet  
The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,  
While past the vision went in bright array.

"Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?  
For all the golden bowers of the day  
Are empty left? Who, who away would be  
From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?  
Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings  
He leans away for highest heaven and sings,  
Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!--  
Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too!  
Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,  
Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,  
Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill  
    Your baskets high  
With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,  
Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,  
Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;  
Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,  
All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie  
    Away! fly, fly!--  
Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,  
Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given  
Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,  
Two fan-like fountains,--thine illuminings  
    For Dian play:  
Dissolve the frozen purity of air;  
Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare  
Shew cold through watery pinions; make more bright  
The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night:  
    Haste, haste away!--  
Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!  
And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:

A third is in the race! who is the third,  
 Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?  
     The ramping Centaur!  
 The Lion's mane's on end: the Bear how fierce!  
 The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce  
 Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent  
 Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,  
     Pale unrelentor,  
 When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing.--  
 Andromeda! sweet woman! why delaying  
 So timidly among the stars: come hither!  
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither  
     They all are going.  
 Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,  
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.  
 Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:  
 Ye shall for ever live and love, for all  
     Thy tears are flowing.--  
 By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!--"

More

Endymion heard not: down his steed him bore,  
 Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.  
 "Alas!" said he, "were I but always borne  
 Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn  
 A path in hell, for ever would I bless  
 Horrors which nourish an uneasiness  
 For my own sullen conquering: to him  
 Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,  
 Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see  
 The grass; I feel the solid ground--Ah, me!  
 It is thy voice--divinest! Where?--who? who  
 Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?  
 Behold upon this happy earth we are;  
 Let us ay love each other; let us fare  
 On forest-fruits, and never, never go  
 Among the abodes of mortals here below,  
 Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny!  
 Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,  
 But with thy beauty will I deaden it.  
 Where didst thou melt too? By thee will I sit  
 For ever: let our fate stop here--a kid  
 I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid  
 Us live in peace, in love and peace among  
 His forest wildernesses. I have clung  
 To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen  
 Or felt but a great dream! O I have been  
 Presumptuous against love, against the sky,  
 Against all elements, against the tie  
 Of mortals each to each, against the blooms



Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs  
 Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory  
 Has my own soul conspired: so my story  
 Will I to children utter, and repent.  
 There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent  
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere,  
 But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here,  
 Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast  
 My life from too thin breathing: gone and past  
 Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!  
 And air of visions, and the monstrous swell  
 Of visionary seas! No, never more  
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore  
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.  
 Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast  
 My love is still for thee. The hour may come  
 When we shall meet in pure elysium.  
 On earth I may not love thee; and therefore  
 Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store  
 All through the teeming year: so thou wilt shine  
 On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,  
 And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss!  
 My river-lily bud! one human kiss!  
 One sigh of real breath--one gentle squeeze,  
 Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,  
 And warm with dew at ooze from living blood!  
 Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that!--all good  
 We'll talk about--no more of dreaming.--Now,  
 Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow  
 Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun  
 Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none;  
 And where dark yew trees, as we rustle through,  
 Will drop their scarlet berry cups of dew?  
 O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place;  
 Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace  
 Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclin'd:  
 For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,  
 And by another, in deep dell below,  
 See, through the trees, a little river go  
 All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.  
 Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,  
 And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,--  
 Cresses that grow where no man may them see,  
 And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag:  
 Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,  
 That thou mayst always know whither I roam,  
 When it shall please thee in our quiet home  
 To listen and think of love. Still let me speak;  
 Still let me dive into the joy I seek,--  
 For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,  
 Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill  
 With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,

And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.  
 Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,  
 And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.  
 Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,  
 And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.  
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace  
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face.  
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire;  
 And to god Phoebus, for a golden lyre;  
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting spear;  
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,  
 That I may see thy beauty through the night;  
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light  
 Tame on thy finger; to the River-gods,  
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods  
 Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.  
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness!  
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be  
 'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee:  
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak  
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,  
 Trembling or stedfastness to this same voice,  
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice:  
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,  
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,  
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.  
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seisure?  
 O that I could not doubt?"

#### The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear  
 His briar'd path to some tranquillity.  
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,  
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow;  
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow  
 Beam'd upward from the vallies of the east:  
 "O that the flutter of this heart had ceas'd,  
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.  
 Young feather'd tyrant! by a swift decay  
 Wilt thou devote this body to the earth:  
 And I do think that at my very birth  
 I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly;  
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,  
 With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven.  
 Art thou not cruel? Ever have I striven  
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do!  
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew  
 Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave  
 To the void air, bidding them find out love:  
 But when I came to feel how far above  
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,  
 All earthly pleasure, all imagin'd good,

Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,--  
Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,  
Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,  
And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,  
Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe  
Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave  
With my own fancies garlands of sweet life,  
Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!  
I may not be thy love: I am forbidden--  
Indeed I am--thwarted, affrighted, chidden,  
By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.  
Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth  
Ask me no more! I may not utter it,  
Nor may I be thy love. We might commit  
Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;  
We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!  
Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught  
In trammels of perverse deliciousness.  
No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,  
And bid a long adieu."

#### The Carian

No word return'd: both lovelorn, silent, wan,  
Into the vallies green together went.  
Far wandering, they were perforce content  
To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;  
Nor at each other gaz'd, but heavily  
Por'd on its hazle cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves  
Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:  
Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem  
Truth the best music in a first-born song.  
Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long,  
And thou shalt aid--hast thou not aided me?  
Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity  
Has been thy meed for many thousand years;  
Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,  
Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester,--  
Forgetting the old tale.

#### He did not stir

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse  
Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls  
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays  
Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.  
A little onward ran the very stream  
By which he took his first soft poppy dream;  
And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant  
A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent  
His skill in little stars. The teeming tree  
Had swollen and green'd the pious charactery,

But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope  
Up which he had not fear'd the antelope;  
And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade  
He had not with his tamed leopards play'd.  
Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,  
Fly in the air where his had never been--  
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery!

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye  
With all his sorrowing? He sees her not.  
But who so stares on him? His sister sure!  
Peona of the woods!--Can she endure--  
Impossible--how dearly they embrace!  
His lady smiles; delight is in her face;  
It is no treachery.

"Dear brother mine!

Endymion, weep not so! Why shouldst thou pine  
When all great Latmos so exalt wilt be?  
Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly;  
And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.  
Sure I will not believe thou hast such store  
Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.  
Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,  
Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.  
Be happy both of you! for I will pull  
The flowers of autumn for your coronals.  
Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls;  
And when he is restor'd, thou, fairest dame,  
Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame  
To see ye thus,--not very, very sad?  
Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad:  
O feel as if it were a common day;  
Free-voic'd as one who never was away.  
No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye shall  
Be gods of your own rest imperial.  
Not even I, for one whole month, will pry  
Into the hours that have pass'd us by,  
Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.  
O Hermes! on this very night will be  
A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light;  
For the soothsayers old saw yesternight  
Good visions in the air,--whence will befall,  
As say these sages, health perpetual  
To shepherds and their flocks; and furthermore,  
In Dian's face they read the gentle lore:  
Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.  
Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.  
Many upon thy death have ditties made;  
And many, even now, their foreheads shade  
With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.

New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,  
 And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows.  
 Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse  
 This wayward brother to his rightful joys!  
 His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise  
 His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,  
 To lure--Endymion, dear brother, say  
 What ails thee?" He could bear no more, and so  
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,  
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said:  
 "I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid!  
 My only visitor! not ignorant though,  
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go  
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be:  
 But there are higher ones I may not see,  
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.  
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake  
 Night after night, and day by day, until  
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.  
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me  
 More happy than betides mortality.  
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave,  
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave  
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.  
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well;  
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.  
 And, for my sake, let this young maid abide  
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,  
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own  
 This may sound strangely: but when, dearest girl,  
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl  
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair!  
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share  
 This sister's love with me?" Like one resign'd  
 And bent by circumstance, and thereby blind  
 In self-commitment, thus that meek unknown:  
 "Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,  
 Of jubilee to Dian:--truth I heard!  
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,  
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.  
 Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,  
 Behold I find it! so exalted too!  
 So after my own heart! I knew, I knew  
 There was a place untenanted in it:  
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,  
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.  
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number  
 Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,  
 With thy good help, this very night shall see  
 My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create

His own particular fright, so these three felt:  
 Or like one who, in after ages, knelt  
 To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine  
 After a little sleep: or when in mine  
 Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends  
 Who know him not. Each diligently bends  
 Towards common thoughts and things for very fear;  
 Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,  
 By thinking it a thing of yes and no,  
 That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow  
 Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last  
 Endymion said: "Are not our fates all cast?  
 Why stand we here? Adieu, ye tender pair!  
 Adieu!" Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,  
 Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot  
 His eyes went after them, until they got  
 Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,  
 In one swift moment, would what then he saw  
 Engulph for ever. "Stay!" he cried, "ah, stay!  
 Turn, damsels! hist! one word I have to say.  
 Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.  
 It is a thing I dote on: so I'd fain,  
 Peona, ye should hand in hand repair  
 Into those holy groves, that silent are  
 Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,  
 At vesper's earliest twinkle--they are gone--  
 But once, once, once again--" At this he press'd  
 His hands against his face, and then did rest  
 His head upon a mossy hillock green,  
 And so remain'd as he a corpse had been  
 All the long day; save when he scantly lifted  
 His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted  
 With the slow move of time,--sluggish and weary  
 Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,  
 Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,  
 And, slowly as that very river flows,  
 Walk'd towards the temple grove with this lament:  
 "Why such a golden eve? The breeze is sent  
 Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall  
 Before the serene father of them all  
 Bows down his summer head below the west.  
 Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,  
 But at the setting I must bid adieu  
 To her for the last time. Night will strew  
 On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,  
 And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves  
 To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.  
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord  
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,  
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour roses;  
 My kingdom's at its death, and just it is  
 That I should die with it: so in all this

We miscal grief, bale, sorrow, heartbreak, woe,  
 What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe  
 I am but rightly serv'd." So saying, he  
 Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;  
 Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,  
 As though they jests had been: nor had he done  
 His laugh at nature's holy countenance,  
 Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,  
 And then his tongue with sober seemlihed  
 Gave utterance as he entered: "Ha!" I said,  
 "King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,  
 And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,  
 This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,  
 And the Promethean clay by thief endued,  
 By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head  
 Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed  
 Myself to things of light from infancy;  
 And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,  
 Is sure enough to make a mortal man  
 Grow impious." So he inwardly began  
 On things for which no wording can be found;  
 Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd  
 Beyond the reach of music: for the choir  
 Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar  
 Nor muffling thicket interpos'd to dull  
 The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,  
 Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.  
 He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,  
 Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight  
 By chilly finger'd spring. "Unhappy wight!  
 Endymion!" said Peona, "we are here!  
 What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?"  
 Then he embrac'd her, and his lady's hand  
 Press'd, saying: "Sister, I would have command,  
 If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."  
 At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate  
 And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,  
 To Endymion's amaze: "By Cupid's dove,  
 And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth  
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!"  
 And as she spake, into her face there came  
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame:  
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display  
 Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day  
 Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld  
 Phoebe, his passion! joyous she upheld  
 Her lucid bow, continuing thus; "Drear, drear  
 Has our delaying been; but foolish fear  
 Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;  
 And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state  
 Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd for change  
 Be spiritualiz'd. Peona, we shall range

These forests, and to thee they safe shall be  
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee  
To meet us many a time." Next Cynthia bright  
Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night:  
Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown  
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.  
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,  
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,  
They vanish'd far away!--Peona went  
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

John Keats



## Epistle To My Brother George

Full many a dreary hour have I past,  
My brain bewildered, and my mind o'ercast  
With heaviness; in seasons when I've thought  
No spherey strains by me could e'er be caught  
From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze  
On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays;  
Or, on the wavy grass outstretched supinely,  
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely:  
That I should never hear Apollo's song,  
Though feathery clouds were floating all along  
The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,  
The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:  
That the still murmur of the honey bee  
Would never teach a rural song to me:  
That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting  
Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,  
Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold  
Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,  
Fly from all sorrowing far, far away;  
A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see  
In water, earth, or air, but poesy.  
It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,  
(For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,)  
That when a Poet is in such a trance,  
In air her sees white coursers paw, and prance,  
Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,  
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel,  
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,  
Is the swift opening of their wide portal,  
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,  
Whose tones reach nought on earth but Poet's ear.  
When these enchanted portals open wide,  
And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,  
The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,  
And view the glory of their festivals:  
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem  
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream;  
Their rich brimmed goblets, that incessant run  
Like the bright spots that move about the sun;  
And, when upheld, the wine from each bright jar  
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.  
Yet further off, are dimly seen their bowers,  
Of which, no mortal eye can reach the flowers;  
And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows  
'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.  
All that's revealed from that far seat of blisses  
Is the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,  
As gracefully descending, light and thin,  
Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,  
When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,

And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,  
Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.  
Should he upon an evening ramble fare  
With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,  
Would he nought see but the dark, silent blue  
With all its diamonds trembling through and through?  
Or the coy moon, when in the waviness  
Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,  
And staidly paces higher up, and higher,  
Like a sweet nun in holy-day attire?  
Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—  
The revelries and mysteries of night:  
And should I ever see them, I will tell you  
Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard:  
But richer far posterity's reward.  
What does he murmur with his latest breath,  
While his proud eye looks though the film of death?  
"What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,  
Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold  
With after times.—The patriot shall feel  
My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel;  
Or, in the senate thunder out my numbers  
To startle princes from their easy slumbers.  
The sage will mingle with each moral theme  
My happy thoughts sententious; he will teem  
With lofty periods when my verses fire him,  
And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.  
Lays have I left of such a dear delight  
That maids will sing them on their bridal night.  
Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,  
When they have tired their gentle limbs with play  
And formed a snowy circle on the grass,  
And placed in midst of all that lovely lass  
Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head  
Crowned with flowers purple, white, and red:  
For there the lily, and the musk-rose, sighing,  
Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying:  
Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,  
A bunch of violets full blown, and double,  
Serenely sleep:—she from a casket takes  
A little book,—and then a joy awakes  
About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,  
And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes:  
For she's to read a tale of hopes, and fears;  
One that I fostered in my youthful years:  
The pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet sleep,  
Must ever and anon with silent creep,  
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest

Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,  
Be lulled with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu!  
Thy dales, and hills, are fading from my view:  
Swiftly I mount, upon wide spreading pinions,  
Far from the narrow bound of thy dominions.  
Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,  
That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,  
And warm thy sons!" Ah, my dear friend and brother,  
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,  
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be  
Happier, and dearer to society.  
At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain  
When some bright thought has darted through my brain:  
Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure  
Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.  
As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,  
I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.  
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,  
Stretched on the grass at my best loved employment  
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought  
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.  
E'en now I'm pillowed on a bed of flowers  
That crowns a lofty clift, which proudly towers  
Above the ocean-waves, The stalks, and blades,  
Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.  
On one side is a field of drooping oats,  
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats;  
So pert and useless, that they bring to mind  
The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.  
And on the other side, outspread, is seen  
Ocean's blue mantle streaked with purple, and green.  
Now 'tis I see a canvassed ship, and now  
Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.  
I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,  
And the broad winged sea-gull never at rest;  
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,  
His breast is dancing on the restless sea.  
Now I direct my eyes into the west,  
Which at this moment is in sunbeams drest:  
Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say adieu!  
'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you!

John Keats

## Fancy

Ever let the Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home:  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;  
Then let winged Fancy wander  
Through the thought still spread beyond her:  
Open wide the mind's cage-door,  
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.  
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,  
And the enjoying of the Spring  
Fades as does its blossoming;  
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,  
Blushing through the mist and dew,  
Cloys with tasting: What do then?  
Sit thee by the ingle, when  
The sear faggot blazes bright,  
Spirit of a winter's night;  
When the soundless earth is muffled,  
And the caked snow is shuffled  
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;  
When the Night doth meet the Noon  
In a dark conspiracy  
To banish Even from her sky.  
Sit thee there, and send abroad,  
With a mind self-overaw'd,  
Fancy, high-commission'd:--send her!  
She has vassals to attend her:  
She will bring, in spite of frost,  
Beauties that the earth hath lost;  
She will bring thee, all together,  
All delights of summer weather;  
All the buds and bells of May,  
From dewy sward or thorny spray;  
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,  
With a still, mysterious stealth:  
She will mix these pleasures up  
Like three fit wines in a cup,  
And thou shalt quaff it:--thou shalt hear  
Distant harvest-carols clear;  
Rustle of the reaped corn;  
Sweet birds antheming the morn:  
And, in the same moment, hark!  
'Tis the early April lark,  
Or the rooks, with busy caw,  
Foraging for sticks and straw.  
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold  
The daisy and the marigold;  
White-plum'd lillies, and the first  
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;  
Shaded hyacinth, alway

Sapphire queen of the mid-May;  
And every leaf, and every flower  
Pearled with the self-same shower.  
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep  
Meagre from its celled sleep;  
And the snake all winter-thin  
Cast on sunny bank its skin;  
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see  
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,  
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest  
Quiet on her mossy nest;  
Then the hurry and alarm  
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;  
Acorns ripe down-pattering,  
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
Every thing is spoilt by use:  
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,  
Too much gaz'd at? Where's the maid  
Whose lip mature is ever new?  
Where's the eye, however blue,  
Doth not weary? Where's the face  
One would meet in every place?  
Where's the voice, however soft,  
One would hear so very oft?  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
Let, then, winged Fancy find  
Thee a mistress to thy mind:  
Dulcet-ey'd as Ceres' daughter,  
Ere the God of Torment taught her  
How to frown and how to chide;  
With a waist and with a side  
White as Hebe's, when her zone  
Slipt its golden clasp, and down  
Fell her kirtle to her feet,  
While she held the goblet sweet  
And Jove grew languid.--Break the mesh  
Of the Fancy's silken leash;  
Quickly break her prison-string  
And such joys as these she'll bring.--  
Let the winged Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home.

John Keats

## Fill For Me A Brimming Bowl

Fill for me a brimming bowl  
And in it let me drown my soul:  
But put therein some drug, designed  
To Banish Women from my mind:  
For I want not the stream inspiring  
That fills the mind with--fond desiring,  
But I want as deep a draught  
As e'er from Lethe's wave was quaff'd;  
From my despairing heart to charm  
The Image of the fairest form  
That e'er my reveling eyes beheld,  
That e'er my wandering fancy spell'd.  
In vain! away I cannot chace  
The melting softness of that face,  
The beaminess of those bright eyes,  
That breast--earth's only Paradise.  
My sight will never more be blest;  
For all I see has lost its zest:  
Nor with delight can I explore,  
The Classic page, or Muse's lore.  
Had she but known how beat my heart,  
And with one smile reliev'd its smart  
I should have felt a sweet relief,  
I should have felt ``the joy of grief."  
Yet as the Tuscan mid the snow  
Of Lapland dreams on sweet Arno,  
Even so for ever shall she be  
The Halo of my Memory.

John Keats

## Fragment of an Ode to Maia

MOTHER of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!  
    May I sing to thee  
As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiae?  
    Or may I woo thee  
In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles  
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,  
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,  
    Leaving great verse unto a little clan?  
O give me their old vigour! and unheard  
    Save of the quiet primrose, and the span  
    Of heaven, and few ears,  
Rounded by thee, my song should die away  
    Content as theirs,  
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

John Keats

## **Give Me Women, Wine, and Snuff**

GIVE me women, wine, and snuff  
Untill I cry out "hold, enough!"  
You may do so sans objection  
Till the day of resurrection:  
For, bless my beard, they aye shall be  
My beloved Trinity.

John Keats



## Happy Is England

Happy is England! I could be content  
To see no other verdure than its own;  
To feel no other breezes than are blown  
Through its tall woods with high romances blent:  
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment  
For skies Italian, and an inward groan  
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,  
And half forget what world or worldling meant.  
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;  
Enough their simple loveliness for me,  
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:  
Yet do I often warmly burn to see  
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,  
And float with them about the summer waters.

John Keats

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John Keats

## His Last Sonnet

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art! -  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors -  
No -yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever -or else swoon to death.

John Keats

## **Hither, Hither, Love**

HITHER hither, love---  
    'Tis a shady mead---  
Hither, hither, love!  
    Let us feed and feed!

Hither, hither, sweet---  
    'Tis a cowslip bed---  
Hither, hither, sweet!  
    'Tis with dew bespread!

Hither, hither, dear  
    By the breath of life,  
Hither, hither, dear!---  
    Be the summer's wife!

Though one moment's pleasure  
    In one moment flies---  
Though the passion's treasure  
    In one moment dies;---

Yet it has not passed---  
    Think how near, how near!---  
And while it doth last,  
    Think how dear, how dear!

Hither, hither, hither  
    Love its boon has sent---  
If I die and wither  
    I shall die content!

John Keats

## How Many Bards Gild The Lapses Of Time!

How many bards gild the lapses of time!  
A few of them have ever been the food  
Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood  
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:  
And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,  
These will in throngs before my mind intrude:  
But no confusion, no disturbance rude  
Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.  
So the unnumbered sounds that evening store;  
The songs of birds—the whispering of the leaves—  
The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves  
With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,  
That distance of recognizance bereaves,  
Makes pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

John Keats

## Hymn To Apollo

GOD of the golden bow,  
And of the golden lyre,  
And of the golden hair,  
And of the golden fire,  
Charioteer  
Of the patient year,  
Where---where slept thine ire,  
When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,  
Thy laurel, thy glory,  
The light of thy story,  
Or was I a worm---too low crawling for death?  
O Delphic Apollo!

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,  
The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd;  
The eagle's feathery mane  
For wrath became stiffen'd---the sound  
Of breeding thunder  
Went drowsily under,  
Muttering to be unbound.  
O why didst thou pity, and beg for a worm?  
Why touch thy soft lute  
Till the thunder was mute,  
Why was I not crush'd---such a pitiful germ?  
O Delphic Apollo!

The Pleiades were up,  
Watching the silent air;  
The seeds and roots in Earth  
Were swelling for summer fare;  
The Ocean, its neighbour,  
Was at his old labour,  
When, who---who did dare  
To tie for a moment, thy plant round his brow,  
And grin and look proudly,  
And blaspheme so loudly,  
And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now?  
O Delphic Apollo!

John Keats

## Hyperion

### BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
Still as the silence round about his lair;  
Forest on forest hung above his head  
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.  
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more  
By reason of his fallen divinity  
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds  
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,  
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,  
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground  
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,  
Unsculptured; and his realmless eyes were closed;  
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,  
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;  
But there came one, who with a kindred hand  
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low  
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.  
She was a Goddess of the infant world;  
By her in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en  
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;  
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.  
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,  
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.  
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:  
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.  
There was a listening fear in her regard,  
As if calamity had but begun;  
As if the vanward clouds of evil days  
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear  
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.  
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:  
The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
She laid, and to the level of his ear  
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake  
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone:  
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue

Would come in these like accents; O how frail  
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!  
 "Saturn, look up!---though wherefore, poor old King?  
 I have no comfort for thee, no not one:  
 I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'  
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;  
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air  
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,  
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;  
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.  
 O aching time! O moments big as years!  
 All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,  
 And press it so upon our weary griefs  
 That unbelief has not a space to breathe.  
 Saturn, sleep on:---O thoughtless, why did I  
 Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?  
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?  
 Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave;  
 So came these words and went; the while in tears  
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,  
 Just where her fallen hair might be outspread  
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.  
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed  
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,  
 And still these two were postured motionless,  
 Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;  
 The frozen God still couchant on the earth,  
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:  
 Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,  
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
 Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:  
 "O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,  
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;  
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it;  
 Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
 Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice  
 Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,



Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 Peers like the front of Saturn? Who had power  
 To make me desolate? Whence came the strength?  
 How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,  
 While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?  
 But it is so; and I am smother'd up,  
 And buried from all godlike exercise  
 Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,  
 And all those acts which Deity supreme  
 Doth ease its heart of love in.---I am gone  
 Away from my own bosom: I have left  
 My strong identity, my real self,  
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit  
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!  
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
 Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;  
 Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;  
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.---  
 Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile: it must---it must  
 Be of ripe progress---Saturn must be King.  
 Yes, there must be a golden victory;  
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown  
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival  
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,  
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir  
 Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be  
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise  
 Of the sky-children; I will give command:  
 Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"  
 This passion lifted him upon his feet,  
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,  
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,  
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.  
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;  
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd  
 Utterance thus.---"But cannot I create?  
 Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth  
 Another world, another universe,  
 To overbear and crumble this to nought?  
 Where is another Chaos? Where?"---That word  
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake  
 The rebel three.---Thea was startled up,  
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,  
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,  
 O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;

I know the covert, for thence came I hither."  
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went  
With backward footing through the shade a space:  
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way  
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist  
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,  
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,  
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:  
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,  
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,  
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.  
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept  
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;---  
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire  
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up  
From man to the sun's God: yet unsecure:  
For as among us mortals omens drear  
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he---  
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,  
Or the familiar visiting of one  
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;  
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,  
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,  
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;  
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagles' wings,  
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard  
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.  
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths  
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,  
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took  
Savor of poisonous brass and metal sick:  
And so, when harbor'd in the sleepy west,  
After the full completion of fair day,---  
For rest divine upon exalted couch,  
And slumber in the arms of melody,  
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease  
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;  
While far within each aisle and deep recess,  
His winged minions in close clusters stood,  
Amaz'd and full of fear; like anxious men  
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,  
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.  
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,  
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,

Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;  
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,  
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;  
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,  
And from the basements deep to the high towers  
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before  
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,  
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,  
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!  
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!  
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!  
O lank-eared phantoms of black-weeded pools!  
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why  
Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
To see and to behold these horrors new?  
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?  
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,  
Of all my lucent empire? It is left  
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,  
I cannot see but darkness, death, and darkness.  
Even here, into my centre of repose,  
The shady visions come to domineer,  
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.---  
Fall!---No, by Tellus and her briny robes!  
Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
I will advance a terrible right arm  
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
And bid old Saturn take his throne again."---  
He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat  
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth;  
For as in theatres of crowded men

Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"  
 So at Hyperion's words the phantoms pale  
 Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;  
 And from the mirror'd level where he stood  
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.  
 At this, through all his bulk an agony  
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
 Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd  
 From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled  
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours  
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
 He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
 Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide  
 Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.  
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode  
 Each day from east to west the heavens through,  
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;  
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep  
 Up to the zenith,---hieroglyphics old,  
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers  
 Then living on the earth, with laboring thought  
 Won from the gaze of many centuries:  
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge  
 Of stone, or rnarble swart; their import gone,  
 Their wisdom long since fled.---Two wings this orb  
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
 Ever exalted at the God's approach:  
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
 Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;  
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.  
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne  
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.  
 He might not:---No, though a primeval God:  
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.  
 Therefore the operations of the dawn  
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.  
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,  
 Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide  
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night  
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,  
 Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent  
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time;  
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.  
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars

Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
 Of Coelus, from the universal space,  
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear:  
 "O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
 And sky-engendered, son of mysteries  
 All unrevealed even to the powers  
 Which met at thy creating; at whose joys  
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,  
 I, Coelus, wonder, how they came and whence;  
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,  
 Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,  
 Manifestations of that beauteous life  
 Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space:  
 Of these new-form'd art thou, O brightest child!  
 Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!  
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,  
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!  
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice  
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head!  
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.  
 Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:  
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.  
 Divine ye were created, and divine  
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,  
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled:  
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;  
 Actions of rage and passion; even as  
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,  
 In men who die.---This is the grief, O son!  
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!  
 Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,  
 As thou canst move about, an evident God;  
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
 Ethereal presence:---I am but a voice;  
 My life is but the life of winds and tides,  
 No more than winds and tides can I avail:---  
 But thou canst.---Be thou therefore in the van  
 Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
 Before the tense string murmur.---To the earth!  
 For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.  
 Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
 And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."---  
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars  
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide  
 Until it ceas'd; and still he kept them wide:  
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.  
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,  
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas,  
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,  
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

## BOOK II

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings  
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,  
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place  
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.  
It was a den where no insulting light  
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans  
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;  
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies  
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.  
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,  
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge  
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:  
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.  
Caus, and Gyges, and Briareus,  
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,  
With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;  
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep  
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs  
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd  
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.  
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;  
Far from her moon had Phoebe wandered;  
And many else were free to roam abroad,  
But for the main, here found they covert drear.  
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque  
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,  
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.  
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave  
Or word, or look, or action of despair.  
Creus was one; his ponderous iron mace  
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
Iapetus another; in his grasp,  
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue  
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
Dead: and because the creature could not spit  
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,

As though in pain; for still upon the flint  
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him  
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
 Though feminine, than any of her sons:  
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
 For she was prophesying of her glory;  
 And in her wide imagination stood  
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes  
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.  
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.  
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,  
 Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,  
 Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild  
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads;  
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,  
 He meditated, plotted, and even now  
 Was hurling mountains in that second war,  
 Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods  
 To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.  
 Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone  
 Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close  
 Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap  
 Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.  
 In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet  
 Of Ops the queen; all clouded round from sight,  
 No shape distinguishable, more than when  
 Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:  
 And many else whose names may not be told.  
 For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,  
 Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt  
 Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd  
 With damp and slippery footing from a depth  
 More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff  
 Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew  
 Till on the level height their steps found ease:  
 Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms  
 Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,  
 And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:  
 There saw she direst strife; the supreme God  
 At war with all the frailty of grief,  
 Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,  
 Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.  
 Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate  
 Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,  
 A disanointing poison: so that Thea,  
 Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass  
 First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart  
 Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,  
 When it is nighing to the mournful house  
 Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;  
 So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,  
 Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,  
 But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
 Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
 Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,  
 "Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;  
 Some started on their feet; some also shouted;  
 Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence;  
 And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,  
 Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,  
 Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.  
 There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
 When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise  
 Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
 With hushing finger, how he means to load  
 His tongue with the fill weight of utterless thought,  
 With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:  
 Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;  
 Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
 No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,  
 Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
 Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
 Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
 Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.  
 Thus grew it up---"Not in my own sad breast,  
 Which is its own great judge and searcher out,  
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus:  
 Not in the legends of the first of days,  
 Studied from that old spirit-leaved book  
 Which starry Uranus with finger bright  
 Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves  
 Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;---  
 And the which book ye know I ever kept  
 For my firm-based footstool:---Ah, infirm!  
 Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent  
 Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,---  
 At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling  
 One against one, or two, or three, or all  
 Each several one against the other three,  
 As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods  
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,  
 Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath  
 Unhinges the poor world;---not in that strife,  
 Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,  
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus:  
 No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,  
 And pore on Nature's universal scroll  
 Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,



The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods,  
 Should cower beneath what, in comparison,  
 Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,  
 O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!  
 O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'---Ye groan:  
 Shall I say 'Crouch!'---Ye groan. What can I then?  
 O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!  
 What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,  
 How we can war, how engine our great wrath!  
 O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear  
 Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,  
 Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face  
 I see, astonied, that severe content  
 Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the sea,  
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
 But cogitation in his watery shades,  
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,  
 In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue  
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.  
 "O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,  
 Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!  
 Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,  
 My voice is not a bellows unto ire.  
 Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof  
 How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:  
 And in the proof much comfort will I give,  
 If ye will take that comfort in its truth.  
 We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
 Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou  
 Hast sifted well the atom-universe;  
 But for this reason, that thou art the King,  
 And only blind from sheer supremacy,  
 One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,  
 Through which I wandered to eternal truth.  
 And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
 So art thou not the last; it cannot be:  
 Thou art not the beginning nor the end.  
 From Chaos and parental Darkness came  
 Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
 That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
 Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
 And with it Light, and Light, engendering  
 Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd  
 The whole enormous matter into life.  
 Upon that very hour, our parentage,  
 The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:  
 Then thou first born, and we the giant race,  
 Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.  
 Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;  
 O folly! for to bear all naked truths,

And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
 That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!  
 As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;  
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
 In will, in action free, companionship,  
 And thousand other signs of purer life;  
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
 And fated to excel us, as we pass  
 In glory that old Darkness: nor are we  
 Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule  
 Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil  
 Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,  
 And feedeth still, more comely than itself?  
 Can it deny the chieftom of green groves?  
 Or shall the tree be envious of the dove  
 Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings  
 To wander wherewithal and find its joys?  
 We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs  
 Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,  
 But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower  
 Above us in their beauty, and must reign  
 In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law  
 That first in beauty should be first in might:  
 Yea, by that law, another race may drive  
 Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.  
 Have ye beheld the young God of the seas,  
 My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?  
 Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along  
 By noble winged creatures he hath made?  
 I saw him on the calmed waters scud,  
 With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
 That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell  
 To all my empire: farewell sad I took,  
 And hither came, to see how dolorous fate  
 Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best  
 Give consolation in this woe extreme.  
 Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through pos'd conviction, or disdain,  
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus  
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?  
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space,  
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;  
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,  
 With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,  
 Thus wording timidly among the fierce:  
 "O Father! I am here the simplest voice,  
 And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,  
 And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,

There to remain for ever, as I fear:  
 I would not bode of evil, if I thought  
 So weak a creature could turn off the help  
 Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;  
 Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell  
 Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,  
 And know that we had parted from all hope.  
 I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
 Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
 Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
 Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;  
 Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;  
 So that I felt a movement in my heart  
 To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
 With songs of misery, music of our woes;  
 And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell  
 And murmur'd into it, and made melody---  
 O melody no more! for while I sang,  
 And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
 The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand  
 Just opposite, an island of the sea,  
 There came enchantment with the shifting wind,  
 That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
 I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
 And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd  
 With that new blissful golden melody.  
 A living death was in each gush of sounds,  
 Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
 That fell, one after one, yet all at once,  
 Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:  
 And then another, then another strain,  
 Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
 With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,  
 To hover round my head, and make me sick  
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears,  
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,  
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
 And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!  
 The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!  
 I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!  
 O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt  
 Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
 Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
 Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook  
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast,  
 Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,  
 And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice  
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:  
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves

In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
 He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.  
 "Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
 Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods?  
 Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all  
 That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,  
 Could agonize me more than baby-words  
 In midst of this dethronement horrible.  
 Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.  
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?  
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?  
 Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the waves,  
 Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I rous'd  
 Your spleens with so few simple words as these?  
 O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:  
 O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes  
 Wide-glaring for revenge!"---As this he said,  
 He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,  
 Still without intermission speaking thus:  
 "Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
 And purge the ether of our enemies;  
 How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
 And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,  
 Stifling that puny essence in its tent.  
 O let him feel the evil he hath done;  
 For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,  
 Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:  
 The days of peace and slumbrous calm are fled;  
 Those days, all innocent of scathing war,  
 When all the fair Existences of heaven  
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:---  
 That was before our brows were taught to frown,  
 Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;  
 That was before we knew the winged thing,  
 Victory, might be lost, or might be won.  
 And be ye mindful that Hyperion,  
 Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced---  
 Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!"

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,  
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name  
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,  
 A pallid gleam across his features stern:  
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God  
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,  
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,  
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks  
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel  
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,

Till suddenly a splendor, like the morn,  
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
 And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
 And every height, and every sullen depth,  
 Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:  
 And all the everlasting cataracts,  
 And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
 Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
 Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
 It was Hyperion:---a granite peak  
 His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view  
 The misery his brilliance had betray'd  
 To the most hateful seeing of itself.  
 Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,  
 Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade  
 In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk  
 Of Memnon's image at the set of sun  
 To one who travels from the dusking East:  
 Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp  
 He utter'd, while his hands contemplative  
 He press'd together, and in silence stood.  
 Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods  
 At sight of the dejected King of day,  
 And many hid their faces from the light:  
 But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
 Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,  
 Uprose Iapetus, and Creus too,  
 And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode  
 To where he towered on his eminence.  
 There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;  
 Hyperion from the peak loud answered, "Saturn!"  
 Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,  
 In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods  
 Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

### BOOK III

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,  
 Amazed were those Titans utterly.  
 O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;  
 For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:  
 A solitary sorrow best befits  
 Thy lips, and antheing a lonely grief.  
 Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
 Many a fallen old Divinity  
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.  
 Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,  
 And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
 In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;  
 For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
 Flush everything that hath a vermeil hue,

Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,  
 And let the clouds of even and of morn  
 Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;  
 Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
 Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
 On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn  
 Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid  
 Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.  
 Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,  
 Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,  
 And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,  
 In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,  
 And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:  
 Apollo is once more the golden theme!  
 Where was he, when the Giant of the sun  
 Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?  
 Together had he left his mother fair  
 And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,  
 And in the morning twilight wandered forth  
 Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
 Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.  
 The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars  
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
 There was no covert, no retired cave,  
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,  
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.  
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears  
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.  
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,  
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by  
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,  
 And there was purport in her looks for him,  
 Which he with eager guess began to read  
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:  
 "How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?  
 Or hath that antique mien and robed form  
 Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?  
 Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er  
 The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone  
 In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced  
 The rustle of those ample skirts about  
 These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers  
 Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.  
 Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,  
 And their eternal calm, and all that face,  
 Or I have dream'd."---"Yes," said the supreme shape,  
 "Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up  
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,  
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast  
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe  
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth

Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange  
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,  
 What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad  
 When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs  
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been  
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,  
 From the young day when first thy infant hand  
 Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm  
 Could bend that bow heroic to all times.  
 Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power  
 Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones  
 For prophecies of thee, and for the sake  
 Of loveliness new born."---Apollo then,  
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,  
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat  
 Throbb'd with the syllables.---"Mnemosyne!  
 Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;  
 Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?  
 Why should I strive to show what from thy lips  
 Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,  
 And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:  
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;  
 And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,  
 Like one who once had wings.---O why should I  
 Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
 Yields to my step aspirant? why should I  
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?  
 Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:  
 Are there not other regions than this isle?  
 What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!  
 And the most patient brilliance of the moon!  
 And stars by thousands! Point me out the way  
 To any one particular beauteous star,  
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
 And make its silvery splendor pant with bliss.  
 I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?  
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
 Makes this alarum in the elements,  
 While I here idle listen on the shores  
 In fearless yet in aching ignorance?  
 O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,  
 That waileth every morn and eventide,  
 Tell me why thus I rave about these groves!  
 Mute thou remainest---Mute! yet I can read  
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:  
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
 Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,  
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
 Creations and destroyings, all at once  
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine

Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
And so become immortal."---Thus the God,  
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept  
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
All the immortal fairness of his limbs;  
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;  
Or liker still to one who should take leave  
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse  
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:  
His very hair, his golden tresses famed,  
Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
Her arms as one who prophesied. At length  
Apollo shriek'd;---and lo! from all his limbs  
Celestial

John Keats



## **If By Dull Rhymes Our English Must Be Chain'd**

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,  
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet  
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness;  
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,  
Sandals more interwoven and complete  
To fit the naked foot of poesy;  
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress  
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd  
By ear industrious, and attention meet:  
Misers of sound and syllable, no less  
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be  
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;  
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,  
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

John Keats

## **In Drear-Nighted December**

IN drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy tree,  
Thy branches ne'er remember  
Their green felicity:  
The north cannot undo them  
With a sleety whistle through them;  
Nor frozen thawings glue them  
From budding at the prime.

In drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy brook,  
Thy bubblings ne'er remember  
Apollo's summer look;  
But with a sweet forgetting,  
They stay their crystal fretting,  
Never, never petting  
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many  
A gentle girl and boy!  
But were there ever any  
Writhed not at passed joy?  
The feel of not to feel it,  
When there is none to heal it  
Nor numbed sense to steel it,  
Was never said in rhyme.

John Keats

## Isabella or The Pot of Basil

I.

Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!  
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!  
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell  
Without some stir of heart, some malady;  
They could not sit at meals but feel how well  
It soothed each to be the other by;  
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep  
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,  
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;  
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,  
But her full shape would all his seeing fill;  
And his continual voice was pleasanter  
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;  
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,  
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,  
Before the door had given her to his eyes;  
And from her chamber-window he would catch  
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;  
And constant as her vespers would he watch,  
Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;  
And with sick longing all the night outwear,  
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight  
Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:  
"To-morrow will I bow to my delight,  
"To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."--  
"O may I never see another night,  
"Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."--  
So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,  
Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek  
Fell sick within the rose's just domain,  
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek  
By every lull to cool her infant's pain:  
"How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,  
"And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:  
"If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,  
"And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day

His heart beat awfully against his side;  
And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide  
Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away--  
Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,  
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child:  
Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

VII.

So once more he had wak'd and anguished  
A dreary night of love and misery,  
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed  
To every symbol on his forehead high;  
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,  
And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,  
"Lorenzo!"--here she ceas'd her timid quest,  
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

"O Isabella, I can half perceive  
"That I may speak my grief into thine ear;  
"If thou didst ever any thing believe,  
"Believe how I love thee, believe how near  
"My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve  
"Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear  
"Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live  
"Another night, and not my passion thrive.

IX.

"Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,  
"Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,  
"And I must taste the blossoms that unfold  
"In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."  
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,  
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:  
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness  
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,  
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart  
Only to meet again more close, and share  
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.  
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair  
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;  
He with light steps went up a western hill,  
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk  
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk

Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,  
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,  
Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.  
Ah! better had it been for ever so,  
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then?--It cannot be--  
Too many tears for lovers have been shed,  
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,  
Too much of pity after they are dead,  
Too many doleful stories do we see,  
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;  
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse  
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,  
The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;  
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,  
And Isabella's was a great distress,  
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove  
Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less--  
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,  
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,  
Enriched from ancestral merchandize,  
And for them many a weary hand did swelt  
In torched mines and noisy factories,  
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt  
In blood from stinging whip;--with hollow eyes  
Many all day in dazzling river stood,  
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
And went all naked to the hungry shark;  
For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death  
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark  
Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe  
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:  
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,  
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts  
Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?--  
Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts  
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?--  
Why were they proud? Because red-lin'd accounts

Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?--  
Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,  
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired  
In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,  
As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,  
Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies,  
The hawks of ship-mast forests--the untired  
And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies--  
Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,--  
Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy  
Fair Isabella in her downy nest?  
How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye  
A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest  
Into their vision covetous and sly!  
How could these money-bags see east and west?--  
Yet so they did--and every dealer fair  
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!  
Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,  
And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,  
And of thy roses amorous of the moon,  
And of thy lilies, that do paler grow  
Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,  
For venturing syllables that ill beseem  
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale  
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;  
There is no other crime, no mad assail  
To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:  
But it is done--succeed the verse or fail--  
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet;  
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,  
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs  
What love Lorenzo for their sister had,  
And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines  
His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad  
That he, the servant of their trade designs,  
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,  
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees

To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,  
And many times they bit their lips alone,  
Before they fix'd upon a surest way  
To make the youngster for his crime atone;  
And at the last, these men of cruel clay  
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;  
For they resolved in some forest dim  
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant  
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade  
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent  
Their footing through the dews; and to him said,  
"You seem there in the quiet of content,  
"Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade  
"Calm speculation; but if you are wise,  
"Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

"To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount  
"To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;  
"Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count  
"His dewy rosary on the eglantine."  
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,  
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine;  
And went in haste, to get in readiness,  
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,  
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft  
If he could hear his lady's matin-song,  
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;  
And as he thus over his passion hung,  
He heard a laugh full musical aloft;  
When, looking up, he saw her features bright  
Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain  
"Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow:  
"Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain  
"I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow  
"Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain  
"Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.  
"Good bye! I'll soon be back."--"Good bye!" said she:--  
And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man  
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream  
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan  
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream  
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan  
The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,  
Lorenzo's flush with love.--They pass'd the water  
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,  
There in that forest did his great love cease;  
Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,  
It aches in loneliness--is ill at peace  
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin:  
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease  
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,  
Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,  
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,  
Because of some great urgency and need  
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.  
Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,  
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;  
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,  
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;  
Sorely she wept until the night came on,  
And then, instead of love, O misery!  
She brooded o'er the luxury alone:  
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,  
And to the silence made a gentle moan,  
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,  
And on her couch low murmuring, "Where? O where?"

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long  
Its fiery vigil in her single breast;  
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung  
Upon the time with feverish unrest--  
Not long--for soon into her heart a throng  
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,  
Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,  
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eyes



The breath of Winter comes from far away,  
And the sick west continually bereaves  
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay  
Of death among the bushes and the leaves,  
To make all bare before he dares to stray  
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel  
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes  
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,  
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes  
Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale  
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes  
Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale;  
And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,  
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,  
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;  
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,  
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall  
For some few gasping moments; like a lance,  
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall  
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again  
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision.--In the drowsy gloom,  
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot  
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb  
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot  
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom  
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute  
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears  
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;  
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,  
To speak as when on earth it was awake,  
And Isabella on its music hung:  
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,  
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;  
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,  
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright  
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof  
From the poor girl by magic of their light,

The while it did unthread the horrid woof  
Of the late darken'd time,--the murderous spite  
Of pride and avarice,--the dark pine roof  
In the forest,--and the sodden turfed dell,  
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet!  
"Red whortle-berries droop above my head,  
"And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;  
"Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed  
"Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat  
"Comes from beyond the river to my bed:  
"Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,  
"And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

"I am a shadow now, alas! alas!  
"Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling  
"Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,  
"While little sounds of life are round me knelling,  
"And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,  
"And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,  
"Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,  
"And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

"I know what was, I feel full well what is,  
"And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;  
"Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,  
"That paleness warms my grave, as though I had  
"A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss  
"To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad;  
"Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel  
"A greater love through all my essence steal."

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"--dissolv'd, and left  
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;  
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,  
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,  
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,  
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:  
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,  
And in the dawn she started up awake;

XLII.

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,  
"I thought the worst was simple misery;  
"I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife  
"Portion'd us--happy days, or else to die;  
"But there is crime--a brother's bloody knife!

"Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:  
"I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,  
"And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised  
How she might secret to the forest hie;  
How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,  
And sing to it one latest lullaby;  
How her short absence might be unsurmised,  
While she the inmost of the dream would try.  
Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,  
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,  
How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,  
And, after looking round the champaign wide,  
Shows her a knife.--"What feverous hectic flame  
"Burns in thee, child?--What good can thee betide,  
"That thou should'st smile again?"--The evening came,  
And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed;  
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,  
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,  
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,  
To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole;  
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,  
And filling it once more with human soul?  
Ah! this is holiday to what was felt  
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though  
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;  
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know  
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;  
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,  
Like to a native lily of the dell:  
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began  
To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon  
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,  
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,  
And put it in her bosom, where it dries  
And freezes utterly unto the bone  
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries:  
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her care,

But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,  
Until her heart felt pity to the core  
At sight of such a dismal labouring,  
And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,  
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:  
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;  
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,  
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?  
Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?  
O for the gentleness of old Romance,  
The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!  
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,  
For here, in truth, it doth not well belong  
To speak:--O turn thee to the very tale,  
And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Persèan sword  
They cut away no formless monster's head,  
But one, whose gentleness did well accord  
With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,  
Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:  
If Love impersonate was ever dead,  
Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.  
'Twas love; cold,--dead indeed, but not dethroned.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,  
And then the prize was all for Isabel:  
She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,  
And all around each eye's sepulchral cell  
Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam  
With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
She drench'd away:--and still she comb'd, and kept  
Sighing all day--and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf,--sweet with the dews  
Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,  
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze  
Through the cold serpent pipe refreshfully,--  
She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did choose  
A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,  
And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set  
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,  
And she forgot the blue above the trees,  
And she forgot the dells where waters run,  
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;  
She had no knowledge when the day was done,  
And the new morn she saw not: but in peace  
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,  
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,  
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,  
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers  
Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew  
Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,  
From the fast mouldering head there shut from view:  
So that the jewel, safely casketed,  
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!  
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!  
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,  
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us--O sigh!  
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile;  
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,  
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,  
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,  
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene!  
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,  
And touch the strings into a mystery;  
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low;  
For simple Isabel is soon to be  
Among the dead: She withers, like a palm  
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself;  
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour!--  
It may not be--those Baalites of pelf,  
Her brethren, noted the continual shower  
From her dead eyes; and many a curious elf,  
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower  
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside  
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much

Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,  
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;  
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean:  
They could not surely give belief, that such  
A very nothing would have power to wean  
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,  
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift  
This hidden whim; and long they watch'd in vain;  
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,  
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain;  
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift  
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again;  
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there  
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,  
And to examine it in secret place:  
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,  
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:  
The guerdon of their murder they had got,  
And so left Florence in a moment's space,  
Never to turn again.--Away they went,  
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!  
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!  
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,  
From isles Lethean, sigh to us--O sigh!  
Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way!"  
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;  
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,  
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,  
Asking for her lost Basil amorously:  
And with melodious chuckle in the strings  
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry  
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,  
To ask him where her Basil was; and why  
'Twas hid from her: "For cruel 'tis," said she,  
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,  
Imploring for her Basil to the last.  
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn

In pity of her love, so overcast.  
And a sad ditty of this story born  
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd:  
Still is the burthen sung--"O cruelty,  
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

John Keats

## **Keen, Fitful Gusts are Whisp'ring Here and There**

Keen, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there  
Among the bushes half leafless, and dry;  
The stars look very cold about the sky,  
And I have many miles on foot to fare.  
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,  
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:  
For I am brimfull of the friendliness  
That in a little cottage I have found;  
Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,  
And all his love for gentle Lycid drown'd;  
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

John Keats



## La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
So haggard and so woe-begone  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow  
With anguish moist and fever dew,  
And on thy cheek a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,  
Full beautiful, a faery's child:  
Her hair was long, her foot was ligh,  
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long;  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She looked at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said,  
"I love thee true!"

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she gazed and sighed deep,  
And there I shut her wild, sad eyes---  
So kissed to sleep.

And there we slumbered on the moss,  
And there I dreamed, ah! woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dreamed  
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
Who cried---"La belle Dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,  
With horrid warning gaped wide,

And I awoke and found me here,  
On the cold hill side.

And that is why I sojourn here,  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

John Keats

## Las Belle Dame sans Merci

'O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
So haggard and so woe-begone?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest 's done.

'I see a lily on thy brow  
With anguish moist and fever dew;  
And on thy cheeks a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.'

'I met a lady in the meads,  
Full beautiful--a faery's child,  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

'I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She look'd at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

'I set her on my pacing steed  
And nothing else saw all day long,  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

'She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said,  
"I love thee true!"

'She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she wept and sigh'd fill sore;  
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes  
With kisses four.

'And there she lulled me asleep,  
And there I dream'd--Ah! woe betide!  
The latest dream I ever dream'd  
On the cold hill's side.

'I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
They cried--"La belle Dame sans Merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

'I saw their starved lips in the gloam  
With horrid warning gaped wide,

And I awoke and found me here,  
On the cold hill's side.

'And this is why I sojourn here  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.'

John Keats

## Last Sonnet

BRIGHT Star, would I were steadfast as thou art--  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priest-like task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors--  
No--yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
    Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
    And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

John Keats

## Lines

UNFELT unheard, unseen,  
I've left my little queen,  
Her languid arms in silver slumber lying:  
Ah! through their nestling touch,  
Who---who could tell how much  
There is for madness---cruel, or complying?

Those faery lids how sleek!  
Those lips how moist!---they speak,  
In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds:  
Into my fancy's ear  
Melting a burden dear,  
How "Love doth know no fulness, nor no bounds."

True!---tender monitors!  
I bend unto your laws:  
This sweetest day for dalliance was born!  
So, without more ado,  
I'll feel my heaven anew,  
For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

.

John Keats

## Lines from Endymion

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondance, of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o`er-darkened ways  
Made for our searching: yes, inspite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits.

John Keats

## Lines on The Mermaid Tavern

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?  
Have ye tippled drink more fine  
Than mine host's Canary wine?  
Or are fruits of Paradise  
Sweeter than those dainty pies  
Of venison? O generous food!  
Drest as though bold Robin Hood  
Would, with his maid Marian,  
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day  
Mine host's sign-board flew away,  
Nobody knew whither, till  
An astrologer's old quill  
To a sheepskin gave the story,  
Said he saw you in your glory,  
Underneath a new old sign  
Sipping beverage divine,  
And pledging with contented smack  
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

John Keats



## Meg Merrilies

OLD Meg she was a gipsy;  
And liv'd upon the moors:  
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,  
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,  
Her currants, pods o' broom;  
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,  
Her book a church-yard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,  
Her sisters larchen trees;  
Alone with her great family  
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,  
No dinner many a noon,  
And 'stead of supper she would stare  
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn, of woodbine fresh  
She made her garlanding,  
And every night the dark glen yew  
She wove, and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown  
She plaited mats o' rushes,  
And gave them to the cottagers  
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,  
And tall as Amazon:  
An old red blanket cloak she wore,  
A chip hat had she on.  
God rest her aged bones somewhere---  
She died full long ago!

John Keats

## **O Blush Not So!**

O BLUSH not so! O blush not so!  
Or I shall think you knowing;  
And if you smile the blushing while,  
Then maidenheads are going.

There's a blush for want, and a blush for shan't,  
And a blush for having done it;  
There's a blush for thought, and a blush for nought,  
And a blush for just begun it.

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!  
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;  
By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips  
And fought in an amorous nipping.

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,  
For it only will last our youth out,  
And we have the prime of the kissing time,  
We have not one sweet tooth out.

There's a sigh for aye, and a sigh for nay,  
And a sigh for "I can't bear it!"  
O what can be done, shall we stay or run?  
O cut the sweet apple and share it!

John Keats

## **O Solitude! If I Must With Thee Dwell**

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,  
Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
Of murky buildings: climb with me the steep, &mdash;  
Nature's observatory &mdash; whence the dell,  
In flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the deer's swift leap  
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.  
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,  
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

John Keats

## Ode

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Have ye souls in heaven too,  
Double lived in regions new?  
Yes, and those of heaven commune  
With the spheres of sun and moon;  
With the noise of fountains wound'rous,  
And the parle of voices thund'rous;  
With the whisper of heaven's trees  
And one another, in soft ease.

Seated on Elysian lawns  
Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns;  
Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
And the rose herself has got  
Perfume which on earth is not;  
Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth;  
Philosophic numbers smooth;  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again;  
And the souls ye left behind you  
Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
Where your other souls are joying,  
Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
To mortals, of their little week;  
Of their sorrows and delights;  
Of their passions and their spites;  
Of their glory and their shame;  
What doth strengthen and what maim.  
Thus ye teach us, every day,  
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Ye have souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new!

John Keats

## Ode On A Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
What little town by river or sea shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,--that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

John Keats

## Ode On Indolence

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,  
I With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced;  
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,  
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;  
They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,  
When shifted round to see the other side;  
They came again; as when the urn once more  
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return;  
And they were strange to me, as may betide  
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

How is it, Shadows! that I knew ye not?  
How came ye muffled in so hush a masque?  
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot  
To steal away, and leave without a task  
My idle days? Ripe was the drowsy hour;  
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence  
Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;  
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower:  
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense  
Unhaunted quite of all but---nothingness?

A third time came they by;---alas! wherefore?  
My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;  
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er  
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams:  
The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,  
Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;  
The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,  
Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;  
O Shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!  
Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd  
Each one the face a moment whiles to me;  
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd  
And ached for wings, because I knew the three;  
The first was a fair maid, and Love her name;  
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,  
And ever watchful with fatigued eye;  
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame  
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,---  
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

They faded, and, forsooth! I wanted wings:  
O folly! What is Love! and where is it?  
And for that poor Ambition---it springs  
From a man's little heart's short fever-fit;  
For Poesy!---no,---she has not a joy,---  
At least for me,---so sweet as drowsy noons,  
And evenings steep'd in honied indolence;  
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,

That I may never know how change the moons,  
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise  
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;  
For I would not be dieted with praise,  
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!  
Fade sofdy from my eyes, and be once more  
In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn;  
Farewell! I yet have visions for the night,  
And for the day faint visions there is store;  
Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle spright,  
Into the clouds, and never more return!

John Keats



## Ode on Melancholy

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist  
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed  
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
Nor let the beetle nor the death-moth be  
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty -- Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips;  
Ay, in the very temple of delight  
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous  
tongue  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

John Keats

## Ode To A Nightingale

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thy happiness,---  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been  
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
Dance, and Provencal song, and sun-burnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Clustered around by all her starry fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain---  
To thy high requiem become a sod

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
The same that oft-times hath  
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:---do I wake or sleep?

John Keats

## Ode To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cell.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,---  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

## Ode to Fanny

Physician Nature! Let my spirit blood!  
O ease my heart of verse and let me rest;  
Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood  
Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.  
A theme! a theme! great nature! give a theme;  
Let me begin my dream.  
I come -- I see thee, as thou standest there,  
Beckon me not into the wintry air.

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,  
And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries, --  
To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears  
A smile of such delight,  
As brilliant and as bright,  
As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,  
Lost in soft amaze,  
I gaze, I gaze!

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?  
What stare outfaces now my silver moon!  
Ah! keep that hand unravished at the least;  
Let, let, the amorous burn --  
But pr'ythee, do not turn  
The current of your heart from me so soon.  
O! save, in charity,  
The quickest pulse for me.

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe  
Voluptuous visions into the warm air;  
Though swimming through the dance's dangerous wreath,  
Be like an April day,  
Smiling and cold and gay,  
A temperate lilly, temperate as fair;  
Then, Heaven! there will be  
A warmer June for me.

Why, this, you'll say, my Fanny! is not true:  
Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,  
Where the heart beats: confess -- 'tis nothing new --  
Must not a woman be  
A feather on the sea,  
Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?  
Of as uncertain speed  
As blow-ball from the mead?

I know it -- and to know it is despair  
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!  
Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,  
Nor, when away you roam,  
Dare keep its wretched home,  
Love, love alone, his pains severe and many:  
Then, loveliest! keep me free,

From torturing jealousy.

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above  
The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour;  
Let none profane my Holy See of love,  
Or with a rude hand break  
The sacramental cake:  
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower;  
If not -- may my eyes close,  
Love! on their lost repose.

John Keats

## Ode To Psyche

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
Even into thine own soft-conched ear:  
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see  
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?  
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,  
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side  
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof  
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran  
A brooklet, scarce espied:

Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,  
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,  
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass;  
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;  
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,  
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,  
And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:  
The winged boy I knew;  
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?  
His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far  
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!  
Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,  
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;  
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;  
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan  
Upon the midnight hours;  
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
From chain-swung censer teeming;  
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,  
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;  
Yet even in these days so far retir'd  
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.  
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
Upon the midnight hours;  
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
From swung censer teeming;  
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat

Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane  
In some untrodden region of my mind,  
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,  
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:  
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees  
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;  
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,  
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;  
And in the midst of this wide quietness  
A rosy sanctuary will I dress  
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,  
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,  
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,  
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:  
And there shall be for thee all soft delight  
That shadowy thought can win,  
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,  
To let the warm Love in!

John Keats



## On Fame

### I.

Fame, like a wayward girl, will still be coy  
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,  
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,  
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;  
She is a Gipsy,--will not speak to those  
Who have not learnt to be content without her;  
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,  
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her;  
A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,  
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;  
Ye love-sick Bards! repay her scorn for scorn;  
Ye Artists lovelorn! madmen that ye are!  
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,  
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

### II.

"You cannot eat your cake and have it too."--Proverb.

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look  
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,  
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,  
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;  
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,  
On the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,  
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,  
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom:  
But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,  
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,  
And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,  
The undisturbed lake has crystal space;  
Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,  
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

John Keats

## On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;  
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He star'd at the Pacific--and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise--  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

John Keats

## **On Leaving Some Friends At An Early Hour**

Give me a golden pen, and let me lean  
On heaped-up flowers, in regions clear, and far;  
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,  
Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen  
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:  
And let there glide by many a pearly car  
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,  
And half-discovered wings, and glances keen.  
The while let music wander round my ears,  
And as it reaches each delicious ending,  
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,  
And full of many wonders of the spheres:  
For what a height my spirit is contending!  
'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

John Keats

## **On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time**

My spirit is too weak; mortality  
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,  
And each imagined pinnacle and steep  
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die  
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.  
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,  
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep  
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.  
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain  
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;  
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,  
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude  
Wasting of old Time -with a billowy main,  
A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

John Keats

## On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again

O golden-tongued Romance with serene lute!  
Fair plumed Syren! Queen of far away!  
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,  
Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute:  
Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,  
Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay  
Must I burn through; once more humbly assay  
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.  
Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,  
Begetters of our deep eternal theme,  
When through the old oak forest I am gone,  
Let me not wander in a barren dream,  
But when I am consumed in the fire,  
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

John Keats

## **On the Grasshopper and Cricket**

The poetry of earth is never dead:  
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;  
That is the Grasshopper's--he takes the lead  
In summer luxury,--he has never done  
With his delights; for when tired out with fun  
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.  
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:  
On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,  
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,  
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

John Keats

## On the Sea

It keeps eternal whisperings around  
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell  
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,  
That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell.  
When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.  
Oh, ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,  
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;  
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,  
Or fed too much with cloying melody---  
Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth and brood,  
Until ye start, as if the sea nymphs quired!

John Keats

## Robin Hood

NO! those days are gone away,  
And their hours are old and gray,  
And their minutes buried all  
Under the down-trodden pall  
Of the leaves of many years:  
Many times have winter's shears,  
Frozen North, and chilling East,  
Sounded tempests to the feast  
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,  
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,  
And the twanging bow no more;  
Silent is the ivory shrill  
Past the heath and up the hill;  
There is no mid-forest laugh,  
Where lone Echo gives the half  
To some wight, amaz'd to hear  
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June  
You may go, with sun or moon,  
Or the seven stars to light you,  
Or the polar ray to right you;  
But you never may behold  
Little John, or Robin bold;  
Never one, of all the clan,  
Thrumming on an empty can  
Some old hunting ditty, while  
He doth his green way beguile  
To fair hostess Merriment,  
Down beside the pasture Trent;  
For he left the merry tale,  
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;  
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;  
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw  
Idling in the "grene shawe";  
All are gone away and past!  
And if Robin should be cast  
Sudden from his turfed grave,  
And if Marian should have  
Once again her forest days,  
She would weep, and he would craze:  
He would swear, for all his oaks,  
Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,  
Have rotted on the briny seas;  
She would weep that her wild bees  
Sang not to her---strange! that honey  
Can't be got without hard money!



So it is; yet let us sing  
Honour to the old bow-string!  
Honour to the bugle-horn!  
Honour to the woods unshorn!  
Honour to the Lincoln green!  
Honour to the archer keen!  
Honour to tight little John,  
And the horse he rode upon!  
Honour to bold Robin Hood,  
Sleeping in the underwood!  
Honour to maid Marian,  
And to all the Sherwood clan!  
Though their days have hurried by  
Let us two a burden try.

John Keats

## **Song of the Indian Maid, from 'Endymion'**

O SORROW!

Why dost borrow  
The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?--  
To give maiden blushes  
To the white rose bushes?  
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow  
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?--  
To give the glow-worm light?  
Or, on a moonless night,  
To tinge, on siren shores, the salt sea-spry?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow  
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?--  
To give at evening pale  
Unto the nightingale,  
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

O Sorrow!

Why dost borrow  
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?--  
A lover would not tread  
A cowslip on the head,  
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day--  
Nor any drooping flower  
Held sacred for thy bower,  
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

To Sorrow

I bade good morrow,  
And thought to leave her far away behind;  
But cheerly, cheerly,  
She loves me dearly;  
She is so constant to me, and so kind:  
I would deceive her  
And so leave her,  
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,  
I sat a-weeping: in the whole world wide  
There was no one to ask me why I wept,--  
And so I kept  
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears  
Cold as my fears.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,  
I sat a-weeping: what enamour'd bride,  
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,  
But hides and shrouds

Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side?

And as I sat, over the light blue hills  
There came a noise of revellers: the rills  
Into the wide stream came of purple hue--

'Twas Bacchus and his crew!

The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills  
From kissing cymbals made a merry din--

'Twas Bacchus and his kin!

Like to a moving vintage down they came,  
Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;  
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,  
To scare thee, Melancholy!

O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!

And I forgot thee, as the berried holly

By shepherds is forgotten, when in June

Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon:--

I rush'd into the folly!

Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,  
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,

With sidelong laughing;

And little rills of crimson wine imbrued

His plump white arms and shoulders, enough white

For Venus' pearly bite;

And near him rode Silenus on his ass,

Pelted with flowers as he on did pass

Tipsily quaffing.

'Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye,  
So many, and so many, and such glee?

Why have ye left your bowers desolate,

Your lutes, and gentler fate?'--

'We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,

A-conquering!

Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,

We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide:--

Come hither, lady fair, and joined be

To our wild minstrelsy!

'Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye,  
So many, and so many, and such glee?

Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left

Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?'--

'For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;

For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,

And cold mushrooms;

For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth;

Great god of breathless cups and chirping mirth!

Come hither, lady fair, and joined be

To our mad minstrelsy!

Over wide streams and mountains great we went,  
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,  
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,  
    With Asian elephants:  
Onward these myriads--with song and dance,  
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,  
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,  
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,  
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil  
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:  
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,  
    Nor care for wind and tide.

Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,  
From rear to van they scour about the plains;  
A three days' journey in a moment done;  
And always, at the rising of the sun,  
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,  
    On spleenful unicorn.

I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown  
    Before the vine-wreath crown!  
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing  
    To the silver cymbals' ring!  
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce  
    Old Tartary the fierce!  
The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,  
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;  
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,  
    And all his priesthood moans,  
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.  
Into these regions came I, following him,  
Sick-hearted, weary--so I took a whim  
To stray away into these forests drear,  
    Alone, without a peer:  
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

Young Stranger!  
I've been a ranger  
In search of pleasure throughout every clime;  
Alas! 'tis not for me!  
Bewitch'd I sure must be,  
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

Come then, Sorrow,  
    Sweetest Sorrow!  
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:  
I thought to leave thee,  
    And deceive thee,  
But now of all the world I love thee best.

There is not one,

No, no, not one  
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;  
    Thou art her mother,  
    And her brother,  
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.

John Keats

## Stanzas

IN a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy tree,  
Thy branches ne'er remember  
Their green felicity:  
The north cannot undo them,  
With a sleety whistle through them;  
Nor frozen thawings glue them  
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,  
Too happy, happy brook,  
Thy bubblings ne'er remember  
Apollo's summer look;  
But with a sweet forgetting,  
They stay their crystal fretting,  
Never, never petting  
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many  
A gentle girl and boy!  
But were there ever any  
Writhed not at passed joy?  
To know the change and feel it,  
When there is none to heal it,  
Nor numbed sense to steal it,  
Was never said in rhyme.

John Keats

## **The Day Is Gone, And All Its Sweets Are Gone**

The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!  
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,  
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semitone,  
Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and lang'rous waist!  
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,  
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,  
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,  
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise&mdash;  
Vanished unseasonably at shut of eve,  
When the dusk holiday&mdash;or holineight  
Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave  
The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;  
But, as I've read love's missal through today,  
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

John Keats

## The Eve Of St. Agnes

ST Agnes' Eve---Ah, bitter chill it was!  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue  
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;  
But no---already had his deathbell rung  
The joys of all his life were said and sung:  
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;  
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,  
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,  
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:  
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily  
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay  
Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and wing'd St Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight,



And soft adorings from their loves receive  
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;  
As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:  
The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,  
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by---she heeded not at all: in vain  
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,  
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;  
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,  
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:  
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs  
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort  
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,  
Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,  
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;  
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss---in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:  
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:  
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,  
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond

The sound of merriment and chorus bland.  
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,  
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;  
"They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;  
He had a fever late, and in the fit  
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:  
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his gray hairs---Alas me! flit!  
Flit like a ghost away."---"Ah, gossip dear,  
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how"---"Good saints! not here, not here;  
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,  
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,  
And as she mutter'd "Well-a---well-a-day!"  
He found him in a little moonlight room,  
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
"Now tell me where is Madeline", said he,  
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
"When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St Agnes! Ah! it is St Agnes' Eve---  
Yet men will murder upon holy days:  
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays  
To venture so: it fills me with amaze  
To see thee, Porphyro!---St Agnes' Eve!  
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
This very night: good angels her deceive!  
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
Who keepeth clos'd a wondrous riddle-book,  
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.  
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold  
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:  
"A cruel man and impious thou art:  
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream

Alone with her good angels, far apart  
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!---I deem  
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace  
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;  
Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring  
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,  
That Angela gives promise she will do  
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
Him in a closet, of such privacy  
That he might see her beauty unespied,  
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
While legion'd fairies pac'd the coverlet,  
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
Never on such a night have lovers met,  
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:  
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there  
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame  
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,  
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer  
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;  
The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.

His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St Agnes' charmed maid,  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
She comes, she comes again, like dove fray'd and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:  
She closed the door, she panted, all akin  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:  
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!  
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;  
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,  
All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;  
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for heaven:---Porphyro grew faint:  
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,  
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;  
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;  
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:  
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,  
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd  
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;  
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
To wake into a slumbrous tenderness;  
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,  
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!---how fast she slept!

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon  
A doth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:---  
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:---  
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.---  
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,  
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream

By the dusk curtains:---'twas a midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as iced stream:  
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;  
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,---  
Tumultuous,---and, in chords that tenderest be,  
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy:"  
Close to her ear touching the melody:---  
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:  
He ceased---she panted quick---and suddenly  
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:  
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd  
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,  
At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,  
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:  
How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far  
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star  
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose  
Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
Blendeth its odour with the violet,---  
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows  
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
Against the window-panes; St Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:  
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:  
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!"

Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.---  
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine  
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;---  
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed?  
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
After so many hours of toil and quest,  
A famish'd pilgrim,---saved by miracle.  
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
Arise---arise! the morning is at hand;---  
The bloated wassailers will never heed:---  
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,---  
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears---  
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.---  
In all the house was heard no human sound.  
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;  
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,  
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;  
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;  
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side:  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
By one, and one, the bolts fill easy slide:---  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones,---  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old

Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;  
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

John Keats



## The Human Seasons

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;  
There are four seasons in the mind of man:  
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:  
He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves  
To ruminatè, and by such dreaming high  
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves  
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings  
He furlèth close; contented so to look  
On mists in idleness--to let fair things  
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.  
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,  
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

John Keats

### **Think Of It Not, Sweet One**

THINK not of it, sweet one, so;---  
Give it not a tear;  
Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go  
Any---anywhere.

Do not lool so sad, sweet one,---  
Sad and fadingly;  
Shed one drop then,---it is gone---  
O 'twas born to die!

Still so pale? then, dearest, weep;  
Weep, I'll count the tears,  
And each one shall be a bliss  
For thee in after years.

Brighter has it left thine eyes  
Than a sunny rill;  
And thy whispering melodies  
Are tenderer still.

Yet---as all things mourn awhile  
At fleeting blisses,  
E'en let us too! but be our dirge  
A dirge of kisses.

John Keats

## **This Living Hand**

This living hand, now warm and capable  
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold  
And in the icy silence of the tomb,  
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights  
That thou wouldst wish thine own heart dry of blood  
So in my veins red life might stream again,  
And thou be conscience-calmed - see here it is -  
I hold it towards you.

John Keats

## **To A Friend Who Sent Me Some Roses**

As late I rambled in the happy fields,  
What time the skylark shakes the tremulous dew  
From his lush clover covert;—when anew  
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields;  
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,  
A fresh-blown musk-rose; 'twas the first that threw  
Its sweets upon the summer: graceful it grew  
As is the wand that Queen Titania wields.  
And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,  
I thought the garden-rose it far excelled;  
But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me,  
My sense with their deliciousness was spelled:  
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
Whispered of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquelled.

John Keats

## To A Young Lady Who Sent Me A Laurel Crown

Fresh morning gusts have blown away all fear  
From my glad bosom, & now from gloominess  
I mount for ever & not an atom less  
Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.  
No! by the eternal stars! or why sit here  
In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press  
Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless  
By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.  
Lo! who dares say, "Do this"? Who dares call down  
My will from its high purpose? Who say, "Stand,"  
Or, "Go"? This mighty moment I would frown  
On abject Caesars & not the stoutest band  
Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown:  
Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand.

John Keats

## To Ailsa Rock

Hearken, thou craggy ocean-pyramid,  
Give answer by thy voice—the sea-fowls' screams!  
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?  
When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?  
How long is't since the mighty Power bid  
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—  
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams—  
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid!  
Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep.  
Thy life is but two dead eternities,  
The last in air, the former in the deep!  
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies!  
Drowned wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,  
Another cannot wake thy giant-size!

John Keats

## To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,--  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

## To Byron

Byron! how sweetly sad thy melody!  
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,  
As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,  
Had touch'd her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,  
Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them to die.  
O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less  
Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress  
With a bright halo, shining beamily,  
As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,  
Its sides are ting'd with a resplendent glow,  
Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,  
And like fair veins in sable marble flow;  
Still warble, dying swan! still tell the tale,  
The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

John Keats



## To Fanny

I cry your mercy&mdash;pity&mdash;love!&mdash;aye, love!  
Merciful love that tantalizes not,  
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,  
Unmasked, and being seen&mdash;without a blot!  
O! let me have thee whole,&mdash;all&mdash;all&mdash;be mine!  
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest  
Of love, your kiss,&mdash;those hands, those eyes divine,  
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast,&mdash;  
Yourself&mdash;your soul&mdash;in pity give me all,  
Withhold no atom's atom or I die,  
Or living on, perhaps, your wretched thrall,  
Forget, in the mist of idle misery,  
Life's purposes,&mdash;the palate of my mind  
Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!

John Keats

## **To G.A.W.**

Nymph of the downward smile and sidelong glance!  
In what diviner moments of the day  
Art thou most lovely?—when gone far astray  
Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance,  
Or when serenely wandering in a trance  
Of sober thought? Or when starting away,  
With careless robe to meet the morning ray,  
Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance?  
Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,  
And so remain, because thou listenest:  
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely  
That I can never tell what mood is best;  
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly  
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

John Keats

## To Haydon

Haydon! forgive me that I cannot speak  
Definitively of these mighty things;  
Forgive me, that I have not eagle's wings,  
That what I want I know not where to seek,  
And think that I would not be over-meeek,  
In rolling out upfollowed thunderings,  
Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,  
Were I of ample strength for such a freak.  
Think, too, that all these numbers should be thine;  
Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's hem?  
For, when men stared at what was most divine  
With brainless idiotism and o'erwise phlegm,  
Thou hadst beheld the full Hesperian shine  
Of their star in the east, and gone to worship them!

John Keats

## To Homer

Standing aloof in giant ignorance,  
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,  
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance  
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.  
So thou wast blind;--but then the veil was rent,  
For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,  
And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,  
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;  
Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,  
And precipices show untrodden green,  
There is a budding morrow in midnight,  
There is a triple sight in blindness keen;  
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel  
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

John Keats

## To Hope

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,  
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,  
Should sad Despondency my musings fright,  
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,  
Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,  
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof!

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,  
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart;  
When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,  
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart:  
Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,  
And fright him as the morning frightens night!

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear  
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,  
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbidfancy cheer;  
Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow:  
Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,  
From cruel parents, or relentless fair;  
O let me think it is not quite in vain  
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air!  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

In the long vista of the years to roll,  
Let me not see our country's honour fade:  
O let me see our land retain her soul,  
Her pride, her freedom; and not freedom's shade.  
From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed---  
Beneath thy pinions canopy my head!

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,  
Great Liberty! how great in plain attire!  
With the base purple of a court oppress'd,  
Bowing her head, and ready to expire:  
But let me see thee stoop from heaven on wings  
That fill the skies with silver glitterings!

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star  
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud;  
Brightening the half veil'd face of heaven afar:

So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,  
Sweet Hope, celestial influence round me shed,  
Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head!

John Keats

## **To John Hamilton Reynolds**

O that a week could be an age, and we  
Felt parting and warm meeting every week,  
Then one poor year a thousand years would be,  
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek:  
So could we live long life in little space,  
So time itself would be annihilate,  
So a day's journey in oblivious haze  
To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.  
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind!  
To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant!  
In little time a host of joys to bind,  
And keep our souls in one eternal pant!  
This morn, my friend, and yester-evening taught  
Me how to harbour such a happy thought.

John Keats

## To Mrs Reynolds' Cat

Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric,  
How many mice and rats hast in thy days  
Destroy'd? How many tit bits stolen? Gaze  
With those bright languid segments green, and prick  
Those velvet ears - but pr'ythee do not stick  
Thy latent talons in me - and upraise  
Thy gentle mew - and tell me all thy frays,  
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.  
Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists -  
For all thy wheezy asthma - and for all  
Thy tail's tip is nick'd off - and though the fists  
Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,  
Still is that fur as soft, as when the lists  
In youth thou enter'dest on glass bottled wall.

John Keats



## To Mrs. Reynolds's Cat

Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric,  
How many mice and rats hast in thy days  
Destroy'd? -- How many tidbits stolen? Gaze  
With those bright languid segments green, and prick  
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Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,  
Still is that fur as soft as when the lists  
In youth thou enter'dst on glass-bottled wall.

John Keats

## To My Brother George

Many the wonders I this day have seen:  
The sun, when first he kissed away the tears  
That filled the eyes of Morn;—the laurelled peers  
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean;—  
The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,  
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,  
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears  
Must think on what will be, and what has been.  
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,  
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping  
So scantly, that it seems her bridal night,  
And she her half-discovered revels keeping.  
But what, without the social thought of thee,  
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

John Keats

## To My Brothers

Small, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,  
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep  
Like whispers of the household gods that keep  
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.  
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,  
Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,  
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,  
That aye at fall of night our care condoles.  
This is your birth-day Tom, and I rejoice  
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.  
Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise  
May we together pass, and calmly try  
What are this world's true joys, ere the great voice,  
From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly.

John Keats

## To one who has been long in city pent

To one who has been long in city pent,  
    'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
    And open face of heaven,--to breathe a prayer  
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.  
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,  
    Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair  
    Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair  
And gentle tale of love and languishment?  
Returning home at evening, with an ear  
    Catching the notes of Philomel,--an eye  
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,  
    He mourns that day so soon has glided by:  
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear  
    That falls through the clear ether silently.

John Keats

## To Sleep

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!  
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,  
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,  
    Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;  
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,  
    In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes.  
Or wait the Amen, ere thy poppy throws  
    Around my bed its lulling charities;  
    Then save me, or the passed day will shine  
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;  
    Save me from curious conscience, that still hoards  
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;  
    Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,  
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

John Keats

## To Solitude

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,  
Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep, --  
Nature's observatory -- whence the dell,  
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap  
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.  
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,  
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

John Keats

## To the Nile

Son of the old Moon-mountains African!  
Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!  
We call thee fruitful, and that very while  
A desert fills our seeing's inward span:  
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,  
Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile  
Such men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,  
Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?  
O may dark fancies err! They surely do;  
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste  
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew  
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste  
The pleasant sunrise. Green isles hast thou too,  
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

John Keats

## To—;

Had I a man's fair form, then might my sighs  
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell,  
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so well  
Would passion arm me for the enterprise:  
But ah! I am no knight whose foeman dies;  
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell;  
I am no happy shepherd of the dell  
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.  
Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee sweet,  
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honied roses  
When steeped in dew rich to intoxication.  
Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,  
And when the moon her pallid face discloses,  
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

John Keats



## When I Have Fears

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
    Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
Before high-piled books, in characterly,  
    Hold like rich garnerers the full ripen'd grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,  
    Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
    Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
    That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the faery power  
    Of unreflecting love;--then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

John Keats

## **When I have Fears that I may cease to be**

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
Before high pilgrimage books, in charact'ry,  
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And feel that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!  
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Never have relish in the faery power  
Of unreflecting love;--then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,  
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

John Keats

## **Where Be Ye Going, You Devon Maid?**

WHERE be ye going, you Devon maid?  
And what have ye there i' the basket?  
Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy,  
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your meads, and I love your flowers,  
And I love your junkets mainly,  
But 'hind the door, I love kissing more,  
O look not so disdainly!

I love your hills, and I love your dales,  
And I love your flocks a-bleating;  
But O, on the heather to lie together,  
With both our hearts a-beating!

I'll put your basket all safe in a nook,  
Your shawl I'll hang up on this willow,  
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye,  
And kiss on a grass-green pillow.

John Keats

## **Where Be Ye Going?**

Where be ye going, you Devon maid?  
And what have ye there i' the basket?  
Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy,  
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your meads, and I love your flowers,  
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And kiss on a grass-green pillow.

John Keats

## Where's the Poet?

Where's the Poet? show him! show him,  
Muses nine! that I may know him.  
'Tis the man who with a man  
Is an equal, be he King,  
Or poorest of the beggar-clan  
Or any other wonderous thing  
A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;  
'Tis the man who with a bird,  
Wren or Eagle, finds his way to  
All its instincts; he hath heard  
The Lion's roaring, and can tell  
What his horny throat expresseth,  
And to him the Tiger's yell  
Come articulate and presseth  
Or his ear like mother-tongue.

John Keats

## **Why did I laugh tonight? No voice will tell**

Why did I laugh tonight? No voice will tell  
No God, no demon of severe response  
Deigns to reply from heaven or from hell  
Then to my human heart I turn at once:  
Heart, thou and I are here, sad and alone,  
Say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!  
O darkness! darkness! Forever must I moan  
To question heaven and hell and heart in vain?  
Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease  
My fancy to it's utmost blisses spreads  
Yet would I on this very midnight cease  
And all the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds  
Verse, fame and beauty are intense indeed  
But death intenser, death is life's high meed.

John Keats

## Written Before Re-Reading King Lear

O golden-tongued Romance with serene lute!  
Fair plumed Syren! Queen of far away!  
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,  
Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute.  
Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute  
Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay  
Must I burn through; once more humbly assay  
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.  
Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,  
Begetters of our deep eternal theme,  
When through the old oak Forest I am gone,  
Let me not wander in a barren dream,  
But when I am consumed in the Fire,  
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

John Keats

## Written on a Blank Space

This pleasant tale is like a little copse:  
The honied lines so freshly interlace,  
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,  
So that he here and there full-hearted stops;  
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops  
Come cool and suddenly against his face,  
And, by the wandering melody, may trace  
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.  
Oh! what a power has white Simplicity!  
What mighty power has this gentle story!  
I, that do ever feel athirst for glory,  
Could at this moment be content to lie  
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings  
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

John Keats



## **Written On A Blank Space At The End Of Chaucer's Tale Of The Flowre And The Lefe**

This pleasant tale is like a little copse:  
The honied lines so freshly interlace,  
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,  
So that he here and there full-hearted stops;  
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops  
Come cool and suddenly against his face,  
And, by the wandering melody, may trace  
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.  
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Could at this moment be content to lie  
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings  
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

John Keats

## Written on a Summer Evening

The church bells toll a melancholy round,  
Calling the people to some other prayers,  
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,  
More harkening to the sermon's horrid sound.  
Surely the mind of man is closely bound  
In some blind spell: seeing that each one tears  
Himself from fireside joys and Lydian airs,  
And converse high of those with glory crowned.  
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,  
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know  
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp, -  
That 'tis their sighing, wailing, ere they go  
Into oblivion -that fresh flowers will grow,  
And many glories of immortal stamp.

John Keats

## Written on the Day that Mr Leigh Hunt Left Prison

What though, for showing truth to flattered state,  
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,  
In his immortal spirit, been as free  
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.  
Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?  
Think you he nought but prison-walls did see,  
Till, so unwilling, thou unturnedst the key?  
Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!  
In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,  
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew  
With daring Milton through the fields of air:  
To regions of his own his genius true  
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair  
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

John Keats