

# Ode to a Nightingale

BY JOHN KEATS

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 thine happiness,—  
    That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees  
        In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
    Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
    Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
    Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt 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 to-morrow.

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,  
Cluster'd 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 cover'd 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,  
Call'd 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  
Charm'd 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 fam'd 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?

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# “Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art”

BY JOHN KEATS

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.

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# To Autumn

BY JOHN KEATS

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 ooziings 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 **sallows**, 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.

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