

KEATS, John

**Imitation of Spenser**

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,

And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill;

Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,

Silv'ring the untainted gushes of its rill;

Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distill,

And after parting beds of simple flowers,

By many streams a little lake did fill,

Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,

And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the king-fisher saw his plumage bright

Vieing with fish of brilliant dye below;

Whose silken fins, and golden scales' light

Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow:

There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,

And oar'd himself along with majesty;

Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show

Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,

And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle

That in that fairest lake had placed been,

I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;

Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen:

For sure so fair a place was never seen,

Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:

It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen

Of the bright waters; or as when on high,

Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously

Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,

Which, as it were in gentle amity,

Rippled delighted up the flowery side;

As if to glean the ruddy tears, it tried,

Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!

Haply it was the workings of its pride,

In strife to throw upon the shore a gem

Outviewing all the buds in Flora's diadem.

**On Death**
I.

Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,

And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?

The transient pleasures as a vision seem,

And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

II.

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,

And lead a life of woe, but not forsake

His rugged path; nor dare he view alone

His future doom which is but to awake.

**Isabella**

…..
L.

With duller steel than the Perséan 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.
…..

**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.

**Sleep and Poetry**…..
What is more gentle than a wind in summer?

What is more soothing than the pretty hummer

That stays one moment in an open flower,

And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?

What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing

In a green island, far from all men's knowing?

More healthful than the leafiness of dales?

More secret than a nest of nightingales?

More serene than Cordelia's countenance?

More full of visions than a high romance?

What, but thee Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!

Low murmurer of tender lullabies!

Light hoverer around our happy pillows!

Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!

Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!

Most happy listener! when the morning blesses

Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes

That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.
…..

**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 kiss'd

       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

       Veil'd 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 shalt taste the sadness of her might,

               And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

**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-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'ercast,
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 rimmed 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 finished: 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.
…..

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| --- | --- |
| **When I have fears that I may cease to be**When I have fears that I may cease to beBefore my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,Before high piled 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 think that I may never live to traceTheir 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 powerOf unreflecting love!—then on the shoreOf the wide world I stand alone, and thinkTill Love and Fame to nothingness do sink. | **Wanneer ik de angst voel dat ik misschien ophoud te bestaan**Wanneer ik de angst voel dat ik misschien ophoud te bestaan, vooraleer mijn pen mijn spinnende brein doorgrond heeft …..Dan sta ik op de wijde wereldoever alleen en denk natot Liefde en Roem in het niets verzinken .*Vertaling: Z. DE MEESTER*  |

**La Belle Dame Sans Merci**O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

 Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has 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 sidelong would she bend, 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.

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

 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.

**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."

**The Eve of St. Agnes**
…..

XXV

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.

XXVI

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.

XXVII

Soon, trembling with her soft and chilly nest,

In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,

Until the poppied 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.

…..

**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 lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;

 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,

And seal the hushed Casket of my Soul.

**'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill'**I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,

That the sweet buds which with a modest pride

Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,

Their scantly leaved, and finely tapering stems,

Had not yet lost those starry diadems

Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.

The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,

And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept

On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept

A little noiseless noise among the leaves,

Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:

For not the faintest motion could be seen

Of all the shades that slanted o’er the green.

There was wide wand’ring for the greediest eye,

To peer about upon variety;

Far round the horizon’s crystal air to skim,

And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;

To picture out the quaint, and curious bending

Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending;

Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,

Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.

I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free

As though the fanning wings of Mercury

Had played upon my heels: I was light-hearted,

And many pleasures to my vision started;

So I straightway began to pluck a posey

Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.
…..
Open afresh your round of starry folds,

Ye ardent marigolds!

Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,

For great Apollo bids

That in these days your praises should be sung

On many harps, which he has lately strung;

And when again your dewiness he kisses,

Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:

So haply when I rove in some far vale,

His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight:

With wings of gentle flush o’er delicate white,

And taper fingers catching at all things,

To bind them all about with tiny rings.
…..
O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight

Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;

Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,

Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,

Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,

Lover of loneliness, and wandering,

Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!

Thee must I praise above all other glories

That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
…..

**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 thine 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

 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?