|  |
| --- |
|  |
|    |
| **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, | *5* |
|   But being too happy in thine happiness, |   |
|     That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees, |   |
|           In some melodious plot |   |
|   Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, |   |
|     Singest of summer in full-throated ease. | *10* |
|   |  |
| O for a draught of vintage! that hath been |   |
|   Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth, |   |
| Tasting of Flora and the country-green, |   |
|   Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth! |   |
| O for a beaker full of the warm South! | *15* |
|   Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, |   |
|     With beaded bubbles winking at the brim, |   |
|           And purple-stainèd mouth; |   |
|   That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, |   |
|     And with thee fade away into the forest dim: | *20* |
|   |  |
| 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 grey hairs, | *25* |
|   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. | *30* |
|   |  |
| 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, | *35* |
|   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. | *40* |
|   |  |
| I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, |   |
|   Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs, |   |
| But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet |   |
|   Wherewith the seasonable month endows |   |
| The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; | *45* |
|   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. | *50* |
|   |  |
| 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 musèd rhyme, |   |
|   To take into the air my quiet breath; |   |
| Now more than ever seems it rich to die, | *55* |
|   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. | *60* |
|   |  |
| 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 | *65* |
|   Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, |   |
|     She stood in tears amid the alien corn; |   |
|           The same that ofttimes hath |   |
|   Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam |   |
|     Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. | *70* |
|   |  |
| 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 famed to do, deceiving elf. |   |
| Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades | *75* |
|   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? | *80* |

*John Keats. 1795–1821*