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| **Ode to a Nightingale** |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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* |
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| 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*