

JOHN  
KEATS

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Complete  
Poems

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*edited by*

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*Hyperion:*  
*A Fragment*

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,  
5 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,  
10 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.

15 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,  
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;  
20 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  
25 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;  
30 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:  
35 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  
40 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:  
45 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 tenour and deep organ tone:  
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue  
50 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?'  
55 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.  
60 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!  
65 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?  
70 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,  
75 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  
 80 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,  
 Just where her falling 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,  
 85 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  
 90 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:  
 95 "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  
 100 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,  
 105 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,  
 110 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,  
 115 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;  
 120 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  
 125 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,  
 130 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?"

135 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;  
 140 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?  
 145 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.

150 "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:  
 155 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.

160 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  
 165 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  
 170 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;  
 175 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,  
 180 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;  
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
 Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagle's wings,  
 Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
 Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,  
 185 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  
 Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:  
 190 And so, when harbour'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  
 195 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,  
 200 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;

205 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,  
 210 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,  
 215 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,  
 220 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  
 225 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!  
 230 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?  
 235 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  
 240 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,  
 245 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,  
 250 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!"  
 255 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  
 260 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  
 265 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  
 270 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,  
 275 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 labouring thought  
 280 Won from the gaze of many centuries:  
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge  
 Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,  
 Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb  
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,  
 285 Ever exalted at the God's approach:  
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense  
 Rose, one by one, till all outspread were;  
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,  
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.

290 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  
 295 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,  
 300 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.  
 305 There as he lay, the heaven with its stars  
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice  
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,  
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.  
 "O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
 310 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, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;  
 315 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, oh brightest child!  
 320 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  
 325 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  
 330 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,  
 335 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  
 340 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  
 345 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,  
 350 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,  
 355 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.  
 5 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.  
 10 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.  
 15 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.  
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,  
 20 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  
 25 Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't 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;  
 30 Far from her moon had Phœbe 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  
 35 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  
 40 Or word, or look, or action of despair.  
 Creüs 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.  
 Iäpetus another; in his grasp,  
 45 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,  
 50 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,  
 55 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,  
 60 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,  
 65 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, wrath,  
 He meditated, plotted, and even now  
 70 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  
 75 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  
 80 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  
 85 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  
 90 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,  
 95 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  
 100 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;  
 105 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,  
 110 "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,  
 115 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  
 120 His tongue with the full 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,  
 125 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,  
 130 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  
 135 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  
 140 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  
 145 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:  
 150 No, no-where 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,  
 155 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!  
 160 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  
 165 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,  
 170 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!  
 175 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,  
 180 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,

185 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:  
 190 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,  
 195 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:  
 200 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,  
 205 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,  
 210 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  
 215 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?  
 220 Can it deny the chiefdom 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  
 225 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:  
 230 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  
 235 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,  
 240 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 poz'd conviction, or disdain,  
 245 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,  
 250 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,  
 255 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  
 260 Of what I heard, and how it made we 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.  
 265 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;

270 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  
 275 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  
 280 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:  
 285 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,  
 290 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!  
 295 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."

300 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:  
 305 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,  
 310 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  
 315 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,  
 320 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,  
 325 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,  
 330 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:  
 335 The days of peace and slumberous 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,  
 340 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—  
 345 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:  
 350 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

355 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.  
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,  
 Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
 360 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,  
 365 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  
 370 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  
 375 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  
 380 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 Iäpetus, and Creüs too,  
 385 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,  
 390 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:  
 5 A solitary sorrow best befits  
 Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.  
 Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find  
 Many a fallen old Divinity  
 Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.  
 10 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 every thing that hath a vermeil hue,  
 15 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,  
 20 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,  
 25 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  
 30 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,  
 35 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  
 40 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,  
 45 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:  
 50 "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  
 55 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,  
 60 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  
 65 Unwearing 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  
 70 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  
 75 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,  
 80 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?  
 85 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;

90 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?  
 95 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  
 100 To any one particular beauteous star,  
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
 And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.  
 I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?  
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity  
 105 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 walleth every morn and eventide,  
 110 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,  
 115 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,  
 120 And so become immortal.”—Thus the God,  
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept  
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
 125 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  
 130 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  
 135 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs  
 Celestial \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

is writing some spenserian stanzas against M<sup>rs</sup> Miss Brawne and me; so I shall amuse myself with him a little: in the manner of Spenser." After the last line he adds, "This character would ensure him a situation in the establishment of patient Griselda" (*Letters*, II, 89, 90).

**20 Tipping the wink:** Warning or signaling with a wink. **21 olden Tom . . . ruin blue:** Two kinds of gin. **22 nantz:** A kind of brandy (after Nantes, in France, the place of manufacture). **26–27:** See Isaiah 3:16.

*Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art*

Written in 1819; first published in *PDWJ*, 27 September 1838. Keats made a copy of this sonnet (in a volume of Shakespeare's *Poetical Works*, opposite the beginning of *A Lover's Complaint*) when he was aboard ship on his way to Italy at the end of September or the beginning of October 1820, and for a long time it was known by the mistaken heading that Milnes gave it in 1848, "Keats's Last Sonnet." For interpretive discussion see Martin Kallich, *Forum* (Ball State University), 5 (Winter 1964), 11–16, and David Ormerod, *K-SJ*, 16 (1967), 73–77.

*Hyperion*

Begun in the closing months of 1818 (perhaps by 27 October and certainly by 17 December) and abandoned in or before April 1819 (Woodhouse copied the poem as we now have it on 20 April, and about the same time noted in his interleaved 1818, opposite *Endymion* IV.774, "April 1819. K. lent me the Fragment here alluded to for perusal. . . . He said he was dissatisfied with what he had done of it; and should not complete it"); first published in 1820.

Keats had the poem in mind for a year or more before he began writing it. He alludes to the Titans several times in *Endymion* and specifically in IV.774 (drafted in November 1817) and at the end of the printed Preface (April 1818) openly announces his intention to do the later poem. He presumably refers to *Hyperion* in speaking of "a new Romance which I have in my eye for next summer" in a letter to Haydon of 28 September 1817 (*Letters*, I, 168), and first mentions it by name, again to Haydon, on 23 January 1818: "in *Endymion* I think you may have many bits of the deep and sentimental cast—the nature of *Hyperion* will lead me to treat it in a more naked and grecian Manner—and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating—and one great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale [*Endymion*] being mortal is led on, like *Buonaparte*, by circumstance; whereas the Apollo in *Hyperion* being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one" (I, 207). His remarks to C. W. Dilke on 20 September 1818, "I am obliged to write, and plunge into abstract images," and to Reynolds a few days later, "I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life" (I, 369, 370), are sometimes taken to mean that he had then begun writing the poem; there is also the mention of "cogitating on the Characters of saturn and Ops" in a letter to Woodhouse of 27 October (I, 387). But the earliest unambiguous evidence of actual composition appears in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats on 18 December ("I went on a little with it last night"—II, 12), and subsequent references in the letters, from 22 December to the following 8 March,

are mainly comments on *not* writing it (see II, 14–15, 18, 21, 42, 62). There is a four-week hiatus in Keats's productivity between the middle of March 1819 (*Why did I laugh*) and the middle of April (*When they were come unto the Faery's court*), and it is possible that he wrote some sizable portion of *Hyperion* during that period. But the terminal dating, like that of the beginning, remains a matter of speculation. We know only that he gave up the poem by 20 April (though he of course took it up again in writing *The Fall of Hyperion* a few months later).

The legend of the overthrow of the Titans by the Olympian gods was available in the same works of Greek mythology that supplied the basic materials for *Endymion*, and, just as in the earlier long mythological poem, most of the specific details and the characterizations and speeches are original with Keats. But the thematic intent is much less clear in *Hyperion*, and there are several interpretive problems that continue to cause difficulties—the question of where Keats's sympathy lies in the struggle between the Titans and the Olympians; some apparent inconsistency concerning who has power over whom, and why; the significance of the many comparisons made between divine and human affairs; and especially the relationship of the deification of Apollo in Book III to the war between the gods that is the main subject of Books I and II. Some of these matters are fundamental to the structure of the work, and it may have been his own uncertainty concerning one or more of them that led Keats to abandon the effort in the first place.

He did not want the fragment published; according to the Advertisement following the title page in 1820, "it was printed at [the publishers'] particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author." It was, however, the most highly regarded of his works at publication and throughout the nineteenth century, and it has continued to attract readers and critics. Virtually every major Keats scholar has written on the work. Bate, *John Keats*, pp. 388–417, provides especially valuable general treatment; Evert, *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats*, pp. 225–243, offers a convincing explanation of why Keats abandoned the fragment; Brian Wilkie, *Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition* (Madison and Milwaukee, 1965), pp. 145–187, has the most comprehensive discussion in print taking the fragment as a unified whole. Among more recent studies, see Helen E. Haworth, *SEL*, 10 (1970), 637–649; Geoffrey H. Hartman, *EC*, 24 (1974), 1–20 (the essay is reprinted in Hartman's *The Fate of Reading*, Chicago, 1975, pp. 57–73, 319–320); Nancy M. Goslee, *PQ*, 53 (1974), 205–219, and *K-SJ*, 30 (1981), 118–151; Pierre Vitoux, *SIR*, 14 (1975), 165–183; Michael Ragussis, *The Subterfuge of Art*, pp. 35–69; Paul Sherwin, *PMLA*, 93 (1978), 383–395; and Anya Taylor, *SEL*, 19 (1979), 673–687. See also the note to *The Fall of Hyperion*, below.

**Book I. 1–7:** In a letter to Milnes of 7 May 1849 Bailey uses this passage to illustrate Keats's "principle of melody in Verse . . . particularly in the management of open & close vowels. . . . Keats's theory was, that the vowels should be so managed as not to clash one with another so as to mar the melody, & yet that they should be interchanged, like differing notes of music to prevent monotony" (*KC*, II, 277). **1 vale:** In his copy of *Paradise Lost* that he later gave to Mrs. Dilke Keats underscored I.321 ("To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven") and commented in the margin, "There is a cool pleasure in the very sound of vale. The english word is of the happiest chance. Milton has put vales in heaven

and hell with the very utter affection and yearning of a great Poet. It is a sort of delphic Abstraction—a beautiful—thing made more beautiful by being reflected and put in a Mist" (*The Romantics on Milton*, ed. J. A. Wittreich, Jr., Cleveland, 1970, p. 554). **23 one:** Thea, wife of Hyperion. **61 reluctant:** In his copy of *Paradise Lost* Keats underscored IV.58–59 ("reluctant flames, the sign / Of wrath awaked") and commented, "'Reluctant' with its original and modern meaning combined and woven together, with all its shades of signification has a powerful effect" (*The Romantics on Milton*, p. 559). The "original" (literal) meaning of the word is "struggling." **147 The . . . three:** Saturn's sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. **216 Hours:** The Horae. **246 Tellus:** The Earth, mother of the Titans (see I.20–21). **274 colure:** The colures are "two great circles which intersect each other at right angles at the poles, and divide the equinoctial and the ecliptic into four equal parts" (*OED*). Keats got the word from *Paradise Lost* IX.66. **307 Coelus:** Another name for Uranus (the Sky), father of the Titans. **323 first-born:** Saturn. **326 wox:** Archaic past tense of "wax."

**Book II. 4 Cybele:** Wife of Saturn and mother of the Olympian gods (see II.389); she is called by another of her names, Ops, in II.78, 113. **29 straying . . . world:** Explained in III.50–79. **39 shroud:** Archaic past participle (= "shrouded"). **45 plashy:** "Marked as if splashed with colour" (*OED*, citing this passage). **70 that . . . war:** The war of the Giants against the Olympian gods (see the note below to III.136). **161 engine:** "Find engines or instruments for" (*OED*, citing this passage). **232 God . . . Seas:** Neptune. **244 poz'd:** Probably intended to mean "puzzled," "baffled," but the word is also interpretable as "affected," "feigned." **252 O Father:** Clymene is a daughter of the preceding speaker, Oceanus. **281–289:** Joseph Severn told Milnes in a letter of 6 October 1845 that a "beautifull air of Glucks . . . furnishd the groundwork of the coming of Apollo in Hyperion" (*KC*, II, 133). **376:** According to Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, Memnon's statue (the "image" of 374) "had the wonderful property of uttering a melodious sound every day, at sun-rising, like that which is heard at the breaking of the string of a harp when it is wound up. This was effected by the rays of the sun when they fell upon it. At the setting of the sun, and in the night, the sound was lugubrious."

**Book III. 29 Giant . . . Sun:** Hyperion. **31–32 mother . . . sister:** Latoona and Diana. **46 Goddess:** Mnemosyne. **81–82 while . . . syllables:** According to some rough notes written by Woodhouse in 1820, Keats "said, that he has often not been aware of the beauty of some thought or expr<sup>n</sup> until after he has composed & written it down— It has then struck him with astonishm<sup>t</sup>—& seemed rather the prod<sup>n</sup> of another person than his own— He has wondered how he came to hit upon it. This was the case with the descr<sup>n</sup> of Apollo in the 3 b. of Hyp<sup>n</sup> white melodious throat. . . . Such Keats s<sup>d</sup> was his Sensation of astonishm<sup>t</sup> & pleasure when he had prod<sup>d</sup> the lines 'His white melod<sup>s</sup> &c— It seemed to come by chance or magic—to be as it were something given to him" (*KC*, I, 129). Critics frequently take the passage in question to be Apollo's speech in 82–120, but Woodhouse's words make it fairly clear that he was referring to the specific bit of description in 81–82 preceding the speech. **136:** Woodhouse noted in his interleaved *1818*, in connection with some extracts that he copied

from Book II, "The poem, if completed, would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo—and incidentally of Oceanus by Neptune, of Saturn by Jupiter &c and of the war of the Giants for Saturn's reestablishment—with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the Mythological poets of Greece & Rome. In fact, the incidents would have been pure creations of the Poet's brain."

### *La Belle Dame sans Merci*

Written in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats on 21 or 28 April 1819; first published in the *Indicator*, 10 May 1820. Keats took his title, but practically nothing else, from a medieval work by Alain Chartier (see the note above to *The Eve of St. Agnes* 292). For the poem itself scholars have proposed a considerable array of sources in Spenser, Shakespeare, Burton, and other Renaissance writers, H. F. Cary's translation of Dante, several specific ballads (e.g., *Thomas the Rhymer*) as well as the ballad tradition in general, and a number of contemporary writers. *The Faerie Queene* is the work most often cited—Duessa's seduction of the Red Cross Knight in I.ii (especially stanzas 28–30, 45), Arthur's dream of the Faerie Queene in I.ix.13–15, the encounter of Phaedria and Cymochles in II.vi.2–18, the story of the false Florimel in III–IV (Keats mentions this last character in his spring journal letter just two pages before the draft of *La Belle Dame*)—and much has been made of some passages in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Part I, Sect. III, mem. i, subs. 2, 3) describing persons suffering certain symptoms of melancholy:

As Bellerophon in Homer . . .

That wandered in the woods sad all alone,  
Forsaking men's society, making great moan;

they delight in floods & waters, desert places, to walk alone in orchards, gardens, private walks, back-lanes, averse from company. . . . they are much given to weeping, and delight in waters, ponds, pools, rivers, fishing, fowling, &c. . . . they are pale of colour, slothful, apt to sleep, heavy; much troubled with head-ache . . .

For this one poem, as an illustration of the kinds of connection that can be made between Keats's phrasings and earlier works, the notes below give a sampling of what used to be called "echoes and borrowings" (for the most part they are here echoed and borrowed from the scholarship of Ernest de Selincourt, C. L. Finney, Robert Gittings, Douglas Bush, and Miriam Allott). As Kenneth Muir and F. W. Bateson point out, in an important statement that applies to Keats's sources more generally (*EC*, 4 [1954], 432–440), some of these citations are of questionable or doubtful usefulness, and in any case they represent merely some of the possible literary sources; the nonliterary sources—which most probably include something of Keats's feelings about Fanny Brawne, the recent experience of Tom Keats's death, some serious thinking about poetry and the nature of human life (the famous "vale of Soul-making" speculations occur only a few pages later in