



Vaishali Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Hajipur, Vaishali

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

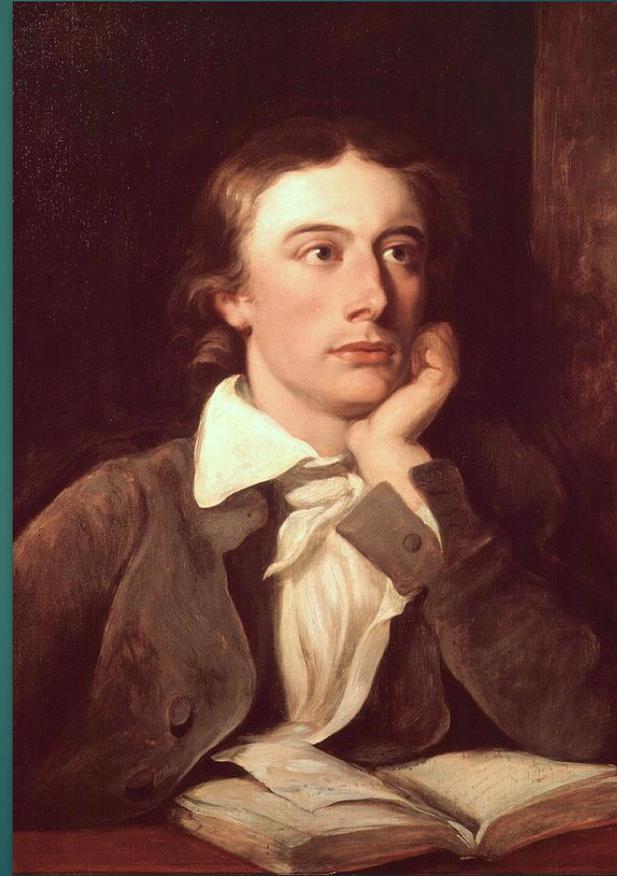
TAKES YOU TO -

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

BY JOHN KEATS

About The Poet

- ▶ Born - 31 October 1795
Moorgate, London, England
- ▶ Died - 23 February 1821 (aged 25)
Rome, Papal States
- ▶ Occupation – Poet
- ▶ Language – English
- ▶ Nationality – English
- ▶ Alma Mater – King's College, London
- ▶ Literary Movement - Romanticism





- ▶ John Keats(1795–1821) was the pure poet amongst all the Romantic poets.
- ▶ He was not only the last but the most perfect Romanticism.
- ▶ He was only devoted to poetry and had no other interests.
- ▶ He did not take notice of the social, political and literary turmoil.
- ▶ He devoted himself entirely to the worship of beauty and writing poetry.
- ▶ Poetry suited his temperament.
- ▶ He was above all a poet and nothing else.
- ▶ His nature was entirely poetical and so all his energy went in this art.
- ▶ Keats came from a poor family.
- ▶ Due to his poverty he started working early as a medical assistant.

- 
- ▶ But in no way was his poetic art raptured. He read Spencer's "The Faerie Queene".
 - ▶ This revealed to him the beauty of poetry and nature.
 - ▶ Of his odes 'Ode To A Nightingale' and others stand above the rest.
 - ▶ It is a masterpiece of art.
 - ▶ There we find a love of sensuous beauty.

Publication

"**Ode to a Nightingale**" is a poem by John Keats written either in the garden of the Spaniards Inn, Hampstead, London or, according to Keats' friend Charles Armitage Brown, under a plum tree in the garden of Keats' house at Wentworth Place, also in Hampstead. According to Brown, a nightingale had built its nest near the house that he shared with Keats in the spring of 1819. Inspired by the bird's song, Keats composed the poem in one day. It soon became one of his 1819 odes and was first published in *Annals of the Fine Arts* the following July. The poem is one of the most frequently anthologized in the English language.



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:

Ode to a Nightingale

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?

About The Title

- Ode to a Nightingale was written by Keats in the spring of 1819.
- With eighty lines, this ode becomes one of the longest.
- The poem focuses on the speaker standing in the dark forest, listening to the beguiling and beautiful song of the nightingale.
- This provokes a deep effect on the speaker.
- Sometimes he feels the suffering death, something that the speaker would like to escape.
- At other times he finds consolation in the song of the bird.
- However, by the end of the poem, the speaker seems to be an isolated figure.
- The Nightingale flies away.
- The speaker is unsure if it was a dream or vision.

Explanation

- The poet begins saying, that it seems as if he had drunk the poisonous hemlock plant.
- Or drunk the opiate fallen into the waters of the lake.
- It is a Greek mythological river which makes you forget when you drink the water.
- The bird is like a Dryad.(Dryad is a mythical tree spirit)
- The bird in full throat singing the summer song.
- The poet wishes to drink a glass of vintage wine, that had been dug in the earth years back.
- He wishes to have the bottle that would transport him to the Hippocrene spring that would grant poetic inspiration.

- 
- He desperately wishes to drink the wine that would stain his lips, would make him forget the world and he would fly away with the bird.
 - The poet wishes to forget everything and disappear and fly away from the human world.
 - The bird seems to be untouched with the earthly sufferings, but human beings grown with pain just at small sufferings.
 - The poet wishes to fly on the wings of poetry and not from Bacchus(The God of Wine).
 - With his imagination, he pictures the birds sitting in the sky with the moon as it's crown and stars the gems.
 - But for the poet the darkness surrounds him with the nightingale's song.
 - He says that he has often been "half in love" with death.

- 
- He addressed death with soft names.
 - At the same time, the poet does not wish to die with pains.
 - To the speaker the bird is immortal, not meant for death.
 - The song of the nightingale has been heard since ancient times by the emperors and clowns.
 - It was heard even by homesick Ruth.
 - The song charmed “Perilous Sea/in fairy land forlorn”.
 - The very word ‘Forlorn’ rings the bell and the poet realises if it was a vision or reality?
 - The poet cannot recall, after the music is gone that was it “A vision, or a waking dream”.



Thank You