

Lives of the Great Romantics II

Edited by
Fiona Robertson



ROUTLEDGE


Lives of the Great Romantics II

Keats

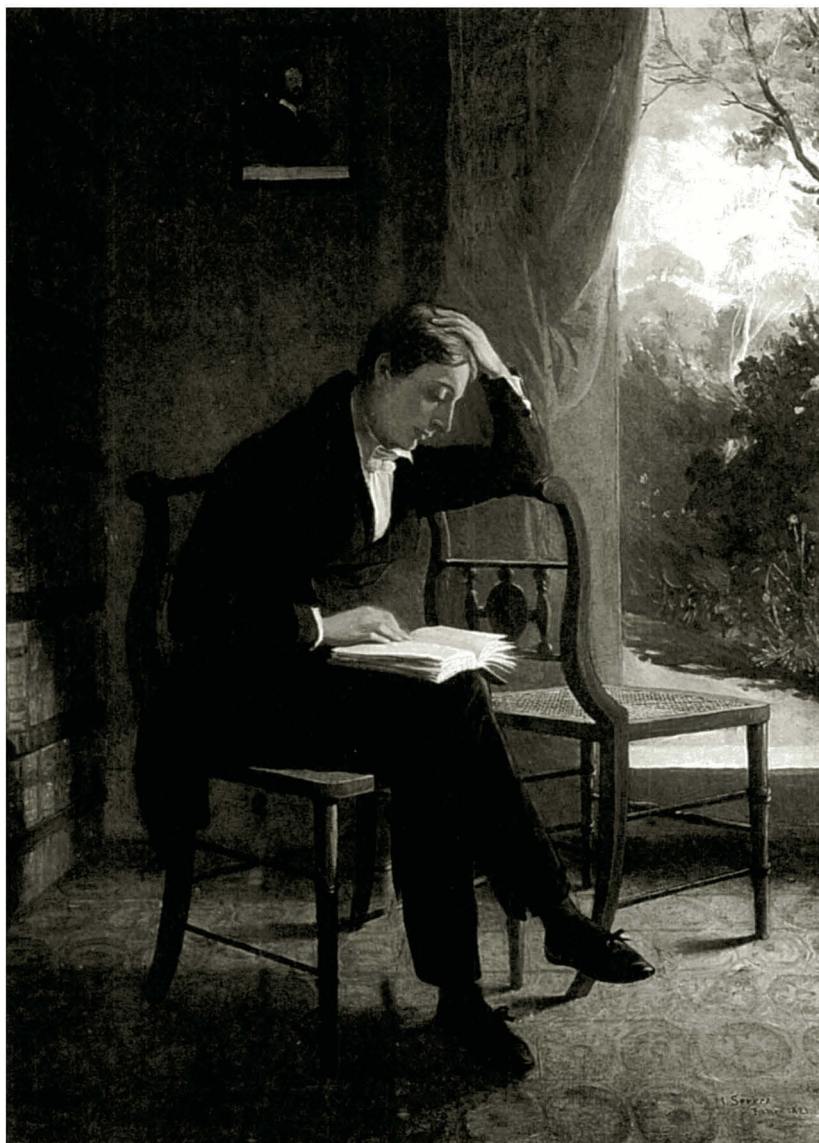
Edited by
Jennifer Wallace



LIVES OF THE GREAT ROMANTICS II

GENERAL EDITOR: JOHN MULLAN

**VOLUME EDITORS: JENNIFER WALLACE
RALPH PITE
FIONA ROBERTSON**



Joseph Severn (1793–1879), portrait of John Keats
By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London

LIVES OF THE GREAT ROMANTICS II

KEATS, COLERIDGE & SCOTT
BY THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

VOLUME

1

KEATS

EDITED BY
JENNIFER WALLACE

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1997 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © Taylor & Francis 1997

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

BRITISH LIBRARY CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Lives of the great romantics II

Keats, Coleridge and Scott

1. Keats, John, 1795–1821 – Biography 2. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 1772–1834 – Biography 3. Scott, Sir Walter, 1771–1832 – Biography 4. Poets, English – 19th century – Biography
I. Wallace, Jennifer II. Pite, Ralph III. Robertson, Fiona
821.7'09

Set ISBN 1–85196–373–1

ISBN 13: 978-1-13875-448-5 (hbk) (Vol-1)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Lives of the great Romantics II by their contemporaries / series editor
John Mullan.

p. cm.

Contents: v. 1. Keats / edited by Jennifer Wallace -- v.

2. Coleridge / edited by Ralph Pite -- v. 3. Scott / edited by Fiona Robertson.

ISBN 1–85196–373–1 (set : alk. paper). -- ISBN 1–85196–370–7 (vol.

1 : alk. paper). -- ISBN 1–85196–371–5 (vol. 2 : alk. paper). --

ISBN 1–85196–372–3 (vol. 3 : alk. paper)

1. Poets, English--19th century--Biography. 2. Keats, John, 1795–1821--Biography. 3. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 1772–1834--Biography. 4. Scott, Walter, Sir, 1771–1832--Biography.

5. Romanticism--Great Britain. I. Mullan, John. II. Wallace, Jennifer. III. Pite, Ralph. IV. Robertson, Fiona.

PR105.L583 1997

821'.7--dc21

[B]

97-1345

CIP

To Simon



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	viii
Introduction	ix
Bibliography	xxix
Chronology	xxxiii
Copy Texts	xxxvii
1. Cornwall, Barry, ‘Town Conversation’	1
2. Shelley, Percy Bysshe, <i>Adonais</i>	7
3. Reynolds, John Hamilton, <i>The Garden of Florence</i>	33
4. Hunt, Leigh, <i>Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries</i>	37
5. William Maginn, ‘Novels of the Season’	67
6. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, <i>Specimens of the Table Talk</i>	69
7a. Dendy, Walter Cooper, <i>The Philosophy of Mystery</i>	73
7b. Dendy, Walter Cooper, <i>Legends of the Lintel and the Ley</i>	79
8. Medwin, Thomas, <i>The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>	83
9. Milnes, Richard Monckton, <i>Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats</i>	125
10. Hunt, Leigh, <i>Autobiography</i>	193
11. Haydon, Benjamin Robert, <i>The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon</i>	201
12. Clarke, Charles Cowden, ‘Recollections of Keats’	229
13. Severn, Joseph, ‘On the Vicissitudes of Keats’s Fame’	247
14. Clarke, Charles Cowden and Mary, ‘Recollections of Writers’	257
15. Richardson, Sir Benjamin, ‘An Esculapian Poet – John Keats’	261
16. Severn, Joseph, ‘Journals and Reminiscences’	283
17. Brown, Charles, <i>The Life of John Keats</i>	303
Notes	312

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was researched over a hot summer in the Cambridge University Library and the British Library in the British Museum. I am particularly grateful for the assistance given by the photographic department of the Cambridge University Library in preparing facsimile copies of the texts. I would like to thank my enthusiastic General Editor, John Mullan, for his comments on earlier drafts and for the light touch with which he handled the whole project; and Bridget Frost, Rebecca Saraceno and all at Pickering & Chatto for their help and patience. Professor Ted Kenney gave some crucial assistance with the Latin at the last minute. My sister, Gillian Wallace, provided a healthy dose of scepticism and useful medical knowledge at an early stage of the book, while, as usual, my husband Simon Targett read every draft and became inevitably part of the Keats team.

INTRODUCTION

A recent newspaper article about a former British government minister began with an anecdote to indicate his attitude to education:

George Walden is not a man given to compromises. He took his daughter away from Godolphin and Latymer, a London independent school with an excellent reputation, because her English lessons involved studying scripts of *Boys From the Black Stuff* [a television drama]. 'I told them: "I pay you to teach my daughter Keats"'. When they failed to do so, he sent her to Westminster.

(*Independent on Sunday*, 15 September 1996)

Walden's attitude, that 'Keats' represents – and is a by-word for – the highest form of literature which should be studied and which can be contrasted with so-called popular culture, is by no means unusual. Only a few years ago, Christopher Ricks, professor of English at Boston University, provocatively raised the question of the comparative merits of Keats and the folk-singer Bob Dylan, assuming that they were at opposite ends of the spectrum of established literary reputation. For Keats now is widely regarded as one of the greatest poets in the English canon. In 1995, when members of the British public were asked by the BBC to name their favourite poems, they actually nominated not one but two of Keats's poems – 'To Autumn' and 'Ode to a Nightingale' – in the list of the top ten poems (*Independent*, 13 October 1995). 'People seem to be voting for poems printed on their tea towels and the ones they learned at school', Daisy Goodwin, editor of the BBC's Bookworm programme commented (*The Guardian*, 11 October 1995). Beyond the classroom walls of Godolphin and Latymer, clearly, Keats's poems are frequently chosen for school study and lovingly remembered and quoted later in life. Reflecting this popular affection and familiarity, they tend to outnumber the poems of his contemporaries – Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley – in anthologies of English poetry. (Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1861) included eleven poems by Keats, twenty two by Shelley and forty four by Wordsworth, whereas John Wain's *Oxford Anthology of English Poetry* (1986) contains fifteen poems by Keats, eleven poems by Shelley and eleven poems by Wordsworth). Certainly, the houses with which Keats was most associated – Wentworth Place in Hampstead and 26, Piazza di Spagna, in Rome – are now much visited museums. As an indication of this national recognition, the

celebrations for the bicentenary of his birth in 1995 included a week-long Keats Festival in Hampstead, the laying of an honorary wreath on his monument in Westminster Abbey and a much discussed BBC television documentary about his life.

Keats's popularity is partly attributable to the fact that he seems to symbolise the archetypal poet. 'The life of Keats', according to Walter Jackson Bate, one of his greatest biographers, 'has always seemed haunted by a feeling of familiarity' (Bate, (1979), p. 2). He is frequently compared to Shakespeare, the national bard. Sidney Colvin points out that both Keats and Shakespeare fulfil our desire for the poet as 'untaught genius': 'From his case less even than from Shakespeare's can we draw up any argument as to the influence of heredity or environment on the birth and growth of genius' (Colvin (1920), p.2); while James Pope-Hennessy compares the iconic qualities of both poets: 'The taut and eager face of Keats, gazing with impassioned eyes from the engraved frontispiece of Milnes' first volume, is now as familiar to us, as much a part of our lives as the strange, egg-shell countenance of Shakespeare from the First Folio' (Pope-Hennessy, (1949) p. 292. The engraved picture also appears in the 'Esculapian Poet' article: see Benjamin Richardson extract). 'Keats has continued', Bate adds, 'to strike so many readers – and writers – as the most Shakespearean in character of all poets since Shakespeare himself' (Bate, (1979) p. 1). But if Keats has become the embodiment of our idea of the 'true poet' because of his Shakespearean qualities, he has also become representative of the tragic life, of the talented man who dies young. For Keats, the myth of the promising life cut tragically short was provided by Thomas Chatterton; for us now, it is provided by Keats. David Frith, for example, was simply drawing upon popular terminology when he chose to call his biography of Archie Jackson, the Australian test cricketer who died from TB aged 23, *Archie Jackson: The Keats of Cricket* (London, 1987).

Given the immense admiration and affection for Keats in the twentieth century, it comes as some surprise to learn that for nearly thirty years after his death virtually nothing was written about him. No major collection of his poetry was published, besides the Galignani unauthorised Paris edition of Shelley, Coleridge and Keats in 1829, which was sold only on the Continent and in America, and a *Standard Library* edition in 1840, reprinted from the Galignani edition and quickly remaindered. No major biographies appeared, besides Leigh Hunt's brief and idiosyncratic memoir in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*. Keats had died virtually alone and penniless in Rome at the age of twenty five, and his 'whole story', according to Richard Monckton Milnes, author of what Andrew Bennett has called the 'inaugural Keats book' in 1848, could 'be summed up in the composition of three small volumes of verse, some earnest friendships, one passion, and a premature death' (Milnes, (1848), p.2; see Bennett, (1996), p. 11). There was consequently, in

the early nineteenth century, no guarantee that the 'story' or indeed the poems would survive at all. "I should like to print a complete Edition of Keats's poems", John Taylor, Keats's publisher, wrote in 1835, 'but the world cares nothing for him – I fear that even 250 copies would not sell' (Blunden, (1936), p. 199).

For a long time after Keats's death, there was even silence from his close friends. As a result, there were far fewer memoirs written about Keats by his contemporaries than there were about the other 'Great Romantics' in this series, and even the ones that did appear were fairly brief. But in the silence about the man, myths of the poet developed, beginning with a certain coterie and then later acquiring greater recognition. Stories and poems were circulated about Keats which did not worry about describing any real acquaintance with him or knowledge of his personal life (even if the author did in fact know Keats), but which were concerned to construct him as a certain type, the archetypal sensitive poet who dies young. The myth of Keats replaced the historical biography, precisely because there were no detailed facts available to disprove it. If we look at the early history of writing about Keats after 1821, we can begin to understand the important connection between the myth and the man – or the public and the private poet – which actually shapes and influences the Keats we think we know so well today.

1. The Long Silence

Ever since Keats's tragically early death in February 1821, his friends had been expecting a memoir or biography. Indeed, even before Keats's death, his friend Richard Woodhouse, a lawyer, had anticipated the scholarly research required for the writing of a biography by collecting and copying all of Keats's poems and letters that he could find; while William Haslam, another friend and lawyer, had recognised the need to record the daily detail of the poet's life for subsequent memoirs and urged Joseph Severn, who was looking after the dying Keats in Rome, to keep a journal. But when the moment arrived, after February 1821, to put pen to paper and send memoir to publisher, doubts set in. One of the reasons for the hesitation could have been the fact that Keats's friends, on the whole, were not literary people, and only Benjamin Bailey, amongst them all, had been educated at university. Several of Keats's friends – Woodhouse, Haslam, James Rice – were lawyers, who had gained their training by serving as clerks or apprentices for law firms. Other friends worked as clerks for trade companies. Charles Brown, who owned part of the present day Keats House museum in Hampstead and with whom Keats lived, worked for the East India company. Charles Wentworth Dilke, who owned the other half of the house, which he rented out to Fanny Brawne's family, worked for

the Navy Pay Office. Although Brown dabbled in a little writing as a hobby and Dilke later became editor of the *Athenaeum*, neither was practised in self expression nor came from an environment with expectations of publication. Several other close friends – Benjamin Robert Haydon, Joseph Severn, William Hilton – were artists who preferred to draw than to write. For this reason, there are almost more drawings and paintings of Keats than there are personal written memoirs, and several of the drawings and engravings from the paintings are included in this volume. The rest of Keats's friends were in the publishing and newspaper business. John Taylor, Keats's publisher, became a personal friend; Charles Cowden Clarke, whom Keats had known as a teacher in his early life, later took on a bookselling and publishing business. Only John Hamilton Reynolds and Leigh Hunt, neither of whom went to university, could be described as established writers and poets, accustomed to seeing their words in print, regulars on the literary scene.

A further reason for the friends' coyness in sending recollections to publishers was probably anxiety about the furore which simply the mention of Keats's name could create in the national press. The memory would not fade easily of Lockhart's ridicule in *Blackwood's Magazine*: 'It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop, Mr John, back to the "plasters, pills, and ointment boxes" etc' (see *Critical Heritage*, pp. 109-110). Nor probably could they forget Croker's scorn in the *Quarterly Review*: '[Mr. Keats is] a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language ... This author is a copyist of Mr Hunt; but he is more unintelligible, almost as rugged, twice as diffuse, and ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype' (*Critical Heritage*, p. 111). Keats's poetry had been viciously attacked by the powerful Tory press during his lifetime, because he was perceived to mingle in the radical London circle of Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt. He was considered to be socially inferior – an 'uneducated and flimsy stripling', according to Lockhart – and his verse seemed to include the experimentation and iconoclasm which were the hallmarks of Hunt's style (*Critical Heritage*, p. 101). Even after his death, the reviews continued to criticise and mock him, driven by political malice: '[Keats was] a foolish young man, who after writing some volumes of very weak, and, in the greater part, of very indecent poetry, died some time since of a consumption: the breaking down of an infirm constitution having, in all probability, been accelerated by the discarding his neckcloth, a practice of the cockney poets, who look upon it as essential to genius' (*Critical Heritage*, p. 245). Given these attitudes, simply to read Keats in the years between 1821 and 1848 was to stage a minor rebellion. The poet Arthur Hallam, a friend of Tennyson at Cambridge and the subject of Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam*, came back from Italy as a student with a copy of Shelley's *Adonais*

– unobtainable in Britain – and urged his friends to read Keats and Shelley. ‘We shall not hesitate to express our conviction’, he wrote in 1831, implying in his rhetoric the boldness of his step, ‘that the Cockney school contained more genuine inspiration, and adhered more speedily to that portion of truth which it embraced, than any *form* of art that has existed in this country since the day of Milton’ (*Critical Heritage*, p. 266). But he was writing against the grain, and it was not till the middle of the century, when Tennyson was installed as Poet Laureate and Pre-Raphealite poetry became popular, that the literary and political climate changed sufficiently for Keats’s poetry to be appreciated.

But the main reason why Keats’s friends did not publish their memoirs was a scandalous and bitter quarrel which broke out only months after the poet’s death and drove members of the close-knit Keats circle apart. The argument was partly over the ‘possession’ of Keats. Only someone who had known or understood Keats or could be called his main friend, it was felt, was sufficiently qualified to write an account of him. John Taylor, Keats’s publisher, decided, with almost indecent haste, that he should write the official biography of the poet and co-opted the help of the painstaking Richard Woodhouse, the publisher’s legal adviser, with his already prepared archive of papers. ‘I believe’, he wrote to his brother, ‘I shall try to write [Keats’s] Life – it is the Wish of his Friends, and was Keats’s Wish also’ (28 March 1821, Blunden (1936), p. 90), and by the following year he had announced the forthcoming ‘Memoirs of Keats’s life’ in the *London Magazine*, of which he was now the editor. John Hamilton Reynolds, another poet and fellow contributor to the *London Magazine*, offered his assistance in tracking down Keats’s letters and poems sent to various correspondents and later considered writing something himself. But crucial members of the Keats circle refused to co-operate. Joseph Severn sent his copies of Keats’s papers to Charles Brown rather than to John Taylor, while Brown, in his customary gruff manner, expressed his reservations about Taylor. ‘In my opinion’, he wrote, ‘Taylor neither comprehended him nor his poetry’ (Sharp (1892), p. 109) and he concluded that he would not ‘consent to be a party in a bookseller’s job’ (Bodurtha and Pope (1937), p. 8). With half the archive in one house and half in another, no account which claimed any kind of completeness could be published. There was stalemate.

The quarrel was also about money. There was some compunction about deriving commercial benefit from Keats’s death. Reynolds, for instance, nearly broke away from the Keats circle a second time in 1846, when he discovered that letters, which he had shown to Woodhouse privately, had been sold to the publisher Edward Moxon for Milnes’s biography. His private property, he felt, was becoming common property for commercial gain: ‘I was never consulted on the subject – never considered; – and he had no more right to receive a farthing than he had to abuse a violated confidence’ (Reynolds to Milnes, *Keats Circle*, II, p. 172). Similarly, rather than simply getting on with

publishing his recollections, Brown agonised over what other friends might think if he derived money from his memoir: 'Dilke urges me, as a proof to the world of my friendship for Keats, and as the only proof that I am not book-making, to declare, from the first, that I will not accept of one penny of the profits which may arise from the memoirs' (Brown to Severn, February 1830; Sharp (1892), p. 161).

However, the main focus of the quarrel was George Keats's treatment of his brother and his money. John Keats's last years had in fact been very difficult financially and his friends, especially Joseph Severn and William Haslam, had devoted much time to raising money for him and to managing his affairs without worrying him in his illness. The culprit for Keats's debts was thought to be Keats's brother George. In 1820 George came back from America, where he had emigrated, to collect his share of the estate of his younger brother, Tom, who had died from consumption. He also took a large share of Keats's inheritance, which, he argued, was due to him because of Keats's costly medical education funded by their joint estate. After George's visit, Keats was left virtually penniless. Charles Brown commented that 'his brother George left him for America, with more by £20 than Keats possessed, saying, which was repeated to me by himself: "You, John, have so many friends they will be sure to take care of you"' (*Keats Circle*, II, p. 169). But Charles Dilke, originally a great friend of Brown's and his neighbour, believed George Keats's protestations of innocence, and replied to George that Keats 'knew nothing of want either of Friends or money' (*Keats Circle*, I, p. 136). As a result of their differing views of George Keats, Brown and Dilke quarrelled irrevocably, and polarised the formerly close Keats circle between their two sides. William Haslam backed Brown against Dilke; John Taylor, already distrusted by the difficult Brown, took Dilke's side. This meant that George Keats's valuable collection of his brother's letters, not to mention his memories, were not available to Brown and others for their biographies. And worse, in 1835 George put an injunction upon the publication of any of his brother's poems in order to spite his enemies. Private rankling and public silence continued. (For a more detailed account of the quarrel, see the excellent introduction to Brown (1937)). The friends could only watch and exchange private correspondence as the myth surrounding the man they knew developed.

2. The Myth

It was the vacuum left by the diffident and squabbling friends that Shelley and Byron, more experienced and assertive writers, rushed to fill. They were by no means bosom companions of Keats. Byron had never met the poet. Shelley had met Keats a few times and was on friendly terms with him, but did not

know him well. 'I know personally but little of Keats', he admitted in a manuscript draft of his poem *Adonais* (see headnote to Shelley). What Byron and Shelley saw in Keats was a particular type of author, whose misfortunes confirmed their own concerns and grievances about any writer's relationship with society. And it was as an exemplary stereotype or caricature that they treated him, rather than as an individual man with personal idiosyncracies and a particular history. Within only a few months of Keats's death, they were discussing its wider implications, its causes and effects. 'Young Keats', Shelley wrote, breaking the news to Byron, 'whose "Hyperion" showed so great a promise died lately at Rome from the consequences of breaking a blood vessel, in paroxysms of despair at the contemptuous attack on his book in the Quarterly Review' (Shelley to Byron, Shelley, *Letters*, II, p. 284; 17 April 1821). Byron replied in typically mock serious fashion, apparently taking Shelley at his word: 'I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats. – is it actually true? I did not think criticism had been so killing' (Byron to Shelley, *LJ*, 26 April 1821). The correspondence began to revolve around the extent to which Keats was literally killed by reviews, prompted partly by Byron's initial trivialising response. 'The account of Keats', Shelley replied, 'is, I fear, too true. Hunt tells me that in the first paroxysms of his disappointment he burst a blood vessel and thus laid the foundation of a rapid consumption' (Shelley to Byron, Shelley, *Letters*, II, p. 289; 4 May 1821).

What Shelley treated seriously and compassionately, Byron wrote about with flippancy. In his poem *Adonais*, Shelley elevated Keats's victimisation by critics into the classical myth of Actaeon, metamorphosed into a stag and hunted by the dogs and hunters' arrows of criticism. Byron preferred to ridicule Keats's predicament. He was not enamoured of Keats's poetry in any case, believing it to be self indulgent. '[His] writing is a sort of mental masturbation', he wrote to his publisher John Murray. 'He is always f-gg-g his Imagination. I don't mean that he is indecent, but viciously soliciting his own ideas into a state which is neither poetry nor anything else but a Bedlam vision produced by raw pork and opium' (*LJ*, VII, p. 225; 9 September 1820). So when Shelley insisted, in his letters to him, that Keats's death had been caused by harsh reviews, the opportunity for a joke was too good to miss. At the time Byron was composing *Don Juan*, a rambling mock epic in which the narrator continually digresses about other subjects and even about writing itself. It was easy to insert topical comment on Keats.

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
 Just as he really promised something great,
 If not intelligible, – without Greek
 Contrived to talk about the gods of late
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
 Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate:-

Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.
(*Don Juan*, XI.473–80)

The neatness of Byron's rhyme quickly lent currency to the sentiment. Hunt found that he had to dispute Byron's lines in his recollections of Keats, so well known had it become, while, in general, being 'snuffed out by an article' became a fashionable phrase to apply to any writer's bad press (see Wolfson, (1995), p. 30).

Shelley's and Byron's poems offered two different interpretations of Keats's death. In one version, Keats was an almost sacred figure, martyred by the insensitivity and ignorance of critics. In the other, he became a rather pathetic, weak character, unable to control his emotions. Both writers were agreed, though, that Keats had died early because he had suffered from bad reviews from unsympathetic magazine critics, and it was in propagating this myth about Keats that they exercised such an influence on his subsequent reputation. Besides the myth-making poems of Shelley and Byron, there was one seminal event which helped to fix the idea of all writers' victimisation by reviewers in the public imagination. This was the duel between magazine editors in February 1821 over the fate of Keats. John Scott, editor of the newly formed *London Magazine*, published a number of articles attacking *Blackwood's Magazine* for its harsh treatment of Keats (*London Magazine*, November and December 1820). What made the *Blackwood's* criticism of Keats and 'The Cockney School of Poetry' harder to take was the fact that, like much magazine journalism of the time, each article was written anonymously and signed simply 'Z', allowing for wild attacks which amused the disinterested reader but for which all the *Blackwood's* men could disclaim responsibility. 'A regular plan of fraud had been concocted, at the very outset of the magazine', Scott wrote, 'a plan to excite interest in the public mind, and realise profit to the unworthy perpetrators, by a series of cunning impositions – involving in their course the sacrifice of every feeling belonging to the writer of real principle, the violation of some of the most sacred rules of honourable intercourse in society, the disfigurement and disgrace of literature, by rendering it an accomplice in low remorseless outrages on reputation, and on truth' (*London Magazine*, 2 (November 1820), p. 510). If the attacks were to be so personal, he argued, the author also should take responsibility personally. Events came to a head when Scott challenged John Gibson Lockhart, whom he suspected to be the author, to admit that he was indeed 'Z' or to give him satisfaction in a duel. After much complicated correspondence and posturing, Scott ended up fighting Lockhart's friend, Jonathan Henry Christie, who had no connection with *Blackwood's* and no particular animosity against Keats. A duel against Lockhart could possibly have had awkward consequences for Scott's

case: if Scott were to lose the duel, it would mean that the victor Lockhart's name would be cleared. A duel against the hapless Christie, caught in the crossfire between the two editors, seemed to simplify matters.

Despite the fact that the early nineteenth century has been termed the 'heyday' of the duel, duels were, and have always been, technically illegal (Loose (1983), p. 6; Baldick (1965), pp. 98-101). Scott's duel, therefore, had to be conducted in secret. The duellists, with their seconds and surgeons, met at Chalk Farm, near Hampstead, 'by moonlight' at 9pm, February 16th ('A Graybeard's Gossip', p. 418). Duellists, by the early nineteenth century, usually aimed to wound rather than to kill, but fumbling in the darkness Christie missed his mark wide of his antagonist and actually shot Scott in the stomach. Scott was carried to Chalk Farm Tavern nearby, where for the next eleven days he lay dying in an upstairs bedroom. Indeed his lingering death and final end mirrored that of Keats in Rome almost exactly. Keats died on 23 February and was quickly autopsied; Scott died on 27 February, and within a few weeks an inquest into his death and the accompanying trial of Christie for murder began. (For more details of the duel, see L. M. Jones, 'The Scott-Christie Duel').

Inevitably the death of John Scott and the death of John Keats became linked. Benjamin Robert Haydon and Joseph Severn record them on the same page in their recollections, published in this volume. Severn, in fact refers to Scott's death as 'another scene in the tragedy', as if both Scott's and Keats's demise were stories dramatised for some wider purpose. For, with Scott's gruesome death in the duel, fought because of what he passionately believed about Keats and the critics, the connection between writing and life (or death), which Byron ridiculed, became closer. The ferocity of the magazine war, which Shelley had mythologised in *Adonais*, became evident in Scott's very real death. But in turn, his death in the farcical duel itself lent weight to the developing story about Keats, that his death had been brought on by reviewers. Myth and reality became combined in a powerful concoction.

It was this myth and ignorance which Richard Monckton Milnes, later Lord Houghton, aimed to dispel with his long awaited *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats* in 1848. The work was dedicated to Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, the first 'to rescue [Keats] from the alternative of obloquay and oblivion' – by a favourable review of *Endymion* – and implied that Milnes himself was the second to 'rescue' Keats. 'I saw how grievously', Milnes wrote, 'Keats was misapprehended even by many who wished to see in him only what was best'. In order to rid people of their misapprehensions about Keats, Milnes relied upon what we might today call primary evidence, the first-hand accounts of Keats from the people who knew him and the letters and papers of Keats himself. Rather than appearing to offer conjecture or criticism himself, he amalgamated the papers sent to him by Keats's

friends, by Charles Brown, Joseph Severn, John Hamilton Reynolds and George Keats's widow (see headnotes to Milnes). The memoirs, letters and journals, Milnes assumed, could speak for themselves, untainted by distortion. 'I came to the conclusion', he wrote in the preface, 'that it was best to act simply as the editor of the life which was, as it were, already written. I had not the right, which many men yet living might claim from personal knowledge, of analysing motives of action and explaining courses of conduct; I could tell no more than was told to me, and that I have done as faithfully as I was able'.

Milnes's book was praised for its lack of its distortion. 'We have read no book for many a day', wrote a Rev. Adams in the *Westminster Review*, 'that has excited such deep emotion; for again a man is brought before us, one whose every thought and trial, whose every strength and weakness we draw to our own bosoms, and enshrine him in our inmost heart'. Milnes was admired for the fact that he had stepped back from intruding comment and, by positioning himself simply as 'editor', had become, according to Adams, a 'reverential listener to the melody'. The book has rightly been described as 'the dividing-line between Keats's obscurity and his fame' (*Critical Heritage*, p. 31), but it could not constitute a 'dividing-line' between the 'myth' and the 'truth' of Keats. It was impossible, by 1848, to ignore entirely the image of Keats already established. Milnes could not act 'simply' as an 'editor'; some degree of selection and distortion of the evidence was inevitable (see headnotes to Milnes extracts for some examples of selection). Even more significantly, the friends of Keats who sent Milnes their recollections were, by now, inevitably affected by the constructions of Keats written by Byron and Shelley. They were compelled to contend with the notion of the weak Keats killed by reviews in their memoirs, even if, as Severn stressed, that meant refuting the notion that Keats was 'snuffed out by an article'. Seventeen years after his death, they could not help, when they tried to cast their minds back to the days of their friendship, thinking of Keats the mythologised poet before Keats the man.

If Milnes's book inadvertently perpetuated the notions of Keats first given currency by Shelley and Byron, it also propagated a new image of Keats which still has force today, and that is the image of Keats the letter writer. Much of the material which Milnes was sent by the Keats circle was not personal anecdote and recollection but a huge archive of correspondence. In the absence of many other facts about Keats's life, Milnes relied heavily upon his letters and in fact created the impression that Keats spent a large amount of his time writing to friends. He attempted to justify the inclusion of the letters on aesthetic grounds:

The journal-letters to his brother and sister in America are the best records of his outer existence. I give them in their simplicity, being assured that thus they

are best. They are full of a genial life which will be understood and valued by all to whom a book of this nature presents any interest whatever: and, when it is remembered how carelessly they are written, how little the writer ever dreamt of their being redeemed from the far West or exposed to any other eyes than those of the most familiar affection, they become a mirror in which the individual character is shown with indisputable truth, and from which the fairest judgement of his very self can be drawn.

(Milnes (1848), I, pp. 245-6)

Milnes's editorial decision, resulting in page after page of Keats's letters to his friends, has meant that Keats's letters are now considered to be an integral part of his oeuvre and are frequently studied as works of art alongside his poems. 'There is a case for arguing that Keats's letters are finer than his poetry', John Barnard wrote (Barnard (1987), p. 143), while Keats's latest biographer, Stephen Coote, describes the correspondence as 'at once intimate and literary' (Coote (1995), p. 39). Most forthright in his preference was W. H. Auden, who, according to *The Times Literary Supplement*, 'suggested that the day may come when Keats's letters – which he sees as Shakespearean in their vigour – will be more widely read and admired than his poetry itself' (*TLS*, 29 January 1954: see *Letters*, introduction, p. 8). While attempting to show the 'indisputable truth' of Keats, Milnes had, in effect, created the new myth that Keats's private letters were more aesthetically beautiful and interesting than his public poems. In other words, he had given currency to the idea that Keats was primarily the poet of spontaneity and privacy, rather than the poet skilled in the art of rhetoric and public expression.

3. The Poet

The discussion of Milnes's book has shown the problem of relying upon Keats's letters in order to reach the 'indisputable truth' of Keats. The letters, too, are now part of the myth and so the provenance and early published history of the letters in Milnes's first biography must be taken into account when they are cited. Yet, along with the few memoirs of his contemporaries, they provide the only source for any kind of knowledge of Keats. And what we discover from Keats's letters and his poems is that it is extremely difficult to form a vivid and detailed picture of Keats the historical man. There is no sense in the letters of a private Keats who was unknown to the memoir writers and actually quite different. This is because Keats himself was engaged in creating his own persona, the image of the poet, in his letters and, apparently, in his way of life. His letters are extremely self-conscious, debating with each correspondent the nature of a poet, the character he should display to the world and the way in which that should be inflected in his poetry. He seems to be

aware of the need to depersonalise himself, to iron out any idiosyncracies, before replacing his former individual characteristics with an archetypal image of a poet, a timeless icon. The image, in other words, which Keats sought to project was one of selflessness, both in his person and in his poetry. This self-mythologisation on Keats's part was what the memoir writers were inevitably responding to and then perpetuating by their own accounts of his life.

Keats's first priority, in the process of depersonalisation, was not to impose his opinions and personality upon others. 'When I am in a room with People', he wrote to Richard Woodhouse, in a letter included in Monckton Milnes's biography, 'if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of everyone in the room begins to press upon me that, I am in a very little time annihilated' (To Woodhouse, *Letters*, I, p. 387; 27 October 1818; see also Milnes (1848), I, p. 222). Keats's self observation seems to have been supported by his friends, since both Benjamin Robert Haydon's recollection of his dinner parties with Keats and the story of Keats and Hunt in *Fraser's Magazine* describe Keats mingling in with the crowd, not pushing his opinions or dominating the group (see Haydon extract and extract from *Fraser's Magazine*). Indeed, this lack of self assertion or distinctiveness in his character made Keats all the more difficult a subject for biography. But Keats is making a literary point to Woodhouse as well as an anecdotal one. He is attempting to describe the need for any poet to observe the world around him intensely, to assume imaginatively the feelings of others. 'If a sparrow comes before my Window', he wrote to Bailey, 'I take part in its existence and pick about the Gravel' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 186; 22 November 1817). In order to achieve the necessary imaginative leap into another's world for the writing of poetry, Keats claimed that the poet had to abandon any thought of his own identity or fixed personality: 'the poet has none; no identity – he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures' (To Woodhouse, *Letters*, I, p. 387; 27 October 1818).

Keats's declared aspiration, to divest himself of identity, was bound up with his belief that a poet should have no didactic purpose in his poetry, no obvious moral investment. It was this belief which lay behind his famous thesis of the camelion poet:

As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am anything, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself – it has no self – it is everything and nothing – It has no character - it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated – It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the camelion Poet. It does no harm from its relish of

the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation.

(To Woodhouse, *Letters*, I, p. 386-7; 27 October 1818)

Critics are now beginning to argue that Keats's declared lack of political or moral investment in his poetry could paradoxically be interpreted as political in its final intentions, an act of rebellion against the established morality of the day (see McGann (1985), pp. 17-65 and Butler (1981) pp. 113-137). But in the process, it meant that Keats hung back from proffering opinions and individual observations which could shed light upon his individual nature. 'It is a wretched thing to confess', he continued to Woodhouse, 'but is a very fact that not one word that I utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature'.

Keats claimed in his letters that a poet should not retain any baggage of opinion or knowledge extraneous to his immediate surroundings. The effort he made to replace his individual beliefs and opinions with speculation and spontaneous reaction was motivated by what he called 'negative capability', the most important attribute of a poet. 'At once it struck me', he wrote to his brothers, 'what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (To George and Tom Keats, *Letters*, I, p. 193; 27 December 1817). Leigh Hunt criticised Keats for this strange passivity, terming it a 'poetical effeminacy' (Hunt (1828), p. 253). But, as can be seen from the letter to Woodhouse, Keats actually relished his ability to abandon his own sense of self and to enter into the identity of others. It allowed for a sense of naivety, which gave a freshness to old subjects, as he attempted to describe to Benjamin Bailey: 'The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream – he awoke and found it truth' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 185; 22 November 1817). Such openness and 'delight in sensation' was something to which, Keats argued in his letters, all poets should aspire.

The myth which Keats was developing about himself, that he was a camelion who asserted no opinion and possessed no distinctive features, also influenced his poetry. The narrators in his poems are noticeably passive and are led into other worlds through the non-judgemental force of their imaginations. Again and again, scenes in his poems flash upon one like visions in a dream. His first major poem, *Endymion*, set in mythical ancient Greece, describes the love of a shepherd, Endymion, for the shadowy figure of the moon goddess who overwhelms and confuses him and who entices him further and further away from the known world which he can understand. 'She took an airy range', Endymion attempts to describe his first meeting with her to his sister,

And then, towards me, like a very maid,
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
 And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 'twas too much;
 Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
 Yet held my recollection, even as one
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
 Gurgling in beds of coral.

(*Endymion*, I, ll. 633-640)

Endymion's increasing immersion in the sensuous realm of language and imagination means that eventually he is swept away for eternal marriage with the moon goddess and his more corporeal sister is left alone in this world:

Her brother kissed her too, and knelt adown
 Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
 She gave fair hands to him, and behold,
 Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
 They vanish'd far away! – Peona went
 Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

(*Endymion*, IV, ll. 998-1003)

Similarly, in 'Ode to a Nightingale', Keats attempts to chart the 'diving' or sinking feeling of entering another imaginative world. The poem alludes to the painful circumstances of the narrator's life, which was probably inspired by Keats's own experiences of watching his brother Tom die of consumption and of witnessing many grisly deaths of patients at St. Thomas's hospital. But the poem is concerned with the desire to leave that historical reality behind. The narrator wishes, instead, to be led like Endymion to an imaginary world where the ethical dilemmas prompted by illness and death are not posed:

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 grey hairs,
 Where pale youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs

('Ode to a Nightingale', ll. 19-28).

At the end of the poem, after exploring the worlds of fairy tale and romance, the narrator is brought back to his original situation: 'Forlorn! the very word is like a bell / To toll me back from thee to my sole self!'. But like Adam in

Keats's account of Adam's dream, he is unable to distinguish fact from fiction: 'Fled is that music: – Do I wake or sleep?'. The naivety of the narrator, which made the entry into the imagination possible, means that no decision can be made over the relative merits of the historical or mythical worlds.

Keats's 'negative capability', the emptying out of distinct and personal features in his character, seems to have had an impact upon his behaviour and his poetics, as described in his letters and poems. But if we look again at Keats's letter about 'negative capability', the paradox of his idea of the poet becomes apparent: 'what quality went to form a Man of *Achievement* I mean Negative Capability' (my italics). Keats seems to have been obsessed with 'achievement', with the 'fame' of becoming a successful poet. As a result, along with the image of the camelion or selfless man, he also paradoxically cultivated the image of himself as the vocational poet, destined to fulfil the traditional role of a poet and, crucially, destined to be recognised as an important and influential poet after his death. For him, being a poet seems to have been synonymous with gaining a place in some great canon of literature, which is perpetually studied and discussed by readers over centuries. 'I have asked myself so often why I should be a Poet more than other Men', he wrote to Hunt, a few months after his first volume of poems was published, 'seeing how great a thing it is – how great things are to be gained by it – What a thing to be in the Mouth of Fame – that at last the Idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming Power of attainment that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton [a type of carriage]' (To Hunt, *Letters*, I, p. 139; 10 May 1817).

Keats often acted the expected role of the poet. He crowned himself with laurel leaves after the publication of his first volume of poems, inspired by the ancient Greek practice of crowning their writers (see extract from *Fraser's Magazine*). He also deliberately set himself the task, aged only twenty one, of writing an epic-length poem, *Endymion*: 'It will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination', Keats wrote of his long poem to Bailey. 'I must make 4000 Lines of one bare circumstance and fill them with Poetry; and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the Temple of Fame – it makes me say – God forbid that I should be without such a task!' (To Bailey, I, pp. 169-170; 8 October 1817). The opening verses of *Endymion* describe the proposed length of the poem in terms of the heroic quest, undertaken like Telemachus's journey in the *Odyssey* or the travels of Spenser's knights in *The Fairie Queene*, as a crucial *rite de passage* to maturity:

Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd 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, through flowers and weed.

(*Endymion*, I, ll. 49-62)

Surprisingly, Keats managed to keep to this rigidly determined timetable, beginning *Endymion* in April 1817 and completing it on 28 November, just at the end of 'Autumn bold'.

Keats's conception of a poet's vocation depended upon an awareness of who else was crowding into the 'Temple of Fame' or of what he called 'the overpowering idea of our dead poets' (To Sarah Jeffrey, *Letters*, II, p. 116; 9 June 1819). Besides setting himself awesome 'tasks' of writing in order to emulate poets such as Homer and Spenser, Keats created his own fame by writing about his relationship to the canon of great poets. His first poem to attract the attention of Leigh Hunt was about his reaction to Homer, when he felt like 'stout Cortez when with eagle eyes / He stared at the Pacific' ('On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer', ll. 11-12). Later, he was to write, among other things, of his reaction to Milton ('On Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair') and to Shakespeare's *King Lear*:

When through the old oak Forest I am gone,
 Let me not wander in a barren dream,
 But when I am consumed in the fire,
 Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.
 ('On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again', ll. 11-14)

In each encounter, Keats, while praising the literature of the past, actually manages to assume some of the sublimity of his subject (for more on Keats's appropriation of sublimity, see headnote to Haydon extract). In the Homer poem, his sense of wonder at Chapman's translation transfigures him into the heroic pioneer Cortez, while reading Shakespeare allows him to take on some of his subject's fiery genius with 'new Phoenix wings'. Indeed, as Bate describes well in his biography, although Keats was acutely aware of his 'belatedness' and the difficulty of matching the excellent literature of the past, he managed to develop an aesthetic of writing about writing. 'Keats', Bate observes, had 'virtually no other subject [for his poetry] than how it feels to lack subjects' (Bate (1979), p. 73).

Keats's self-consciousness extended to his thinking about his own death, which of course overshadowed the last year of his life. He thought about the implications of his impending death, the obvious fears of pain and suffering and loss. 'I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing', he wrote to Charles Brown, torn between debilitating illness, from which death would be an escape, and his love for Fanny Brawne, from whom death would bring terrifying separation (To Brown, *Letters*, II, p. 345; 30 September 1820). More startlingly, he also thought of himself after death, of his life retrospectively. In what Milnes called 'the last letter of Keats; probably the last he wrote', Keats confided to Brown: 'I have an habitual feeling of my real life having past, and that I am leading a posthumous existence' (To Brown, *Letters*, II, p. 359; 30 November 1820). The idea of his 'posthumous existence' seems to have become a preoccupation for Keats in his dying days. According to Joseph Severn, he repeatedly asked the doctor in Rome, when he visited him, 'how long is this posthumous life of mine to last' (Sharp (1892), p. 85; see Severn's *Journals* extract). While Keats was probably using the phrase in despair, cut off from his friends in England and with no hope of recovery or return, he was also employing the phrase in a literary sense, thinking about the way in which writers' lives are shaped by biographers after their death. (For his self-consciousness in this regard, see the anecdote of Keats fighting the local butcher in the Milnes extract and the discussion in the headnote). Besides the myth of the vocational poet, then, Keats was developing the idea of himself as a 'posthumous' poet, as a 'dead poet', already in that 'Temple of Fame'. He attempted to deny the living man in order to transform himself into a text, canonical and contemplated retrospectively.

The interest in the poet as a 'posthumous being' was rehearsed frequently in his poetry, before he knew of his actual impending death and literal fulfilment of the role. One fragment is particularly haunting and horrifying:

This living hand, now warm and capable
Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
And in the icy silence of the tomb,
So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
That thou wouldst wish thine own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again,
And thou be conscience-calm'd – see here it is –
I hold it towards you.

This fragment of a poem, written in December 1819, is a palimpsest, uniting time past, present and future. It tantalises with its juxtaposition of the living poet and the dead poem, and collides imaginary time with real time. Holding the hand eerily out towards the reader, the poem demands consideration of

the process of creating a 'dead poet', of turning the living hand of the writer into the dead hand of the written text. (For an excellent analysis of the poem, see Bennett (1994), pp. 11-14).

The transformation of a living man into a 'dead poet' is further considered in Keats's poem about Robert Burns, supposedly written in Burn's cottage in Ayr. Keats was excited at the prospect of seeing the home of Burns, who he implicitly compared with Shakespeare: 'One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns', he wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds. 'I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure as I do upon my Stratford on Avon day with Bailey' (To Reynolds, *Letters*, I, p. 323; 11 July 1818). In the event, he discovered that part of the cottage had been turned into a whisky shop, while the other half was guarded by a custodian who was 'a great Bore with his anecdotes' (To Reynolds, *Letters*, I, p. 324; 13 July 1818). However, in the absence of what he might consider a worthy or authentic relic, Keats found the space to ponder, half humourously, the after-life of any poet:

This mortal body of a thousand days
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom!
 My pulse is warm with thine own Barley-bree,
 My head is light with pledging a great soul,
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
 Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
 The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er –
 Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind –
 Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name –
 O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

Drunk on Burns's whisky, Keats recognises his similarity to Scotland's most famous alcoholic poet. But the similarity between the two also depends upon Keats's acknowledgement of his mortality, his ability to foresee himself dead and visited by tourists as Burns now is. 'Fame' comes about through the curious juxtaposition of present prescience and future recollection.

4. Great Romantic

The discussion so far has involved the stripping away of the illusion of truth and certainty. The memoirs of Keats, I have argued, are unavoidably influenced by caricature and idealisation and do not convey the 'indisputable

truth' of the poet, while even Keats himself continually attempted to re-invent himself as a featureless yet canonical poet. The biographer Ken Robinson noted recently that 'from the philosophy of science through the social sciences to critical theory, the naive conception of objectivity no longer has intellectual credibility' and that the art of biography is no exception to this (Batchelor (1995), p. 101). The Marxist critic Terry Eagleton has poured scorn on biography because of its conservative recourse to a notion of an essential and knowable life: 'The structure of biography is biology; even the most wayward of geniuses have to get themselves born and educated, fight with their parents, fall in love and die' (*LRB*, 2 December 1993, p. 12). But one of the great contemporary biographers of the Romantics, Richard Holmes, has refuted Eagleton's assumption. Biography, he argues in *Footsteps*, his book about writing biography, forces the writer to accept the unknowability of the past and of any individual: 'It is the paradox that the more closely and scrupulously you follow someone's footsteps through the past the more conscious do you become that they never existed wholly in any one place along the recorded path. You cannot freeze them, you cannot pinpoint them, at any particular turn in the road' (Holmes (1985), p. 69).

Having deconstructed the illusion of ever really knowing Keats, we can build up again the invented image of Keats, through reading the myth-making memoirs. Despite his obstinate assertion that he is offering the reader the 'undisputable truth' of Keats, Milnes seems to recognise the process of creating a life when he chooses to include Wordsworth's remarks on biography in his preface: 'Biography, though differing in some essential from works of fiction, is nevertheless like them an art – an art, the laws of which are determined by the imperfections of our nature and the constitution of society. Truth is not here, as in the sciences and in natural philosophy ...' (Milnes (1848), p. xiii). Biography, for Milnes, becomes a kind of fiction, whose origins are in the subjective emotions rather than in objective scientific truth. It becomes, as Ken Robinson puts it, 'a form of story-telling' (Batchelor (1995), p. 102). Richard Holmes has offered a vivid analogy for the creative role of biography, in which each re-telling of a life (or successive memoir in this volume) becomes a new addition or a new version of that life. In his biography of Coleridge, he confessed:

In 1986 I crawled [into a cave] and was astonished to discover the initials STC carved at the very back of the cave. It took me a moment to realise that the sandstone walls are so porous and flaky that these could not possibly be Coleridge's original graffiti, but some later act of piety. Such carvings and re-carvings of his initials, ceremoniously repeated by generation after generation of unknown memoiralists, suddenly seemed to me like a symbol of the essentially cumulative process of biography itself.

(Holmes (1989), p. 12n)

The recognition of the elusiveness of the biographee and the metaphorical 're-carving of his initials' is something characteristic of all biography. However, this lack of historical identity and necessary literary 're-carving' is even more marked in Keats than in others. Keats's life, after all, offers scanty materials to the biographer. The most famous act of his life was, paradoxically, to die (young). But, just as his poetry was, according to Bate, about 'not having a subject', so the life he invented for himself was about not having a life, at any rate not for much longer. It is in this respect that Keats can be classed a 'Great Romantic'. Jerome McGann has pointed out that Romantic writers displaced the material conditions of their lives with the ideology of a poetic life or with the cult of the individual poet in his imaginative world (McGann (1983), pp. 59-71). Keats's displacement of the world around him – and at the same time his material sickly body – by the contemplation of his death and of himself dead carries the Romantic ideology to extremes. Again and again he inscribes in his poetry the moment when the material life of a man becomes the 'Life' of a poet, and it is this self-extinguishing impulse to which the writers of the memoirs included in this volume were attracted and bore witness. The longevity of Keats's reputation depended crucially upon the brevity of his life. Similarly the beauty of his poetry derived from its fragility, its source in annihilation and despair. To read the following memoirs is to understand better the uncertainty behind the modern Keats of the tea-towel and the classroom, and the narrow distinction (and occasional connection) in Keats's life, work and subsequent reputation, between 'fame' and 'nothingness':

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high-piled books, in charactery,
 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 trace
 Their 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 power
 Of unreflecting love; – then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References to works are by author's or editor's names, publication date, volume and page number.

Primary Texts

Brown, Charles, *The Life of John Keats*, edited by Dorothy Hyde Bodurtha and Willard Bissell Pope (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937)

Clarke, Charles Cowden, 'Recollections of Keats', in *The Atlantic Monthly*, vii (January, 1861)

—— and Mary Cowden Clarke, *Recollections of Writers* (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1878)

Coleridge, H.N. (ed.), *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: John Murray, 1835)

Cornwall, Barry, 'Town Conversation', *London Magazine* (April 1821), pp. 426-7

Dendy, Walter Cooper, *The Philosophy of Mystery* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, & Green & Longmans, 1841)

——, *Legends of the Lintel and the Ley* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1863)

Fraser's Magazine (August 1831)

Haydon, Benjamin Robert, *The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, from his Autobiography and Journals*, edited by T. Taylor, 3 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1853)

Hunt, Leigh, *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries; with Recollections of the Authors Life, and of his Visit to Italy* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828)

——, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries*, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1850)

Medwin, Thomas, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols (London: T.C. Newby, 1847)

Milnes, Richard Monckton (ed.), *The Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats* (London: E. Moxon, 1848)

Reynolds, John Hamilton, *The Garden of Florence and Other Poems* (London: J. Warren, 1821: under pseudonym of John Hamilton)

Richardson, Sir Benjamin, 'An Esculapian Poet — John Keats', *The Asclepiad, A Book of Original Research and Observation in the Science, Art and Literature of Medicine, Preventative and Curative* (April, 1884)

- Severn, Joseph, 'On the Vicissitudes of Keats's Fame', *The Atlantic Monthly*, xi (April 1863)
- , *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, edited by W. Sharp (London: Sampson, Low & Co., 1892)
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Adonais: an elegy on the death of John Keats, author of Endymion, Hyperion etc* (Pisa: Didot, 1821)

Secondary Texts

- Altick, Richard Daniel, *The Cowden Clarkes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948)
- Armour, Richard Willard and Raymond Floyd Howes (eds), *Coleridge the Talker. A Series of Contemporary Descriptions and Comments. With a Critical Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940)
- Baldick, Robert, *The Duel: A History of Duelling* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1965)
- Barnard, John, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- , 'Charles Cowden Clarke's "Cockney" Commonplace Book', in N. Roe, *Keats and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 65-87
- Batchelor, John (ed.), *The Art of Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
- Bate, Walter Jackson, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963)
- Bennett, Andrew, *Keats, Narrative and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- , 'Keats's Prescience, His Renown', *Romanticism*, 2:1 (1996), pp. 9-26
- Blainey, Ann, *Immortal Boy: A Portrait of Leigh Hunt* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985)
- Blunden, Edmund, *Keats's Publisher: A Memoir of John Taylor 1781-1864* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936)
- Brookfield, Francis Mary, *The Cambridge 'Apostles'* (London: Sir I. Pitman and Sons, 1906)
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord, *Poetical Works*, edited by Frederick Page and corrected by John Jump (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- , *The Letters and Journals*, edited by L.A. Marchand, 12 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973-82) [abbreviated as LJ]
- Clarke, James Fernandez, *Autobiographical Recollections of the Medical Profession* (London: J & A Churchill, 1874)
- Colvin, Sir Sidney, *John Keats* (English Men of Letters series; London: Macmillan & Co., 1887)
- , *John Keats, His Life and Poetry, His Friends, Critics, and After-Fame* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1917)

- Coote, Stephen, *John Keats: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995)
- Dilke, Sir Charles, *The Papers of a Critic: Selected From the Writings of the late Charles Wentworth Dilke. With a Biographical Sketch by his Grandson, Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1875)
- Eagleton, Terence, 'First-Class Fellow Traveller', [Review of Sean French, *Patrick Hamilton: A Life*], *London Review of Books* [LRB], 2 December 1993, p. 12
- Fields, J.T., *Barry Cornwall and Some of his Friends* (Boston, Mass.: James Osgood and Co., 1876)
- Finney, Claude Lee, *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936)
- Garrod, H.W. (ed.), *The Poetical Works of John Keats* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939)
- Gittings, Robert, *John Keats* (London: Heinemann, 1968)
- Haydon, B.R., *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, edited by William Bissell Pope, 5 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960-3)
- Hazlitt, William, *The Spirit of the Age; or Contemporary Portraits*, (Paris: Galignani, 1825)
- Heffernan, J.A.W., 'Adonais : Shelley's Consumption of Keats', *Studies in Romanticism*, 23 (1984), pp. 295-315.
- Hewlett, Dorothy, *Adonais: A Life of John Keats* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1937)
- Holmes, Richard, *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985)
- , *Coleridge, Early Visions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989)
- Houghton, W.E. (ed.), *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900*, 5 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972)
- Jones, L.M., *The Life of John Hamilton Reynolds* (Hanover, New England: University Press of New England, 1984)
- , (ed.), *The Letters of John Hamilton Reynolds* (Lincoln, Nebraska: ? 1973)
- , 'The Scott-Christie Duel', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 12 (1971), pp. 605-29.
- Keats, John, *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, edited by H. E. Rollins, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958) [abbreviated as *Letters*]
- Lamb, Charles, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, edited by E.V. Lucas, 6 vols (London: Methuen, 1912)
- Loose, Jaqueline, *Duels and Duelling: Affairs of Honour and the Wandsworth Area* (London: Wandsworth Borough Council, 1983)
- McCormick, E.H., *The Friend of Keats: A Life of Charles Armitage Brown* (Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press, 1989)
- McGann, Jerome, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

- , *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985)
- Matthews, G.M. (ed.), *Keats. The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971)
- Patmore, C. (ed.), *Bryan Waller Procter: An Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Personal Sketches of Contemporaries, Unpublished Lyrics and Letters of Literary Friends* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1877)
- Pope-Hennessy, James, *Monckton Milnes: The Years of Promise 1809-1851* (London: Constable, 1949)
- Reiman, D.H. (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers, Part C, Shelley, Keats and London Radical Writers*, 2 vols (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972)
- Richardson, Joanna, *Fanny Brawne: A Biography* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1952)
- Ricks, Christopher, *Keats and Embarrassment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
- Rollins, Hyder E. (ed.), *The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1816-1878*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948)
- Shelley, Mary (ed.), *Essays, Letters From Abroad, Translations and Fragments by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols (London, 1840)
- , *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-1844*, edited by Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by F.L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) [abbreviated as Shelley, *Letters*]
- , *Shelley. Poetical Works*, edited by Thomas Hutchinson and revised by G.M. Matthews (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- [Smith, Horace], 'A Graybeard's Gossip about his Literary Acquaintances', *New Monthly Magazine*, 81 (1847), pp. 83-7, 227-40, 288-94, 415-24
- Stephen, Leslie (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, 63 vols (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885-)
- Thomas, Donald, *Swinburne: The Poet in his World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979)
- Trelawny, Edward, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron* (London: Edward Moxon, 1858)
- Ward, Aileen, *John Keats: The Making of a Poet* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1963, revised edition, 1986)
- Wasserman, Earl R., *Shelley: A Critical Reading* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1971)
- Wolfson, S.J. (ed.), 'Keats and Politics. A Forum', *Studies in Romanticism* (Summer 1986)
- , 'Keats Enters History: Autopsy, *Adonais*, and the Fame of Keats', in N. Roe (ed.), *Keats and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 17-45.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1795 (31 October) John Keats born at Swan and Hoop Livery Stables, Moorfields, London.
- 1797 (28 February) George Keats born.
- 1799 (18 November) Tom Keats born. The family move from the rooms over the stables to a house in Craven Street, Shoreditch.
- 1803 (3 June) Fanny Keats born. (September) Enters school of John Clarke at Enfield.
- 1804 (15 April) Keats's father dies, after falling from his horse on his return from Enfield late at night. (27 June) Keats's mother marries William Rawlings but soon leaves him, thereby losing her right to her property and children. The Keats children live with their grandparents at Ponders End.
- 1805 (8 March) Keats's grandfather dies. The family move to Edmonton.
- 1810 (March) Keats's mother dies from consumption. (July) Keats's grandmother appoints Richard Abbey as the children's guardian.
- 1811 (August) Keats leaves Clarke's school and is apprenticed to Thomas Hammond, a surgeon in Edmonton. He begins to read Spenser with Charles Cowden Clarke. George Keats joins Abbey in the counting house of his tea business.
- 1814 (December) Keats's grandmother dies.
- 1815 (Spring) Meets George Felton Mathew. (October) Enters Guy's Hospital as a student and lives in St Thomas's Street. After a month becomes a 'dresser' to supplement income, dressing and bandaging wounds. Tom joins George in Abbey's counting house.
- 1816 (Spring) Meets Joseph Severn. (May) First published poem, 'O Solitude', appears in the *Examiner*. (July) Passes examination at Apothecaries Hall, and is licensed to practise as an apothecary or surgeon. (August-September) Stays in Margate. Moves with Tom to 8, Dean Street, Southwark, near the hospital, and continues to work as dresser. (October) Meets Leigh Hunt, Benjamin Robert Haydon and John

Hamilton Reynolds. (November) Writes 'On first Looking Into Chapman's Homer'. Moves to 76, Cheapside with George and Tom. Haydon makes life mask of Keats. (December) Chapman's Homer sonnet appears in Hunt's article in the *Examiner* on 'Young Poets'. Meets Shelley.

- 1817 (January) Dinner party at Horace Smith's with Haydon and Shelley. (March) Visits Elgin Marbles with Haydon. *Poems* published by Charles and James Ollier; possibly exchanges laurel crowns with Hunt. Meets John Taylor, future publisher. Moves with George and Tom to 1, Well Walk, Hampstead. (April) Travels to Isle of Wight and, later, Margate where Tom joins him. Begins *Endymion*. (May) Stops in Canterbury, on his return from Margate. (September) Stays with Benjamin Bailey in Oxford while brothers are in Paris and visits Stratford-on-Avon. (October) Returns to Hampstead to find *Blackwood's Magazine's* first attack on the Cockney School. Meets Charles Brown. (November) Stays at Burford Bridge, Box Hill, where he finishes the first draft of *Endymion*. Sends 'Adam's dream' letter to Bailey. (December) George and Tom go to Teignmouth, Devon, for Tom's failing health. Meets Wordsworth through Haydon and attends Haydon's 'immortal dinner'. Writes letter to brothers on 'negative capability'. 'Going out too much', drinking and playing cards.

- 1818 (January) Begins to correct manuscript of *Endymion*. Attends Hazlitt's lectures at Surrey Institution. Writes 'On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again'. (February) Writes sonnet 'To the Nile' in competition with Hunt and Shelley. (March) Travels through storm to Teignmouth to look after Tom, while George returns to London. Sends *Endymion* to the publishers. (April) Rewrites preface to *Endymion* on Reynolds's advice; meanwhile working on 'Isabella'. (May) *Endymion* published. Returns with Tom to Hampstead. George marries Georgiana Wylie. (June) Travels with Charles Brown and George and Georgiana Keats to Liverpool, where he watches his brother and sister-in-law set sail for America. Continues with Brown on walking holiday, visiting the Lake District, (July) Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Belfast, Ayr, Glasgow, Inverary, Oban, Iona, (August) Fort William, Ben Nevis and Inverness. Develops a sore throat and decides to return to London quickly by ship from Cromarty, leaving Brown to continue his holiday alone. Arrives back at Well Walk to find Tom very ill, nursed by Charles and Maria Dilke. Meets Fanny Brawne. (September) Reads attacks on *Endymion* in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Quarterly Review*. (October-November) Looks after Tom and begins

Hyperion. Sends 'camelion poet' letter to Richard Woodhouse. (December) Tom dies. Goes to live with Brown in Wentworth Place. Suffering from a persistent sore throat.

- 1819 (January) Haydon asks him for a loan. Stays in Chichester, where he writes 'The Eve of St. Agnes'. (March) Joseph Severn exhibits miniature of Keats at the Royal Academy. (April) Meets Coleridge. Writes 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and gives up writing *Hyperion*. Haydon still pestering for a loan. (May) Writes 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', 'Ode to a Nightingale', 'Ode on Melancholy' and 'Ode on Indolence'. (June) Travels to Isle of Wight with James Rice. (July) Sends the first of his love letters to Fanny Brawne. Writing *Otho the Great* and 'Lamia'. Brown joins him in Shanklin, and Rice leaves. (August) Moves with Brown from Shanklin to Winchester, where he also works on 'The Fall of Hyperion'. (September) Writes 'Ode to Autumn'. Letter from George asking for more money. Meeting with Abbey fails to procure any of their inheritance. Announces that he will become a journalist and must have more independence from Brown. (October) Returns with Brown to London and tries living alone in 25, College Street, Westminster. Ten days later back with Brown in Wentworth Place. (November) Writing 'King Stephen' and 'The Cap and Bells'. (December) Writes 'This Living Hand'. Probably becomes secretly engaged to Fanny Brawne.

- 1820 (January) George Keats returns from America and stays for a month. Departs from Liverpool with £700, leaving Keats with £60. (February) First haemorrhage on 3 February, tended by Brown. Fever and starvation diet. Fanny Brawne sends him a ring. (March) Seems to be recovering and meets Barry Cornwall. Revises 'Lamia' and attends private view of Haydon's 'Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem'. (May) Moves to 2, Wesleyan Place, Kentish Town near Hunt while Brown away on walking holiday in Scotland. (June) Another haemorrhage, so moves in with Leigh Hunt in Mortimer Terrace. Is told by doctors that he will not survive another winter in England. (July) *Lamia* volume of poems published. (August) After misunderstanding with Hunt, moves back to Wentworth Place and stays with Fanny Brawne and her mother. Correspondence with Shelley. (September) Departs for Italy from Gravesend with Joseph Severn. Bad weather detains them, and they anchor in Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Writes sonnet 'Bright Star'. (October) Finally leave English Channel. Reach Bay of Naples three weeks later, and wait in quarantine for ten days. (November) Travel to Rome and settle in 26, Piazza di Spagna opposite Dr Clark. Keats throws disgusting food out of his window and writes his final

letter about 'leading a posthumous existence'. (December) Another terrible haemorrhage and begins starvation diet.

- 1821 (January) Very little money left; Taylor begins trying to raise subscription for Keats. On diet of an anchovy a day with a morsel of bread. Severn refuses Keats laudanum to kill himself. Letters arrive from Fanny Brawne, unread. Severn sketches Keats at night. (February). Now only taking milk; tells Severn of his desired epitaph 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water'; clutching his ring given by Fanny Brawne. (23 February) Keats dies about 11pm in Severn's arms. (24 February) Casts taken of Keats's face, hand and foot by Canova's mask maker. (25 February) Autopsy of Keats's body; his lungs 'intirely destroyed'. (26 February) Keats buried with Fanny Brawne's unopened letters in Protestant Cemetery, Rome; turfs of daisies placed over his grave.

COPY TEXTS

The following extracts are reproduced in facsimile. Breaks between excerpts (which may cover paragraphs or whole volumes) are indicated by three asterisks

★ ★ ★

In order to fit texts comfortably to the pages of this edition certain liberties have been taken with the format of the original: occasionally right-hand pages have become left-hand pages (and vice versa) and text from consecutive pages has been fitted onto a single page. Endnotes in this edition refer to Pickering & Chatto page and line numbers. Readers wishing to consult the passages in the original are referred to the table below.

TEXT NO.	PROVENANCE	ORIGINAL PAGE NUMBERS	P&C page no. ff
1.	<i>CUL</i>	426–7	4
2.	<i>BL</i>	1–25	9
3.	<i>CUL</i>	xi–xiii	34
4.	<i>CUL</i>	246–68	42
5.	<i>CUL</i>	19	68
6.	<i>CUL</i>	89–90	72
7a.	<i>CUL</i>	98–100	75
7b.	<i>BL</i>	3–7	77
8.	<i>CUL</i>	I: 295–8; II: 80–115	84
9.	<i>CUL</i>	I: ix–xix, 1–7, 14–16, 73–5, 103–4, 129–30, 151–3, 242–4; II: 39–46, 68–76, 76–94	127
10.	<i>CUL</i>	II: 201–6	195
11.	<i>CUL</i>	I: 331–5, 342–3, 353–7, 361–4, 368–71; II: 6–10	205
12.	<i>CUL</i>	86–100	231
13.	<i>CUL</i>	401–7	249

TEXT NO.	PROVENANCE	ORIGINAL PAGE NUMBERS	P&C page no. ff
14.	<i>CUL</i>	131–2	258
15.	<i>CUL</i>	138–55	263
16.	<i>CUL</i>	48, 54–67, 84–5	285
17.	<i>CUL</i>	51–4, 64–5	306

Texts are reproduced by kind permission of: *BL* – the British Library Board and *CUL* – the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Barry Cornwall, 'Town Conversation', *London Magazine* (April 1821)

In many ways, the following obituary offered no more than another blow in the long-running squabble amongst literary magazines. The *London Magazine*, in which the article first appeared, had become associated indirectly with Keats and his treatment by critics since the infamous Scott-Christie duel in February 1821 (see introduction). The magazine had been set up, in 1820, in direct opposition to the tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. It was *Blackwood's* which had carried the series of 'Cockney Poets' reviews, which, together with John Wilson Croker's articles in the *Quarterly*, constituted the most ferocious and notorious attacks on Keats. Francis Jeffrey had written a defence of Keats in the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood's* Scottish rival, but only in 1820, a couple of years after the initial damaging reviews. The obituary enters into the quarrel by recalling the *Edinburgh Review* as endorsement and by suggesting that Keats's work is a 'test' of literary (and political) taste. But there is also a sense in which it is concerned to establish Keats's reputation beyond the narrow political squabble, to introduce Keats's poetry to first time readers and to set the agenda for ways in which his poetry will be read in the future.

The author of the obituary was Bryan Waller Procter. Procter, known by the bizarrely unracy literary pseudonym Barry Cornwall, would now be called one of the greatest 'networkers' of the early nineteenth century. Indeed, Coventry Patmore, Procter's biographer, when trying to sum up the main incidents of his subject's life, concluded that 'his friendships may be regarded as its events' (Patmore (1877), p. 6). He was born into a family moving upwards socially. His father began his career as a tradesman and finished it living on independent means, with substantial income from property. Educated at Harrow with Lord Byron and Robert Peel, Procter was articled to solicitors, spent about ten years devoted to full-time writing, and then returned to law, serving as the Metropolitan Commissioner of Lunacy and drawing upon the income of his father's houses. In 1820 he was one of the founding members and writers of the *London Magazine*, along with Charles Lamb, Thomas de Quincey and William Hazlitt. It was through Scott's successor as editor of the *London Magazine*, John Taylor – Keats's publisher – that Procter heard the news of Keats's death. The *London Magazine* marked a crucial turning point in his already active social life. As he admitted in his old age to an American disciple, James T. Fields, 'All the "best talent" (to use a modern advertisement phrase) wrote for [the *London Magazine*] and to have a prose or poetical

article in the "London" entitled a man to be asked to dine out anywhere in society in those days' (Fields, (1876), p. 59). Indeed, after his marriage in 1824 to the daughter of Mrs Basil Montague, his house became the chief centre of London literary society, and by the time of his death in 1874, he had met and known nearly all the main writers of the previous hundred years.

In the years between 1815 and 1823, Procter published a profusion of poems and was dubbed by one magazine the 'poetical rival of Mr Keats' (*Eclectic Review*, September 1820). Certainly he seems to have been considered one of *Blackwood's* 'Cockney Poets', often reviewed together with Keats and damningly associated with the denigrated Leigh Hunt. Hunt compounded this association by including Barry Cornwall's poems in his *Literary Pocket Book*, alongside poems by Keats, Shelley and himself. And yet Procter did not incur the same wrath from the critics, being often favourably contrasted with Keats. This lack of criticism might be explained by the fact that Procter was now considered to belong to a different class and so, like the aristocratic Shelley, was distinguished, in Lockhart's mind, from the humbler Hunt and Keats. But it could also have been designed to annoy Keats still further. Shelley's and Byron's adverse reactions to Procter's 'imitative' poetry suggest that being considered worse than Procter was poor praise indeed. (Shelley, *Letters*, 21 March 1821; 4 May 1821; Byron, *LJ*, 7 June 1820).

Whatever his contemporary poets' private opinion of his poetry, Procter was generously disposed towards them and their work. He asked Leigh Hunt to take him over to Hampstead and introduce him to Keats, whom he was to see once or twice more before he left for Italy in September. While Keats admitted privately to some difficulty in reconciling his 'esteem' of his new friend's 'kindness' with his opinion of his poetry (To Fanny Brawne, *Letters*, II, p. 267; 27 February 1820), Procter was obviously enthusiastic, admitting in a private reminiscence published after his death that he had 'never encountered a more manly and simple young man', that 'it would be difficult to discover a man with a more bright and open countenance', and that he was a 'great admirer of his poetry, which is charming and original; full of sentiment, full of beauty' (Patmore, (1877), pp. 201-2).

The obituary is surprisingly formal in tone. It does not admit to personal acquaintance with the poet, or indulge in the physical description to be found in Procter's private reminiscence. Rather, the impersonal tone allows the stereotypical picture of the tragic young poet to come across more forcefully. Keats, divested of too many personal details, is more easily fitted into a certain type with which the public has become familiar – 'self-consuming meteors' or poets who die young. The adjectives used to describe Keats are applied without much specificity – 'young', 'solitary', 'helpless' – while the quotation from 'Ode to a Nightingale' identifies the poet's life with his work in a conventional way. The only anecdote vaguely worthy of the name is the account of

Severn at Keats's deathbed, discussing the inscription for his grave. Interestingly, this article must be one of the first pieces of writing in which the now conventional connection between the three younger Romantics – Byron, Shelley and Keats – is noted: 'he was one of three English poets who had been compelled by circumstances to adopt a foreign country as their own'.

Procter's account was reproduced in *Imperial Magazine* (December 1821), John Millard's annual *Time's Telescope* (January 1822), and the Boston *Athenaeum* (March 1822), and as a result it had a considerable and important impact. One of the chief side-effects of the article and its only anecdote, particularly in America, was to encourage a growing number of tourists to make pilgrimages to Rome, to visit the Protestant cemetery and to see one of the most famous tombstone epitaphs (see extract from Severn, *Atlantic Monthly*).

Town Conversation.

No. IV.

DEATH OF MR. JOHN KEATS.

WE commence our article this month with but a melancholy subject—the death of Mr. John Keats.—It is, perhaps, an unfit topic to be discussed under this head, but we knew not where else to place it, and we could not reconcile ourselves to the idea of letting a poet's death pass by in the common obituary. He died on the 23rd of February, 1821, at Rome, whither he had gone for the benefit of his health. His complaint was a consumption, under which he had languished for some time, but his death was accelerated by a cold caught in his voyage to Italy.

Mr. Keats was, in the truest sense of the word, A POET.—There is but a small portion of the public acquainted with the writings of this young man; yet they were full of high imagination and delicate fancy, and his images were beautiful and more entirely his own, perhaps, than those of any living writer whatever. He had a fine ear, a tender heart, and at times great force and originality of expression; and notwithstanding all this, he has been suffered to rise and pass away almost without a notice: the laurel, has been awarded (for the present) to other brows: the bolder aspirants have been allowed to take their station on the slippery steps of the temple of fame, while he has been nearly hidden among the crowd during his life, and has at last died, solitary and in sorrow, in a foreign land.

It is at all times difficult, if not impossible, to argue others into a love of poets and poetry: it is altogether a matter of feeling, and we must leave to time (while it hallows his memory) to do justice to the re-

putation of Keats. There were many, however, even among the critics living, who held his powers in high estimation; and it was well observed by the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, that there was no other Author whatever, whose writings would form so good a test by which to try the love which any one professed to bear towards poetry.

When Keats left England, he had a presentiment that he should not return: that this has been too sadly realized the reader already knows.—After his arrival in Italy, he revived for a brief period, but soon afterwards declined, and sunk gradually into his grave. He was one of three English poets who had been compelled by circumstances to adopt a foreign country as their own. He was the youngest, but the first to leave us. His sad and beautiful wish is at last accomplished: It was that he might drink “of the warm south,” and “leave the world unseen,”—and—(he is addressing the nightingale)—

“And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou amongst 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,

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.”

A few weeks before he died, a gentleman who was sitting by his bed-side, spoke of an inscription to his memory, but he declined this altogether,—desiring that there should be no mention of his name or country; “or if any,” said he, “let it be—*Here lies the body of one whose name was writ in water!*”—There is something in this to us most painfully affecting; indeed the whole story of his later days is well calculated to make a deep impression.—It is to be hoped that his biography will be given to the world, and also

whatever he may have left (whether in poetry or prose) behind him. The public is fond of patronizing poets: they are considered in the light of an almost helpless race: they are bright as stars, but like meteors

“Short-lived and self-consuming.”

We do not claim the *patronage* of the public for Mr. Keats, but we hope that it will now cast aside every little and unworthy prejudice, and do justice to the high memory of a young but undoubted poet. L.

Shelley, *Adonais* (Pisa, 1821)

Shelley's *Adonais* proved to be the most important influence upon the development of Keats's reputation in the nineteenth century (Wolfson, (1995)) and any anthology which omitted it would seriously misrepresent Keats's 'after-fame'. Commentators on Keats were soon quoting from Shelley's poem and one later biographer of Keats, Dorothy Hewlett, actually gave her book the title *Adonais*. As a result of the poem, the notion that Keats's early death had been caused by harsh reviews became firmly fixed in criticism of his poems. The impact of the poem also meant that Keats and Shelley were always to be closely linked in the public mind. The review of *Adonais* in the *Literary Register*, for example, commented on the 'remarkable coincidence' of Shelley's death when the 'breath which uttered that lamentation [for Keats] was scarcely cool on the poet's lip' (*Literary Register*, 28 September 1822, p. 193). It seemed only poetic justice that, according to Edward Trelawny, Shelley had died with a copy of Keats's poems in his pocket, 'doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away' (Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Byron and Shelley* (1858).

The two poets were not so closely linked in life. They first met at Leigh Hunt's house at the beginning of 1817. Following the suicide of his first wife Harriet, Shelley was going through the ordeal of a custody case over their children and, temporarily homeless after spending the summer in Geneva, was staying with Hunt. Through the month of February, Shelley and Keats made a number of visits to each other (Mary Shelley's *Journal*, pp. 162, 164). Two months earlier, Leigh Hunt famously brought their work together in an article in the *Examiner* entitled 'Young Poets'. But Keats kept his distance. He refused Shelley's invitation later in the year to join him in Marlow, in order 'that I might have my own unfettered scope' (To Benjamin Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 170; 8 October 1817) and kept to himself his drafts of *Endymion*, composed simultaneously and almost in competition with Shelley's *Revolt of Islam*. Shelley, he felt, would be bound to be critical, 'much disposed to dissect and anatomise, any trip or slip I may have made' (To George and Tom Keats, *Letters*, I, p. 214; 23 January 1818). It was only when Shelley returned to London before finally leaving for Italy that they saw each other a few more times and joined in one of Hunt's favourite sonnet writing competitions (Bate, (1979), p. 300).

The difference between them seems to have been partly based on differing poetic priorities. Shelley told Keats that 'in poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius, would pursue

the same plan' (Shelley, *Letters*, 27 July 1820); while Keats replied: 'you I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore' (To Shelley, *Letters*, II, p. 323; 16 August 1820). In this relationship, Keats always seems a little rebellious, harbouring past grievances: 'I remember you advising me not to publish my first-blights [sic] on Hampstead Heath – I am returning advice upon your hands' (Ibid, *Letters*, I, p. 323). Shelley, in contrast, is ostensibly self-deprecating and generous, admitting, for example, to Mrs. Hunt: 'I consider his [Keats's] a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and of his soul, to keep the one warm and to teach the other Greek and Spanish. I am aware indeed in part that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me and this is an additional motive and will be an added pleasure' (Shelley, *Letters*, 29 October 1820). Perhaps it was this slightly patronising attitude which Keats found so irritating.

It was through Maria Gisborne, Shelley's friend then staying with the Hunts in London, that Shelley heard about Keats's illness. He wrote immediately to invite him to 'take up your residence with us' in Pisa. Keats sent back a non-committal but polite reply: 'If I do not take advantage of your invitation it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy'. In the event, Keats's prophesied 'circumstance' occurred: he died in Rome without seeing Shelley at all. Shelley learnt of Keats's death through Leigh Hunt and wrote to Byron with the news in April (see introduction). He composed *Adonais* comparatively quickly, writing to his publisher to tell him of the finished poem, a 'lament on the death of poor Keats', at the beginning of June. It was only at that point that he asked for actual details of Keats's death. A week later he had received an account from a certain John Finch (gleaned from Joseph Severn), via John Gisborne. 'I have received the heart-rending account', he replied to Gisborne, 'of the closing scene of the great genius whom envy and ingratitude scourged out of the world. I do not think that if I had seen it before that I could have composed my poem – the enthusiasm of the imagination would have been overpowered by sentiment' (Shelley, *Letters*, 16 June 1821).

In fact, as Shelley was undoubtedly aware, the power of *Adonais* relies on the fact that it does not dwell upon the messy details of Keats's last days. The poem is written in the formal elegy genre, self-consciously invoking the already self-conscious classical elegies by the ancient Greek writers, Bion, Moschus and Theocritus, and also Milton's *Lycidas*. Standard images and tropes – such as anthropomorphised nature mourning – are employed, and, as with the last extract, Keats the historical man – significantly renamed, and so translated into, the mythical Adonais – becomes transformed into a more timeless figure, the poet who dies tragically young. (For the significance of the

name, see Wasserman (1971), pp. 464-5). Elegies by their nature are expected to raise their subjects above historical specificity and so to find consolation in the polished certainty of poetry; Milton, after all, goes off to 'pastures new' following the therapeutic experience of *Lycidas*. But Shelley emphasises the idealising possibilities of elegy even more forcefully. By the end of *Adonais*, Keats – or Adonais in his new idealised form – is imagined to be living, albeit in an abstract capacity, while the world he has left behind is murky and dead. It was in this Platonic or unworldly spirit that Shelley attempted to add extra lines to Keats's desired epitaph:

"Here lieth One whose name was writ in water"
 But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
 Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,
 Death, the immortalising winter, flew
 Athwart the stream – and time's printless torrent grew
 A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
 Of Adonais!

(Hutchinson and Matthews, p. 658)

Ultimately we learn more about Shelley in *Adonais* than we do about Keats. Although Shelley narrates the story that Keats was driven to death by harsh reviews, the excessive passion with which he writes of the critics, both in the preface and in the poem, suggests that he himself feels his own denigration and neglect by critics bitterly. In the couple of years before *Adonais*, Shelley had seen his revolutionary and proselytising *Prometheus Unbound* either attacked or misunderstood and ignored. Possibly more disappointingly, his drama *The Cenci* was criticised as immoral and never reached the stage. In addition, Shelley had lost the custody case over his two children by Harriet because the courts believed the critics' accounts of the scandalous opinions contained in *Queen Mab*. It is hard not to feel that the image of a victimised Keats serves as a projection of Shelley's own feelings. (See Heffernan, (1984)). Indeed, the degree to which Keats might be considered as Shelley's alter-ego in the poem may be discerned in the expressions of envy or yearning for Keats's now oblivious condition: 'Die, if thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek'. It is this typical Shelleyan mixture of despair and intense unfulfillable optimism which informs his response to Keats's death and, by implication, the imagining of his own.

Adonais was one of the key texts in the making of a stereotype of the Romantic poet. Influenced by the spirit of Shelley's poem, later interpreters allowed the individual details of both Keats's and Shelley's lives to be subsumed in the myth of the Adonais-type poet: a poet who is sensitive, weak, unworldly, and who finally prefers his own ideal world of the imagination (and death) to the everyday world of readers and reviewers.

ADONAI8

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS,
AUTHOR OF ENDYMION, HYPERION ETC.

BY

PERCY. B. SHELLEY

*Ἀστήρ πρὶν μὲν ἑλαμπες ἐνὶ ζῶοισιν ἦν.
Νυν δὲ θανῶν, λαμπρὸς ἔσπερος ἐν φθίμενοις.*

PLATO.

P I S A

WITH THE TYPES OF DIDOT

M D C C C X X I.

P R E F A C E

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτι σον στομα, φάρμακον ἔιδες·
 Πῶς τεν τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτεδραμε, κοῦκ ἐγλυκανθη;
 Τις δὲ βροτος τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κερασσαι τοι,
 "Ἢ δοῦναι λαλίοντι το φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ὦδιν.

ΜΟΨΧΟΣ, ΕΒΙΤΑΓΗ. ΒΙΟΝ.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem, a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled, prove, at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion, as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats, died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins covered in

winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses, was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where canker-worms abound, what wonder, if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said, that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates, is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to "*Endymion*"; was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, "*Paris*," and "*Woman*," and a "*Syrian Tale*," and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men, who in their venal good nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery, dares the

foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion*, was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed "almost risked his own life, and "sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon "his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAI8.

I.

I weep for Adonais — he is dead !
 O, weep for Adonais ! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say : with me
 Died Adonais ; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity !

II.

Where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay,
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
 In darkness ? where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died ? With veiled eyes,
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

III.

O, weep for Adonais — he is dead !
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep !
 Yet wherefore ? Quench within their burning bed
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep ;
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
 Descend ; — oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air ;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV.

Most musical of mourners, weep again !
 Lament anew, Urania ! — He died,
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
 Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,
 Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite
 Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the sons of light.

V.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;
 And happier they their happiness who knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
 In which suns perished ; others more sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
 And fed with true love tears, instead of dew;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
 The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
 The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal. — Come away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more! —
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace,
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
 Of mortal change, shall fill the grave which is her maw.

IX.

O, weep for Adonais! — The quick Dreams,
 The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not, —
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;
 " Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
 " See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
 " Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 " A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
 She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
 Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
 Another in her wilful grief would break
 Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more weak;
 And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With lightning and with music : the dædly death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and past to its eclipse.

XIII.

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
 Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp ; — the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
 Her eastern watchtower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
 Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day ;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
 And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away
 Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou Adonais: wan they stand and sere
 Amid the drooping comrades of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII.

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
 But grief returns with the revolving year;
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
 As it has ever done, with change and motion,
 From the great morning of the world when first
 God dawned on Chaos; in its steam immersed
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
 Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
 The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

XX.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
 By sightless lightning? — th' intense atom glows
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,
 And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !
 Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene
 The actors or spectators ? Great and mean
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more !
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
 "Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
 "A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
 Had held in holy silence, cried : "Arise !"
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania ;
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere
 Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
 And human hearts, which to her aery tread
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
 And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV.

In the death chamber for a moment Death
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
 "Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
 "As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
 "Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress

XXVI.

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
 "Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 "And in my heartless breast and burning brain
 "That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
 "With food of saddest memory kept alive,
 "Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
 "Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
 "All that I am to be as thou now art!
 "But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII.

" O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
 " Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
 " Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
 " Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
 " Defenceless as thou wert, oh where was then
 " Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
 " Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
 " Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
 " The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII.

" The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
 " The obscene ravens, clamorous oer the dead;
 " The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
 " Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
 " And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
 " When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
 " The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
 " And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
 " They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them as they go.

XXIX.

" The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
 " He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
 " Is gathered into death without a dawn,
 " And the immortal stars awake again;
 " So is it in the world of living men:
 " A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
 " Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
 " It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
 " Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XXX.

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds came
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
 An early but enduring monument,
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
 In sorrow ; from her wilds Ierne sent
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
 And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
 A phantom among men ; companionless
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm
 Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift —
 A Love in desolation masked ; — a Power
 Girt round with weakness ; — it can scarce uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour ;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
 A breaking billow ; — even whilst we speak
 Is it not broken ? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly : on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
 He came the last, neglected and apart;
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own;
 As in the accents of an unknown land,
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "who art thou?"
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—Oh! that it should be so!

XXXV.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one;
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh !
 What deaf and, viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown :
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !
 Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be !
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'er flow :
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

XXXVIII.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below ;
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now. —
 Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
 He hath awakened from the dream of life —
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
 Invulnerable nothings. — *We* decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI.

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on it's despair!

XLII.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII.

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
 All new successions to the forms they wear;
 Torturing th'unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV.

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it, for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from thier thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us", they cry,
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 "Swung blind in unascended majesty,
 "Silent alone amid an Heaven of song.
 "Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII.

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night;
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre
 O, not of him, but of our joy : 'tis nought
 That ages, empires, and religions there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought ;
 For such as he can lend,— they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey ;
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX.

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

L.

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand ;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble ; and beneath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI.

Here pause : these graves are all too young as yet
 To have out grown the sorrow which consigned
 Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

LII.

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !
 Follow where all is fled ! — Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart ?
 Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here
 They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !
 A light is past from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles, — the low wind whispers near :
 'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
 The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

John Hamilton Reynolds, *The Garden of Florence and Other Poems* (1821)

In 1917 the gravestone of John Hamilton Reynolds in Newport, Isle of Wight was cleaned and restored. To the old inscription, 'In Memory of John Hamilton Reynolds who died November 15th 1852 Aged 58 Years', a new epitaph was added: 'The Friend of Keats'. It was as a friend of Keats, rather than for any literary or other achievement, that it was felt Reynolds should be remembered. So it is surprising at first to discover that the only published account which Reynolds gave of his greatest and most important friend is this extremely brief and oblique statement at the beginning of his 1821 collection of poems. Why? Motives of envy or jealousy must be ruled out. Reynolds was one of Keats's most consistent and critically informed admirers, asserting, in his review of Keats's *Poems* (1817) in the *Champion*, that Keats was likely to 'eclipse' nearly all contemporary poets (*Champion*, 9 March 1817). Lack of time or commitment to writing could have been possible factors preventing the production of a longer memoir. By 1821, Reynolds had retreated from poetry to law, his dedication to his future wife in *The Garden of Florence* wistfully announcing his retirement: 'thy advice is law – so farewell, fairies!' Any spare time not spent 'drawing leases' or concentrating on his new wife was devoted to journalism, to magazine reviews and witty essays. Besides, Reynolds believed that John Taylor would write the biography of Keats and so he spent some time writing to the Keats circle endeavouring to collect papers and letters to help his friend's work. Typically, he did not want to eclipse Taylor's enterprise.

But the main reason for his brevity was probably emotional. Reynolds and Keats had been very close, treating each other like brothers. A year apart in age, there were many similarities in their early careers. Reynolds, like Keats, left school (St. Paul's) aged fifteen. Like Keats at Guy's hospital, he took up what he considered to be tiresome work, as a clerk at the Amicable Insurance Office. Like Keats, he gave up his work to concentrate on full-time writing. When they met in October 1816, through Leigh Hunt, Reynolds was the more widely published and apparently more promising writer. His first major work, *Safie, An Eastern Tale* (1814), had attracted the attention of Lord Byron, who met Reynolds over dinner to encourage him and advise him about dealing with critics, while the second, *The Eden of the Imagination* (1814), had earned the praise of Wordsworth. Reynolds was the third writer that Hunt included in his 'Young Poets' essay in *The Examiner*, alongside Shelley and Keats. Within weeks of first meeting, Keats and Reynolds were

swapping ideas and drafts for poems, echoing each other's work. It was to Reynolds that Keats composed some of his most important letters, in which he discussed his developing theories of poetry. And it was Reynolds who played a key part in curbing the excesses of *Endymion* by urging Keats to re-write the preface.

Towards the end of Keats's life, the two friends saw less of each other. Keats was living with Charles Brown and so mixing with different people. Chiefly, he was in love with Fanny Brawne. Reynolds's sisters like many of Keats's friends did not approve of Brawne, and so Keats crossly stopped visiting the Reynolds family (although he met up with John elsewhere). Moreover, although Keats tried to dissuade him, Reynolds had returned to law, enticed back by the need to make a living to allow his intended marriage. He was too busy with his new commitments to bid Keats goodbye before his departure for Italy. But he was as assiduous as ever on his friend's behalf, never really believing that Keats was in danger of death (partly because he had always suffered more from ill health than Keats): 'You give me the best of news, full to the brim, that Keats is positively off for a better Lungland', he wrote to John Taylor (*Letters of John Hamilton Reynolds*, 21 September 1820). A few months later, now part of the new *London Magazine* team of writers, he was actually present at the Scott-Christie duel, watching his friend's reputation being defended (see introduction).

The passage below is remarkably understated, and for this reason powerful. Keats is unnamed but his identity is left to be inferred by readers with inside knowledge. Reynolds does not dwell on Keats the poet, unlike Procter and Shelley, but hints at Keats the man and friend. He does not go into much detail, probably not wanting to exploit his connection with the poet in an unseemly way: 'He, who is gone, was one of the very kindest friends I possessed'. He mentions Keats's 'sensitive' nature, and so gestures at the notion, already current, that he had been driven to death by reviews, without opening up wounds still felt too bitterly. Primarily one is struck in the passage by the terrible sense of loss. They had shadowed each other's poems for many years and even here Reynolds admits that his poems were intended to complement Keats's Boccaccio-inspired poem, *Isabella*, and others which he never managed to write. Keats's missing poems thus form a ghostly presence (or absence) behind Reynolds's work. There is a tremendous poignancy in this, the self-confessed last volume of poems by the one-time most precocious writer of his generation, paying tribute to the demise and 'frustrating' waste of his talented friend. Reynolds's sense of loss and consequential self-failure is emphasised by the fact that he was not able to write more profusely, either in 1821 or in the years afterwards. The understatement of this extract implies, perhaps more acutely than a full scale memoir might do, his sense of the importance of Keats for his own creativity. When he died in the Isle of Wight

in 1852, he had become a drunkard and, in the words of Rowland Edmund Prothero who had grown up locally, a 'broken-down, discontented man, whose great literary abilities had brought him no success in life' (L. M. Jones, (1984), p. 292).

ADVERTISEMENT.

MANY of the poems in this little volume, indeed the greater part of them, have been written for some years, and I very much fear that age has not improved them. Modern poetry is not, perhaps, bettered by being hoarded according to the directions of Horace;—for to be seen in its freshest colours, it should be “worn in its newest gloss.”

The stories from Boccacio (The Garden of Florence, and The Ladye of Provence) were to have

been associated with tales from the same source, intended to have been written by a friend ;—but illness on his part, and distracting engagements on mine, prevented us from accomplishing our plan at the time ; and Death now, to my deep sorrow, has frustrated it for ever !

He, who is gone, was one of the very kindest friends I possessed, and yet he was not kinder perhaps to me, than to others. His intense mind and powerful feeling would, I truly believe, have done the world some service, had his life been spared—but he was of too sensitive a nature—and thus he was destroyed ! One story he completed, and that is to me now the most pathetic poem in existence !

The Ladye of Provence is taken from one of Boccacio's stories, and the original incidents are

pretty faithfully followed. The names have been changed, for the reason given in the old epitaph; —*Rossiglione* would not accommodate itself to metre.

Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* (1828)

Leigh Hunt's account of Keats in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* was the first full-scale, conventional memoir of the poet. It occurs halfway through the volume, after the commissioned memoir of the more famous, and therefore more marketable, Byron and the far more hagiographic and warm memoir of Shelley. Hunt's account of Keats is measured, proprietorial, muted. And yet Hunt was arguably Keats's most important – and certainly most controversial – friend, the person who did most to forge and shape Keats's career as a poet, and who, later, turned out to be the main cause of Keats's troubled relationship with the critics.

Keats was first introduced to Hunt by his schoolfriend and tutor Charles Cowden Clarke while he was still working at Guy's Hospital, with only vague poetic aspirations. Clarke's father, the headmaster of Keats's school in Enfield, used to read Hunt's *Examiner* regularly, and it was at Clarke's house that Keats heard the news of Hunt's imprisonment for libel and subsequently composed a sonnet on Hunt's release. Meeting the author of the *Examiner*, Keats admitted to Clarke, 'will be an Era in my existence' (To Charles Cowden Clarke, *Letters*, I, p. 113; 9 October 1816). Hunt quickly adopted Keats into his household, at that point an apparently idyllic cottage in the Vale of Health on Hampstead Heath. Having already been shown one of Keats's poems by Clarke before their first meeting, Hunt hastened to include his new protégé – now privately nicknamed Junkets by him – in the 'Young Poets' essay in the *Examiner*. In the next few weeks, Keats was to meet, amongst others, John Hamilton Reynolds, Benjamin Robert Haydon and Shelley at Hunt's house, thus moving swiftly from a world of literary medical students to the more professional world of published poets and artists. He summed up the excitement in a poem sent to Haydon, 'Great Spirits now on Earth are sojourning'. The three men who 'give the World another heart', according to the poem, are Wordsworth, Haydon and Hunt: 'He of the rose, the violet, the spring / The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake' (To Haydon, *Letters*, I, p. 117; 20 November 1816). In the first few months, while Keats was still living in Cheapside, a sofa bed was set up for him in Hunt's library to save him from the long trip back to London late at night and it was there that he composed 'Sleep and Poetry'. Later, in spring 1817, he moved to Well Walk in Hampstead, a short walk from his new friend. It was Hunt who introduced him to the publisher Charles Ollier, who commissioned his first volume of poems. When it appeared, it seemed only natural that it should be dedicated to Leigh Hunt: 'I feel a free, / A leafy luxury, seeing I

could please / With these poor offerings, a man like thee' ('Dedication to Leigh Hunt', *Poetical Works*, p. 2).

But even during these first thrilling months, when friendship with Hunt was inevitably associated with the first taste of professional poetry, Keats was hearing warning voices and entertaining doubts. Haydon invited Keats and Reynolds to his house only a week after first meeting them, and pointedly did not include Hunt. Soon both he and Reynolds were warning Keats of Hunt's affectation in poetry and dangerous opinions in politics. Keats admitted to his new friend Benjamin Bailey that 'Haydon says to me Keats dont show your lines to Hunt on any account' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 169; 8 October 1817) and Haydon's campaign to wean Keats from Hunt was obviously effective, because even as early as May 1817 he asserted to Haydon that Hunt's 'self delusions are very lamentable they have enticed him into a situation which I should be less eager after than that of a galley Slave – what you observe thereon is very true' (To Haydon, *Letters*, I, p. 143; 10/11 May 1817). Admittedly, Hunt was absorbed by his new friendship with Shelley, staying with him for a long period in Marlow. But crucially, Keats was embarking on a new long poem, *Endymion*, without consulting his mentor of the last six months. He was suddenly aware of the extent to which Hunt regarded him as almost his own creation, his 'elevé', and was anxious to assert his independence. A story related to him by Reynolds, who of course was prejudiced against Hunt, seems to have particularly provoked him: 'When [Hunt] met Reynolds in the Theatre John told him that I was getting to the completion of 4000 lines. Ah! says Hunt, had it not been for me they would have been 7000! If he will say this to Reynolds what would he to other People?' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 169; 8 October 1817). When Hunt finally saw the first book of *Endymion*, he was critical, but, as Keats said, he was probably hurt that he had not been allowed a greater role in its composition.

If Keats expressed some doubts about Hunt's taste in poetry and suitability as a mentor in 1817, what finally confirmed the uneasiness of the relationship between the two was the series of 'Cockney Poets' articles in *Blackwood's*, which began in October 1817. The prime target was Hunt. Hunt's editorship of the liberal *Examiner*, and his imprisonment for libel in 1813, confirmed his oppositional politics and made him an obvious target for the Tory *Blackwood's*, which ridiculed his apparently innocuous works, *Rimini* (1817) and *Foliage* (1818). Keats, considered to be of Hunt's school because of the dedication in his *Poems* (1817), found himself in the same line of fire. In many ways, Keats expressed sympathy for Hunt, confessing 'I never read anything so virulent – accusing him of the greatest crimes depreciating his Wit his poetry – his Habits – his company, his Conversation' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 180; 3 November 1817). But the continual comparison between Hunt and himself must have irritated him, for what Keats disliked about Hunt was really

what he disliked and felt embarrassed about in his own early writing and poetic experiments. His vehement criticism of Hunt's 'sin' of 'flattering one-self into an idea of being a great Poet' must have been motivated by guilty memories of crowning himself with laurel (see headnote to 'Novels of the Season' in *Fraser's Magazine*), and his complaint to his brother George that Hunt is 'vain, egotistical and disgusting in matters of taste and morals' was probably partly provoked by his later efforts to change his early over-elaborate style, which had been modelled on *Rimini* (To George and Georgiana Keats, *Letters*, II, p. 11; 16 December–4 January 1819). The rebellion against Hunt could really, then, be thought of as a displaced revolution in his self-image. The *Blackwood's* articles, which linked the two writers, made that rebellion or revolution impossible.

In the last few months of his life in England, there was a slight mellowing in the relationship with Hunt. While Charles Brown was away in Scotland, Keats was too ill to look after himself and went to stay with Hunt and family in Kentish Town, where, he wrote to his sister, 'Mr Hunt does everything in his power to make the time pass as agreeably with me as possible' (To Fanny Keats, *Letters*, II, p. 309; 22 July 1820). Although, a month later, he stormed out of the house after one of Fanny Brawne's letters to him was inadvertently opened by Hunt's son, the following day, now ensconced at the Brawnes' in Hampstead, he was full of contrition, writing to Hunt that 'I feel really attached to you for your sympathies with me and patience at my luns' (To Hunt, *Letters*, II, p. 316; August 1820). Hunt had been gradually pushed out from the inner circle of Keats's friends. However, a man of renowned and self-confessed cheerfulness, he was not one to bear a grudge. He replied to Keats that he was very 'attached' to him. And a few months later, he wrote a moving letter to Joseph Severn, in an effort to exhort Keats to live:

Judge how often I thought of Keats, and with what feelings ... If he can bear to hear of us, pray tell him; but if he knows it already, and can put it in better language than any man. I hear that he does not like to be told that he may get better ... He can only regard it as a puerile thing, and an insinuation that he shall die. ... If he can put up with attempts to console him, [tell him] of what I have said a thousand times, and what I still (upon my honour) think always, that I have seen too many instances of recovery from apparently desperate cases of consumption not to be in hope to the very last. If he cannot bear this, tell him – tell that great poet and noble hearted man – that we shall all bear his memory in the most precious part of our hearts, and that the world shall bow their heads to it, as our loves do. Or if this, again, will trouble his spirit, tell him that we shall never cease to remember and love him; and that Christian or infidel, the most sceptical of us has faith enough in the high things that nature puts into our heads, to think all who are of one accord in mind or heart are journeying to one and the same place, and shall unite somewhere or other again, face to face,

mutually conscious, mutually delighted. Tell him he is only before us on the road, as he is in everything else ... The tears are again in my eyes, and I must not afford to shed them. (Blainey, 1985, p. 118)

Unfortunately, Keats had died before this letter arrived. It was first published in Milnes's biography in 1848.

In the years after Keats's death, Hunt was to suffer disappointment, poverty and ill health. He travelled out to Italy to join Shelley in order to set up a new newspaper, *The Liberal*, together with Byron, but within a few weeks Shelley had drowned. With Shelley – the 'link between the two thunderbolts' – gone, Byron and Hunt drifted apart somewhat acrimoniously and the *Liberal* failed. These ill starred ventures led to stress and poor health, and by October 1825, Hunt was back in England. It was then that the publisher Henry Colburn, for whose magazine the *New Monthly* he was contributing the occasional article and to whom he was greatly in debt, urged Hunt to exploit his experiences financially by writing *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* (see head-note to Hunt in *Lives of the Great Romantics*, Shelley). The account of Byron was what was demanded, and what sold the book – the second edition was published within three months and pirated editions soon appeared abroad – while the 'detached portraits' of Shelley, Keats and others are remnants of Hunt's originally planned autobiography.

As a result of the fluctuating relationship between Hunt and Keats outlined above, the portrait of Keats in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* is both possessive and patronising. Hunt is eager to point out the role he played in discovering Keats's talent and in shaping his style. The two poets are depicted, in effect, going poetry training together. In the relationship, Hunt is most definitely the teacher; again and again he uses the words 'young' or 'youthful' to describe his protégé's work. In keeping with this pedagogical sentiment, Hunt described Keats as 'of extraordinary promise, and almost as extraordinary performance' in his contribution to John Gorton's *General Biographical Dictionary*, published the same year. The long section on the reviewer depicts Hunt as the strong and experienced man who failed to protect his innocent and weaker friend, emphasising the notion of the sensitive Keats through the allusion to Shelley's *Adonais*: 'I little suspected ... that the hunters had struck him'. What are most surprising are the hints of actual spite. Hunt accuses Keats of occasionally degenerating into 'poetical effeminacy', and of covering up his humble origins, both characteristics of which he himself was accused by *Blackwood's*. Hunt in fact had only recently derived the account of Keats's origins from John Taylor, who had quizzed Richard Abbey, Keats's guardian, after a lavish dinner and written a garbled version of what he was told the following morning. (See Gittings, (1968), pp. 3-4).

Hunt's portrait of Keats was not popular. George Keats, Keats's brother,

wrote to Charles Dilke: 'Hunt's sketch is not altogether a failure but I should be extremely sorry that poor John's name should go down to posterity associated with the littlenesses of L.H., an association of which he was so impatient in his Lifetime. He speaks of him patronisingly' (12 May 1828, *Keats Circle*, I, p. 313). And Charles Brown in Florence expressed his disappointment and felt moved to begin his own memoir. The effect of the book was to fragment the already bitterly divided Keats circle still further.

MR. KEATS.

WITH A CRITICISM ON HIS WRITINGS.

Mr. KEATS, when he died, had just completed his four-and-twentieth year. He was under the middle height; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well-turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size: he had a face, in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up, an eager power checked and made patient by ill-health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. The face was rather long than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken; the eyes mellow and glowing; large, dark and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this, there was ill health as well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull; a singularity which he had in common with Lord Byron and Mr. Shelley, none of



whose hats I could get on. Mr. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed, between his upper and lower extremities; and he would look at his hand, which was faded, and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty. He was a seven month's child: his mother, who was a lively woman, passionately fond of amusement, is supposed to have hastened her death by too great an inattention to hours and seasons. Perhaps she hastened that of her son.

Mr. Keats's origin was of the humblest description; he was born October 29, 1796, at a livery-stables in Moorfields, of which his grandfather was the proprietor. I am very incurious, and did not know this till the other day. He never spoke of it, perhaps out of a personal soreness which the world had exasperated. After receiving the rudiments of a classical education at Mr. Clarke's school at Enfield, he was bound apprentice to Mr. Hammond, a surgeon, in Church-street, Edmonton; and his enemies having made a jest even of this, he did not like to be reminded of it; at once disdaining them for their meanness, and himself for being sick enough to be moved by them. Mr. Clarke, junior, his schoolmaster's son, a reader of genuine discernment, had encouraged with great warmth the genius that he saw in the young poet; and it was to Mr. Clarke I was indebted for my acquaintance with him. I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the exuberant specimens of genuine though young poetry that were laid before me, and the promise of which was seconded by the fine fervid countenance of the writer. We became intimate on the spot, and I found the young poet's heart as warm as his imagination. We read and walked together, and used to write verses of an evening upon a given subject. No imaginative pleasure was left unnoticed by us, or unenjoyed; from the recollection of the bards and patriots of old, to the luxury of a summer rain at our window, or the clicking of the coal in winter-time. Not long after-

wards, having the pleasure of entertaining at dinner Mr. Godwin, Mr. Hazlitt, and Mr. Basil Montague, I showed them the verses of my young friend, and they were pronounced to be as extraordinary as I thought them. One of them was that noble sonnet on first reading Chapman's Homer, which terminates with so energetic a calmness, and which completely announced the new poet taking possession. As Mr. Keats's first juvenile volume is not much known, I will repeat the sonnet here, as a remarkable instance of a vein prematurely masculine.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Much have I travelled 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.

Modern criticism has made the public well acquainted with the merits of Chapman. The retainers of some schools of poetry may not see very far into his old oracular style ; but the poets themselves (the true test of poetical merit) have always felt the impression. Waller professed that he could never read him without a movement of transport ; and Pope, in the preface to his translation, says that he was animated by a daring fiery

spirit, something like what we may conceive of Homer himself "before he arrived at years of discretion." Chapman certainly stands upon no ceremony. He blows as rough a blast as Achilles could have desired to hear, very different from the soft music of a parade. "The whales exult" under his Neptune, playing unwieldy gambols; and his Ulysses issues out of the shipwreck, "soaked to the very heart;" tasting of sea-weeds and salt-water, in a style that does not at all mince the matter, or consult the proprieties of Brighton. Mr. Keats's epithets of "loud and bold," showed that he understood him thoroughly. The men of Cortez staring at each other, and the eagle eyes of their leader looking out upon the Pacific, have been thought too violent a picture for the dignity of the occasion; but it is a case that requires the exception. Cortez's "eagle eyes" are a piece of historical painting, as the reader may see by Titian's portrait of him. The last line,

" Silent—upon a peak in Darien,"

makes the mountain a part of the spectacle, and supports the emotion of the rest of the sonnet upon a basis of gigantic tranquillity.

The volume containing this sonnet was published in 1817, when the author was in his twenty-first year. The poem with which it begins, was suggested to him by a delightful summer-day, as he stood beside the gate that leads from the Battery on Hampstead Heath into a field by Caen Wood; and the last poem, the one "On Sleep and Poetry," was occasioned by his sleeping in one of the cottages in the Vale of Health, the first one that fronts the valley, beginning from the same quarter. I mention these things, which now look trivial, because his readers will not think them so twenty years hence. It was in the beautiful lane, running from the road between Hampstead and Highgate to the foot of Highgate Hill,

that, meeting me one day, he first gave me the volume. If the admirer of Mr. Keats's poetry does not know the lane in question, he ought to become acquainted with it, both on his author's account and its own. It has been also paced by Mr. Lamb and Mr. Hazlitt, and frequented, like the rest of the beautiful neighbourhood, by Mr. Coleridge; so that instead of Millfield Lane, which is the name it is known by "on earth," it has sometimes been called Poets' Lane, which is an appellation it richly deserves. It divides the grounds of Lords Mansfield and Southampton, running through trees and sloping meadows, and being rich in the botany for which this part of the neighbourhood of London has always been celebrated. I recommend it, contrary to the interests of my solitude; but the mischief done me by sociality pleases me, as usual, still better.

" A drainless shower
Of light is poesy; 'tis the supreme of power;
'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.

These are some more of the lines in a book, in which feeble critics thought they saw nothing but feebleness. Here are four more, out of a profusion of mixed youth and beauty:—the writer is speaking of some engraved portraits, that adorned the room he slept in:—

" Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,
As if he always listen'd to the sighs
Of the goaded world; and Kosciusko's, worn
With horrid suff'rance,—*mightily forlorn.*"

But there were political opinions in the book; and these not according with the opinions of the then government authorities, the writer was found to be a very absurd person, and not to be borne. His youth,

and the sincerity natural to youth, to say nothing of personal predilections, which are things that nobody has a right to indulge in but the affectionate followers of office, all told against instead of for him in the eyes of a servile weakness, jealous of independence in others, and (to say the truth) not very capable of discerning the greatest talent. To admire and comment upon the genius that two or three hundred years have applauded, and to discover what will partake of the applause two or three hundred years hence, are processes of a very different description. Accordingly, when Mr. Keats, in 1818, published his next volume, his poetic romance entitled "*Endymion*," the critical authority, then reigning at the west end, showed it no mercy. What completed the matter was, that his publisher, in a fright, went to the critic to conciliate him; as if the greater and more insolent the opportunity of trampling, the petty tyrant would not be the happier to seize it. Mr. Gifford gave his visitor very plainly to understand that such would be the case. Such it was; and though the bookseller, who in reality had a better taste than the critic, and very properly felt piqued to support his author, stood by him in the publication of another volume, the sale of both volumes was neutralized in that gratuitous acquiescence with the critics, in which the public have since learnt not to be quite so trusting.

"*Endymion*," it must be allowed, was not a little calculated to perplex the critics. It was a wilderness of sweets, but it was truly a wilderness; a domain of young, luxuriant, uncompromising poetry, where the "weeds of glorious feature" hampered the petty legs accustomed to the lawns and trodden walks, in vogue for the last hundred years; lawns, as Johnson says, "shaven by the scythe, and levelled with the roller;" walks, which, being public property, have been re-consecrated, like

Kensington Gardens, by the beacles of authority, instead of the Pans and Sylvans. Mr. Wordsworth knew better than the critics, but he did not choose to say any thing. He stood upon equivocal footing himself, his greatest poetical recommendation arising from the most prosaical action of his life, to wit, his acceptance of the office of Distributor of Stamps. Mr. Keats, meeting him one day at Mr. Haydon's,—the same day when Lamb said that good thing about Voltaire*,—our young poet was induced to repeat to the older one the Hymn to Pan out of “*Endymion* ;” upon which Mr. Wordsworth said it was a “very pretty piece of Paganism.” A new poet had come up, who

“Had sight of Proteus coming from the sea ;”

and certainly “the world was not too much with him.” But this, which is a thing desired by Lake Poets in their abstractions, is a presumption in the particular, and not to be countenanced. “Such sights as youthful poets dream” must cease, when their predecessors grow old ; when they get jealous as fading beauties, and have little annuities for behaving themselves.

The great fault of “*Endymion*,” next to its unpruned luxuriance, (or before it, rather, for it was not a fault on the right side,) was the wilfulness of its rhymes. The author had a just contempt for the monotonous termination of every-day couplets ; he broke up his lines in order to distribute the rhyme properly ; but going only upon the ground of his contempt, and not having yet settled with himself any principle of versification, the very exuberance of his ideas led him to make use of the first rhymes that offered ; so that, by a new meeting of extremes, the effect was as artificial, and much more obtrusive than the

* See the Memoir of Mr. Lamb.

one under the old system. Dryden modestly confessed, that a rhyme had often helped him to a thought. Mr. Keats, in the tyranny of his wealth, forced his rhymes to help him, whether they would or not; and they obeyed him, in the most singular manner, with equal promptitude and ungainness. "Endymion," too, was not without its faults of weakness, as well as of power. Mr. Keats's natural tendency to pleasure, as a poet, sometimes degenerated, by reason of his ill health, into a poetical effeminacy. There are symptoms of it here and there in all his productions, not excepting the gigantic grandeur of *Hyperion*. His lovers grow "faint" with the sight of their mistresses; and Apollo, when he is superseding his divine predecessor, and undergoing his transformation into a *Divus Major*, suffers a little too exquisitely among his lilies. But Mr. Keats was aware of this contradiction to the real energy of his nature, and prepared to get rid of it. What is more, he said as much in the Preface to "Endymion," and in a manner calculated to conciliate all critics who were worth touching his volume; but not such were those, from whom the public were to receive their notions of him. Let the reader see it, and wish, if he has hitherto read nothing but criticism upon him, that he had seen it before.

"Knowing," says Mr. Keats, "within myself, the manner in which this poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

"What manner I mean will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they, if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good; it will not; the foundations are

too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

"This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

"The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of man is healthy; but there is a space between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceed mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

"I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try it once more before I bid it farewell.

"Teignmouth, April 10, 1818."

An organized system of abuse had come up at this period, of a nature with which it was thought no department of literature had hitherto been polluted. The mistake was natural, after a long interval of decorum; but similar abuses have always taken place, when society was not better occupied, or when jealousy and party spleen paid an adversary the compliment of thinking itself sufficiently provoked. A

shelf full of scandal might be collected against Dryden and Pope. "The life of a wit," said Steele, "is a warfare upon earth;" and he had good reason to know it. There was a man of the name of Baker, who made it his business to assail him with criticisms and personalities. The wits themselves too often assailed one another, and in a manner worthy of their calumniators, of which there is humiliating evidence in the lives of Addison and Swift. Even Shakspeare was not without his libeller. Somebody in his time accused him, in common with his fellow playwrights, of irreligion,—nay, of personal arrogance, and of taking himself for the only "Shake-scene" of the theatre. The new taste in calumny, however, surpassed all the other, by its avowed contempt for truth and decency. It seemed to think, that by an excess of impudence it would confound objection, and even bully itself out of the last lingerings of conscience; and the public, who were mean enough to enjoy what they condemned, enabled the plot to succeed. The lowest and falsest personalities were a trifle. Privacies were invaded, in a way to make the stoutest hearts tremble for the gentlest and most pitiable; and with an instinct common to the despicable, every delicacy was taken advantage of, that could secure impunity to offence. Even cowardice itself was avowed as a thing profitable. In short, never before was seen such a conspiracy between a reckless love of importance, cold calculation, and party and private resentment. Not being tied down by hard logic or Calvinism, the Scotch, it was said, were resolved to show how difficult it was for them to understand any other principle. Having no throats to cut as Jacobites or Puritans, they must run a muck as Draw-cansirs in literature. Not being able to be Reeves of Westburn Flat, they were to plunder people of their characters, and warm the chill

poverty of their imaginations at the blushes and distresses of private life.† Unfortunately, some of the knaves were not destitute of talent: the younger were tools of older ones, who kept out of sight. * *

* * * * *

Sir Walter Scott calls this, I believe, a re-action in favour of legitimate ideas. Legitimate ideas are obliged to him for the compliment, and are very much his humble servants: but I doubt whether the Government of 1828 will agree with him, as the Pittites did; and a present Government is a great thing, as the Reviewers have found out. Your absent deity is nothing to your *præsens divus*.

The contrivers of this system of calumny thought that it suited their views, trading, political, and personal, to attack the writer of the present work. They did so, and his friends with him, Mr. Keats among the number. Had the hostility been fair, I was a fair object of attack, having not only taken a warm part in politics, but in a very thoughtless and immature spirit attacked people critically, Sir Walter among them. But then I did it openly: my books were not published without a name; and word was always left at the Examiner office, where I was to be found, in case explanation was demanded of any thing I wrote in the paper. I therefore treated these anonymous assailants with indifference in the first instance, and certainly should not have noticed them at all, had not another person chosen to call upon them in my name. Circumstances then induced me to make a more peremptory call: it was not answered; and the two parties retreated, they into their meanness, and I into my contempt. I have since regretted, on Mr. Keats's

† I confess that one Burns or one Thomson is enough to sweeten all Scotland in my imagination; which is saying a good deal, after what Edinburgh has done for it.

account, that I did not take a more active part. The scorn which the public and they would feel for one another, before long, was evident enough; but, in the mean time, an injury, in every point of view, was done to a young and sensitive nature, to which I ought to have been more alive. The truth was, I never thought about it; nor, I believe, did he, with a view to my taking any farther notice. I was in the habit, though a public man, of living in a world of abstractions of my own, and I regarded him as a nature still more abstracted, and sure of unsought renown. Though a politician, (such as I was,) I had scarcely a political work in my library. Spensers and Arabian Tales filled up the shelves, as they do now; and Spenser himself was not a remoter spirit in my eyes, from all the commonplaces of life, than my new friend. Our whole talk was made up of idealisms. In the streets we were in the thick of the old woods. I little suspected at that time, as I did afterwards, that the hunters had struck him; that a delicate organization, which already anticipated a premature death, made him feel his ambition thwarted by these fellows; and that the very impatience of being impatient was resented by him, and preyed on his mind. Had he said but a word to me on the subject, I would have kept no measures with them. There were delicacies on other subjects, which I had leave to merge in greater ones, had I chosen it; and, in a case like this, it should have been done.

In every thing but this reserve, which was encouraged by my own incuriousness, (for I have no reserve myself with those whom I love,)—in every other respect but this, Mr. Keats and I were friends of the old stamp, between whom there was no such thing as obligation, except the pleasure of it. He enjoyed the usual privilege of

greatness with all whom he knew, rendering it delightful to be obliged by him, and an equal, but not a greater delight, to oblige. It was a pleasure to his friends to have him in their houses, and he did not grudge it. When "*Endymion*" was published, he was living at Hampstead with his friend Mr. Charles Brown, who attended him most affectionately through a severe illness, and with whom, to their great mutual enjoyment, he had taken a journey into Scotland. The lakes and mountains of the North delighted him exceedingly. He beheld them with an epic eye. Afterwards, he went into the South, and luxuriated in the Isle of Wight. On Mr. Brown's leaving England a second time, to visit the same quarter, Mr. Keats, who was too ill to accompany him, came to reside with me, when his last and best volume of poems appeared, containing *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and the noble fragment of *Hyperion*. I remember Charles Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this work; how pleased he was with the designation of Mercury as "the star of Lethe" (rising, as it were, and glittering, as he came upon that pale region); with the fine daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem,—

" So the two brothers and *their murdered man*
Rode past fair Florence ;"

and with the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes praying beneath the painted window. This last (which should be called, *par excellence*, the Prayer at the Painted Window) has been often quoted; but for the benefit of those who are not yet acquainted with the author's genius, farther than by means of these pages, I cannot resist repeating it. It throws a light upon one's book.

" A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

" 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 press'd,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly dress'd,
 Save wings, for heaven."

The whole volume is worthy of this passage. Mr. Keats is no half-painter, who has only distinct ideas occasionally, and fills up the rest with commonplaces. He feels all as he goes. In his best pieces, every bit is precious ; and he knew it, and laid it on as carefully as Titian or Giorgione. Take a few more samples.

LOVERS.

"Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart,
 Only to meet again more close, and share
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart."

BEEES.

" Bees, the little almsmen of spring bowers."

A DELICATE SUPPER.

"And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep
 In blanched linen, smooth and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon."

These are stanzas, for which Persian kings would fill a poet's mouth with gold. I remember Mr. Keats reading these lines to me with great relish and particularity, conscious of what he had set forth. The melody is as sweet as the subject, especially at

"Lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon,"

and the conclusion. Mr. Wordsworth would say that the vowels were not varied enough; but Mr. Keats knew where his vowels were *not* to be varied. On the occasion above alluded to, Mr. Wordsworth found fault with the repetition of the concluding sound of the principles in Shakspeare's line about bees.

The singing masons building roofs of gold.

This, he said, was a line which Milton would never have written. Mr. Keats thought, on the other hand, that the repetition was in harmony with the continued note of the singers, and that Shakspeare's negligence (if negligence it was) had instinctively felt the thing in the best manner. The assertion about Milton startles one, considering the tendency of that great poet to subject his nature to art; yet I have dipped, while writing

this, into "Paradise Lost," and at the second chance have lit on the following :

The gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,
But opposite, *in levelled west, was set*
His mirrour, with full force borrowing her light.

The repetition of the *e* in the fourth line is an extreme case in point, being monotonous to express one-ness and evenness. Milton would have relished the supper which his young successor, like a page for him, has set forth. It was Mr. Keats who observed to me, that Milton, in various parts of his writings, has shown himself a bit of an epicure, and loves to talk of good eating. That he was choice in his food, and set store by a good cook, there is curious evidence to be found in the proving of his Will; by which it appears, that dining one day "in the kitchen," he complimented Mrs. Milton, by the appropriate title of "Betty," on the dish she had set before him; adding, as if he could not pay her too well for it, "Thou knowest I have left thee all." Henceforth let a kitchen be illustrious, should a gentleman choose to take a cutlet in it. But houses and their customs were different in those days.

CALAMITIES FOLLOWING CALAMITIES.

There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun ;
As if its vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, *and the sullen rear*
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.

This is out of the fragment of "Hyperion," which is truly like the

fragment of a former world. There is a voice in it grander than any that has been uttered in these times, except in some of Mr. Wordsworth's sonnets; though the author, in a noble verse, has regretted its inadequacy to his subject.

Oh how frail

To that large utterance of the early Gods!

OAKS CHARMED BY THE STARS.

As when upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
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.

A GOD RECLINING IN SORROW.

And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself, in grief and radiance faint.

THE ELDER GODS DETHRONED.

Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her throne 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*
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.

But I shall fill my book with quotations. A criticism, entering more into the nature of the author's genius, may be found by any one who

wishes to see it, in the "Indicator." One or two passages, however, in the fine lyrical pieces in this volume, must be noticed. One is on a sculptured vase, representing a procession with music; upon which the author says, with an intensity of sentiment, at once original in the idea, and going home, like an old thought, to the heart—

" 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 can'st 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.

Upon this beautiful passage, a sapient critic observed, that he should like to know how there could be music unheard. The reader will be more surprised to know who it was that asked what was the meaning, in the following ode, of a beaker, "*full of the warm south.*" As Mr. Keats's poems are in few hands, compared to what they will be, I will not apologize for transcribing the whole of a beautiful poem, which in a very touching manner falls in with the poetical biography of the author, having been composed by him while he lay sleepless and suffering under the illness which he felt to be mortal:

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 most melodious plot
 Of beechen green and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Oh 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 !
 Oh 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, grey hairs ;
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where still 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 covered 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 path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that ofttime 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 ?

It was Lord Byron, at that time living in Italy, drinking its wine, and basking in its sunshine, who asked me what was the meaning of a beaker "full of the warm south." It was not the word beaker that puzzled him. College had made him intimate enough with that. But the sort of poetry in which he excelled, was not accustomed to these poetical concentrations. At the moment also, he was willing to find fault, and did not wish to discern an excellence different from his own. When I told him, that Mr. Keats admired his "Don Juan," he expressed both surprise and pleasure, and afterwards mentioned him with respect in a canto of it. He could not resist, however, making undue mention of one of the causes that affected his health. A good rhyme about *particle* and *article* was not to be given up. I told him he was mistaken in attributing Mr. Keats's death to the critics, though they had perhaps hastened, and certainly embittered it; and he promised to alter the passage: but a joke and a rhyme together! Those Italian shrugs of the shoulders, which I hope will never be imported among us, are at once a lamentation and an excuse for every thing; and I cannot help using one here. At all events, I have kept my promise, to make the erratum myself in case it did not appear.

Mr. Keats had felt that his disease was mortal for two or three years before he died. He had a constitutional tendency to consumption; a close attendance to the death-bed of a beloved brother, when he ought to have been nursing himself in bed, gave it a blow which he felt

for months; and meanwhile the rascally critics came up, and roused an indignation in him, both against them and himself, which he could ill afford to endure. All this trouble was secretly aggravated by a very tender circumstance, which I can but allude to thus publicly, and which naturally subjected one of the warmest hearts and imaginations that ever existed, to all the pangs, that doubt, succeeded by delight, and delight, succeeded by hopelessness in this world, could inflict. Seeing him once change countenance in a manner more alarming than usual, as he stood silently eyeing the country out of window, I pressed him to let me know how he felt, in order that he might enable me to do what I could for him: upon which he said, that his feelings were almost more than he could bear, and that he feared for his senses. I proposed that we should take a coach, and ride about the country together, to vary, if possible, the immediate impression, which was sometimes all that was formidable, and would come to nothing. He acquiesced, and was restored to himself. It was nevertheless on the same day, sitting on the bench in Well Walk, at Hampstead, nearest the heath,* that he told me, with unaccustomed tears in his eyes, that "his heart was breaking." A doubt, however, was upon him at the time, which he afterwards had reason to know was groundless; and during his residence at the last house that he occupied before he went abroad, he was at times more than tranquil. At length, he was persuaded by his friends to try the milder climate of Italy; and he thought it better for others as well as himself that he should go. He was accompanied by Mr. Severn, a young artist of great promise, who has since been well known as the principal English student at Rome, and who possessed all that could recommend him for a companion,—old acquaintanceship, great animal spirits, active tenderness, and a mind capable of appreciating that of the poet. They went first

* The one against the wall.

to Naples, and afterwards to Rome; where, on the 27th of December, 1820, our author died in the arms of his friend, completely worn out, and longing for the release. He suffered so much in his lingering, that he used to watch the countenance of the physician for the favourable and fatal sentence, and express his regret when he found it delayed. Yet no impatience escaped him. He was manly and gentle to the last, and grateful for all services. A little before he died, he said that he "felt the daisies growing over him." But he made a still more touching remark respecting his epitaph. "If any," he said, "were put over him, he wished it to consist of nothing but these words: 'Here lies one, whose name was writ in water:—'—so little did he think of the more than promise he had given;—of the fine and lasting things he had added to the stock of poetry. The physicians expressed their astonishment that he had held out so long, the lungs turning out, on inspection, to have been almost obliterated. They said he must have lived upon the mere strength of the spirit within him. He was interred in the English burying-ground at Rome, near the monument of Caius Cestius, where his friend and poetical mourner, Mr. Shelley, was shortly to join him.

So much for the mortal life of as true a man of genius as these latter times have seen; one of those who are too genuine and too original to be properly appreciated at first, but whose time for applause will infallibly arrive with the many, and has already begun in all poetical quarters. I venture to prophesy, as I have done elsewhere, that Mr. Keats will be known hereafter in English literature, emphatically, as *the Young Poet*; and that his volumes will be the sure companions, in field and grove, of all those who know what a luxury it is to hasten, with a favourite volume against one's heart, out of the strife of commonplaces into the haven of solitude and imagination.

William Maginn, 'Novels of the Season', *Fraser's Magazine* (August 1831)

The apparently trivial incident in the following extract appears to have been one of the most significant, and later embarrassing, of Keats's literary career. The swapping of laurel crowns with Leigh Hunt epitomised Keats's ambivalent feelings about the role of the poet and, retrospectively, his ambivalent feelings about Leigh Hunt. On the one hand, the symbolic act of wearing a laurel crown was taken extremely seriously by him. At a time when he was making the important decision to devote himself to writing fulltime, the crowning symbolised all that a poet should be and do. It linked Keats with a long tradition of bards, about which he was always to be very self-conscious, and it involved the public display and search for fame which he considered was part of the business of being a poet. 'I have asked myself so often why I should be a Poet more than other Men – seeing how great a thing it is – how great things are to be gained by it – What a thing to be in the Mouth of Fame', he wrote to Hunt, in the early months of enthusiasm (To Hunt, *Letters*, I, p. 139; 10 May 1817). But later, especially after his relationship with Hunt began to cool, the crowning episode began to seem a petty artifice, laughable in its attempt to mimic the great poets of the past and diminishing the poetic tradition through its after-dinner flippancy.

Various accounts of the story remain. The most reliable is probably that of Richard Woodhouse, the friend of Keats who, realising the probable future fame of his friend, did most to collect his letters and copy his manuscript draft poems.

As the author and Leigh Hunt were taking their wine together, after a dinner at the house of the latter, the whim seized them to crown themselves, after the fashion of the elder poets, with a wreath of laurel.

While they were attired, two acquaintances of Mr Hunt called upon him: – Just before their entrance Hunt removed the crown from his own brows, and suggested to Keats that he might as well do the same.

K. however, in the enthusiasm of the moment, vowed that he would not for any human being and he accordingly wore it without any explanation thro' the visit.

He mentioned the cir.^c after^d to one or two of his friends expressing his sense how foolish he had been; and his intention of recording it, by apologetic verses suited to the occasion.—He produced shortly after^d the following fragment of an Ode to Apollo.

(Garrod, 1939, pp. 430-31)

It was as a result of this experience, Woodhouse claims, that Keats composed his 'Ode to Apollo'. By now the initial excitement of the action was turning into embarrassment:

Where – where slept thine ire,
When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
Thy laurel, thy glory,
The light of thy story.

But Woodhouse's account is complicated by the fact that John Hamilton Reynolds contained in his copy of Keats's poems a sonnet entitled 'To the ladies who saw me crowned'. This has given rise to the alternative tradition that the visitors who dropped by were not men, as in Woodhouse's account, but women, the two Reynolds sisters, who inspired the poem and showed it to their brother. Moreover, it is claimed that Keats and Hunt swapped crowns rather than crowning themselves, because of another Keats sonnet, 'On Receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt'. (W. J. Bate, pp. 137-40).

The variations on the story could suggest that the crowning occurred on more than one occasion. The story could, on the other hand, be much simpler, gaining currency because it seemed a likely thing for Hunt and Keats to do. Leigh Hunt was renowned for enacting classical or pagan rituals. In Marlow there was a rumour that he and Shelley had set up an altar to Pan and were conducting regular pagan worship. (Holmes (1974), p. 368). Back in Hampstead, he held poetry writing evenings, encouraging friends such as Keats and Shelley to compete in the writing of sonnets and the penning of tributes to each other. Indeed, he did go on to publish his poems about the laurel crowning episode the following year. It was the convivial playing at poetry, epitomised by symbolic and ostentatious rituals, which initially seduced Keats and which later he felt was so wrong. He wrote to Benjamin Bailey about eight months after the incident that 'I put on no Laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion*, and I hope Apollo is not angered at my having made a Mockery at him at Hunt's' (To Bailey, *Letters*, I, p. 170; 8 October 1817).

The account in *Fraser's Magazine* is a different version again. This illustrates the extent to which the story was circulating privately amongst literary people and acquiring new variations in the process. The article was probably written by William Maginn, the editor of *Fraser's* and formerly a contributor to *Blackwood's* (see *Wellesley Index*, (1972), II, p. 328). An original version of the story could have been passed on to him at *Blackwood's* by Lockhart, who had had a conversation with Benjamin Bailey in 1818 about Keats's relationship with Hunt (Bate (1979), pp. 366-7). This version is clearly erroneous, since Peacock could never have been a participant in the event. The crowning occurred probably in early 1817, possibly around the time of the publication of Keats's poems, and Keats did not meet Peacock until 1818. As all too frequently, the

story presents Keats as a bystander, a youthful extra to the main events, a man who is swept along by the antics of others. It was possibly this weak yielding to Hunt's mad whims about which Keats felt shame-faced later. The tone is mocking, denigrating Peacock by including him with the Cockney Poets while at the same time allowing him at least to be one degree more modest and restrained than them. The political animosity behind the memoir is evident in the reference to Hunt's and Keats's uncravated state, a fashion of the Cockney poets noted by one biting review (*Literary Gazette*, 8 December 1821). Of greatest significance, here, is the continuing association of Keats with Hunt in the popular mind, even in a gossip story told ten years after his death.

Some years ago it entered the imagination of Hunt and Keats, and some others of that coterie, to crown themselves with laurel, and take off their cravats. This was the janty thing, and quite poetical. While the coroneted and uncravated company were sitting thus one day, "with their singing robes about them," Peacock came in. "Do," said a lady, who officiated as coronet manufacturer, "do, dear Mr. Peacock, let me weave you a chaplet, and put it on your head; then you will sit as poets altogether."

"No, ma'am," said Peacock, wiping his head, "no, ma'am; you may make a fool of your own husband, but there is no need of your making a fool of me."

This anecdote is authentic, and we agree, after reading his books, that there is no need of making a fool of Peacock, by crowning him with a laurel chaplet, or any more convenient utensil, because it is evident that he is block-head enough already.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. H. N. Coleridge (1835), vol. II, 14 August 1832

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was one of the greatest talkers of his generation. William Hazlitt commented caustically in 1825 that 'he lays down his pen to make sure of an auditor, and mortgages the admiration of posterity for the stare of an idler' (*The Spirit of the Age*, p. 60). But Charles Lamb remembered his conversation more warmly: 'Great in his writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight, yet who ever would interrupt him, – who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion?' (*Works*, I, p. 407). It is not surprising, therefore, that Coleridge's one published recollection of Keats should occur in the transcript of his conversations, *Table Talk*.

Table Talk was compiled by the poet's nephew, H. N. Coleridge, later editor of Coleridge's first posthumous collections of poems in 1834, out of a 'spirit of vexation that such a strain of music as I had just heard should not last for ever' (*Table Talk*, p. viii). The conversations range from December 1822 to July 1834, the period in which Coleridge was living in Highgate, cared for in his helpless opium addiction by the surgeon James Gillman. Having left the Wordsworths and, finally, his wife Sara, he was setting up a new circle of friends. Every Thursday evening he held literary soirées at the Gilmans' house in Highgate, at which he was proud to gather a varied group of people: 'A few weeks ago we had present two painters, two poets, one divine, an eminent chemist and naturalist, a major, a naval captain and voyager, a physician, a colonial chief justice, a barrister and a baronet', he once boasted (*Letters*, II, 741). Two years before Keats met him, he had published *Biographia Literaria*, his rambling quasi-autobiography, which contains literary criticism, philosophy and theology besides personal anecdote. And at the time of their meeting, Coleridge had just finished giving a course of philosophical and literary lectures at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. After years of depression and bitterness living in Wordsworth's wake and frustrated by his unfulfillable love for Sara Hutchinson, Coleridge was, we might say, on the up.

Coleridge's and Keats's memories of the meeting differ widely. Coleridge remembers a conversation of 'only a minute or so'. In another version of his account of the conversation, recorded by John Frere in 1830, Coleridge reiterates his impression that the meeting involved solely the shaking of hands, a momentary introduction:

Poor Keats, I saw him once. Mr Green, whom you have heard me mention, and I were walking out in these parts, and we were overtaken by a young man of a very striking countenance whom Mr Green recognised and shook hands with, mentioning my name; I wish Mr Green had introduced me, for I did not know who it was. He passed on, but in a few moments sprung back and said, "Mr Coleridge, allow me the honour of shaking your hand". I was struck by the energy of his manner, and gave him my hand. He passed on and we stood still looking after him, when Mr Green said, "Do you know who that is? That is Keats, the poet" (*Cornhill Magazine*, April 1917)

But Keats recalls walking together with Coleridge for a couple of miles over Hampstead Heath, and a huge range of conversational topics covered. His letter to his brother describing the incident, written much sooner after the event than Coleridge's recorded memory, is worth quoting in full (To George and Georgiana Keats, *Letters*, II, pp. 88-9; 15 April 1819):

Last Sunday I took a Walk towards Highgate and in the lane that winds by the side of Lord Mansfield's park I met Mr Green our Demonstrator at Guy's in conversation with Coleridge – I joined them, after enquiring by a look whether it would be agreeable – I walked with him at his alderman-after-dinner pace for near two miles I suppose. In those two Miles he broached a thousand things – let me see if I can give you a list – Nightingales, Poetry – on Poetical Sensation – Metaphysics – Different genera and species of Dreams – Nightmare – a dream accompanied by a sense of touch – single and double touch – A dream related – First and second consciousness – the difference explained between will and Volition – so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking the second consciousness – Monsters – the Kraken – Mermaids – Southey believes in them – Southey's belief too diluted – A Ghost story – Good morning – I heard his voice as it came towards me – I heard it as he moved away – I had heard it all the interval – if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate".

Coleridge seems to have been able to talk regardless of his audience. Madame de Stael noticed his preference for the monologue (*Coleridge the Talker*, p. 80). Perhaps it was for this reason that he later could not remember Keats – rather than any other interlocuter – being with him for very long. Besides the fame of Coleridge was greater than that of Keats at the time, and so the meeting would naturally make a stronger impact on the younger poet. Keats had read *Sibylline Leaves*, Coleridge's collected poems, in November 1817, and drew upon Coleridge's poetic practice (wrongly, it seems) as an example when developing his ideas of 'negative capability': 'Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetrallium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining Content with half knowledge' (To George and Tom Keats, *Letters*, I, pp. 193-4; 21 December 1817). In contrast, even by 1830, Coleridge admitted to John Frere that he

had only read a couple of Keats's sonnets and 'a poem with a classical name – I forget what' (*Cornhill Magazine*).

Keats never took up the invitation to call on Coleridge, even though he lived so close by. Perhaps he felt that Coleridge would have forgotten the invitation after so much talk and felt reticent about pressing so slight an acquaintance with the great man. Or perhaps it was the relentless voice which deterred him, since H. N. Coleridge himself admitted that Coleridge's way of talking was 'too long breathed for the patience of a chance visitor' (*Table Talk*, p. xix). In an informal sonnet, never intended for publication, Keats included 'The voice of Mr Coleridge' in a miscellaneous list of things he considered 'vile' (Finney, (1936), p. 652). Nevertheless it is tempting to see some of the topics of Coleridge's conversation – the nightingale or the dreaming state – making their way into Keats's great odes, which he was composing at the time.

Coleridge's memory is significant in that it perpetuates the myth that Keats was associated with death. As Coleridge admits, Keats did not suffer his first consumptive haemorrhaging until February 1820 so there was no reason for feverish symptoms to be evident in April 1819. Clearly Coleridge, hazily recalling the incident over ten years after Keats's death, is reading deathliness – with which Keats post-*Adonais* was now associated – and his remark to Mr Green back into the story, and considering Keats's mortality, rather than his poetry, as the most distinctive and memorable feature of the man. Once again, like the reference in the *Fraser's Magazine* extract, the slight criticism of Keats's attire alludes to a difference of political allegiance. Since his decision to become a poet while at Guy's Hospital, Keats usually went without cravat, a style adopted by Byron but which had originally developed in imitation of the French Jacobins (see headnote to *Asclepiad* extracts). Coleridge, once a radical sympathiser who had planned to set up a commune in America, was now very much a cravated and, as Keats puts it, an 'alderman-after-dinner' type of gentleman.

A loose, slack, not well-dressed youth met Mr. ——— and myself in a lane near Highgate. ——— knew him, and spoke. It was Keats. He was introduced to me, and staid a minute or so. After he had left us a little way, he came back, and said: "Let me carry away the memory, Coleridge, of having pressed your hand!" — "There is death in that hand," I said to ———, when Keats was gone; yet this was, I believe, before the consumption showed itself distinctly.

Walter Cooper Dendy, *The Philosophy of Mystery* (1841) and *Legends of the Lintel and the Ley* (1863)

Keats could have become a Walter Cooper Dendy, if he had not met Leigh Hunt and made the fateful – Dendy would have said fatal – decision to become a poet. Dendy was a surgeon, fellow and later president of the Medical Society of London. He was born a year before Keats, near Horsham, birthplace of Shelley. At the age of seventeen, he entered as a student at Guy's and St Thomas's hospitals, qualifying three years later and gaining membership of the College of Surgeons. He set up a practice in Great Eastcheap, and later became senior surgeon to the Royal Infirmary for Children. His other numerous publications, besides *The Philosophy of Mystery* and *Legends of the Lintel and the Ley*, include *Portraits of the Diseases of the Scalp* (1849) and *The Varieties of Pock Delineated and Described* (1853). But according to James Fernandez Clarke, fellow surgeon and editor of the *Lancet*, who wrote an obituary of Dendy in the *Medical Times and Gazette*: 'Walter Cooper Dendy was not a mere Surgeon. In days when the Surgeon in general practice was certainly not usually an educated person, he shone conspicuously by his superior acquirements, by his cultivated taste, and his polished manners. He found time, even amongst the toils and struggles all but invariably the early lot of men who engage in our calling, to indulge in his fancy for general literature' (*Autobiographical Recollections*, (1874), p. 444). Presumably 'indulging' this 'fancy', Dendy spent his retirement in the British Museum reading room, 'where his eccentric costume made him a well-known character' (*DNB*). Having published in his youth a poem entitled 'Zone', one of his last literary efforts was to write an account of the poet William Cowper's madness and to hypothesise about its causes. However, Clarke rejected the article for publication in the *Lancet*, because he considered it 'not fitted' for a serious medical journal.

The Philosophy of Mystery, from which the memory of Keats in the lecture theatre is taken, derives from Dendy's lifelong interest in the mind. It brings together different approaches to understanding the mental state, from theories drawn from literature about the imagination to what were then early developments in clinical psychology. Described by one commentator as a 'treatise on dreams, spectral illusions and other imperfect manifestations of the mind', it is written in the form of a dialogue. Astrophel is a 'moon-struck student' who believes in mystery; Evelyn represents the rational and sceptical opponent, who is eager to reveal the 'illusions' of Astrophel; and Castaly and Ida are two young women who express a desire to hear both sides of the

argument and who, by the end of the book, have each 'worked a spell of natural witchcraft' and caused the two men to fall in love with them and so forget their separate theories. The account of Keats is introduced by Evelyn, in the chapter entitled 'Poetic Phantasy or Frenzy', as an illustration of the dangers of the poetic imagination and Romantic idealism.

The second extract comes from an idiosyncratic collection of stories about Sussex, half fictional and half true, some 'choice scraps of truthful history' and some 'stories from the rude gossip of the by-ways'. Most are historical or mythical, but occasionally some literary names are mentioned, such as Fanny Burney or Keats. The Keats-Hazlitt anecdote occurs in the first chapter, to illustrate Box Hill. The story brings together facts about Keats which were well known by 1863 – his supposed envy of Shelley, his anxiety about reviews, his enjoyment of Lempriere and classical mythology. Keats, in fact, stayed in the inn at Burford Bridge near Box Hill in November 1817, a place recommended to him by Hazlitt, when trying to finish *Endymion*. He wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds about his impressions of the landscape: 'There is Hill & Dale, and a little River – I went up Box hill this evening after the Moon – you a' seen the Moon – came down – and wrote some lines' (To Reynolds, *Letters*, I, p. 188; 22 November 1817).

The authenticity of both accounts of Keats have been questioned. The story of Keats and Hazlitt at Box Hill is, in fact, universally dismissed as 'obviously imaginary' (Finney, (1936), I, p. 91; Bate, (1979), p. 51), although there are enough vestiges of fact – Keats's stay in Box Hill when writing *Endymion* and the fact that it was a favourite haunt of Hazlitt's – to suggest that some actual secondhand account might have set Dendy's imagination working. The account of Keats in the lecture room at St Thomas's has proved more controversial (see *TLS*, 31 May 1934). Some have felt that Dendy could not have witnessed Keats attending lectures since they were not students at exactly the same time. Dendy, after all, went to study at Guy's in 1811, whereas Keats did not enrol there until 1815, four years later. However it has been argued that, although Dendy had finished being a student before Keats arrived, he could have become a junior demonstrator and thus could have known, and possibly taught, Keats in 1815-16. Moreover, Finney argues that the style of the poetical fragment supposedly composed during the lecture is identifiably Keatsian and that therefore the whole story must have some historical validity (Finney, (1936), I, p. 91).

What is significant, however, is not the historical validity of either of these tales but rather Dendy's presentation, his supposition that these are anecdotes of Keats which we might imagine are true. Dreaming in lectures or appearing half mad in conversation are, for Dendy, just the sort of things his Keats might do. In other words, Dendy conceives of Keats as a victim of poetic frenzy, indulging in fancy, enjoying – as his poetry appears to confirm – fading away

and quite forgetting the medical world 'where men sit and hear each other groan', and therefore he creates stories as memories which confirm this view. Ostensibly both stories are perjorative. Keats has been led astray by poetry, and would have enjoyed greater stability and happiness if he had continued as a doctor. But there is also an underlying wistfulness and yearning for the poetic life, as Dendy imagines it, and perhaps Dendy's final flamboyant and slightly mad days in the British Library were his way of attempting to recreate the poetic eccentricity which, for him, Keats had come to represent.

Ev And had the sword spared him, he would have died a moral suicide.

What folly, thus to chase a butterfly, instead of yielding to the virtuous influence of woman, which, beyond aught else, softens and ennobles man's heart; entranc-

ing it in floods of human passion, which, with all its pains, yields happiness a thousand-fold more than the maudlin sentiments of Rousseau, that, reducing love to a mere phantom, leave the lone heart to prey on its own sensibility.

Such was the romantic poet of Endymion, who for the phantom of his waking dreams, gave up the study of that science, which might have nursed and fortified a mind, so soon chilled to death by the icy finger of criticism. Erato was the mistress of John Keats; but while he wooed, he perished: like the Rosicrucian, who, to save the life of his lady, took the oath of celibacy, and thus lost her love for ever. Even in the lecture-room of Saint Thomas's, I have seen Keats in a deep poetic dream: his mind was on Parnassus with the muses. And here is a quaint fragment which he one evening scribbled in our presence, while the precepts of Sir Astley Cooper fell unheeded on his ear:—

“Whenne Alexandre the Conqueroure was wayfayringe in y^e londe of Inde, there mette hym a damoselle of marveillouse beautie slepyngc uponne the herbys and flourys. He colde ne loke uponne her withouten grete plesance, and he was welle nighe loste in wondrement. Her forme was everyche whytte lyke y^e fayrest carvyngc of Quene Cythere, onlie thatte y^t was swellyd and blushyd wyth warmthe and lyffe wythalle.

“Her forhed was as whytte as ys the snowe whyche y^e talle hed of a Norwegian pyne stelythe from y^e northerne wynde. One of her fayre hondes was yplaced thereonne, and thus whytte wyth whytte was ymyngld as y^e gode Arthure saythe, lyke whyttest lylys yspredde on whyttest snowe; and her bryghte eyne whenne she them oped, sparklyd lyke Hesperus through an evenyngc cloude.

“Theye were yclosyd yn slepe, save that two slaunteyngc raies shotte to her mouthc, and were theyre

bathyd yn swetenesse, as whenne bye chaunce y^e moone fyndeth a banke of violettes and droppethe thereonne y^e sylverie dewe.

“The authoure was goynge onne withouthen descrybynge y^e ladye’s breste, whenne lo, a genyus appearyd—‘Cuthberte,’ sayeth he, ‘an thou canst not descrybe y^e ladye’s breste, and fynde a simile thereunto, I forbyde thee to proceede yn thy romaunt.’ Thys, I kennd fulle welle, far surpassyd my feble powres, and forthwythe I was fayne to droppe my quille.”

★ ★ ★

The green-laced chalk is here well-nigh perpendicular over the Arcadian valley of Burford: across the bridge the wayfarer may find the Hostelrie, at this day a quiet roadside inn, years ago the fashion. It was oft the nest

of blushing brides in the flush of their honeymoon: it was haunted by grave senators, and golden citizens, and deep philosophers, and used-up libertines, and maudlin poets withal, whose rhapsodies were oft picked up by the spider brushes of the bedrooms, and intertwined with their ringlets, for maids gloried then in their mop of corkscrews. Fancy these present hours to be early in this nineteenth century, and that one of these dreamers of the light and loving lay, that worshipped and drew from nature, was wandering, as he was often wont, along these meadows of the Mole, watching the growth of flowers, that he confessed to be his "intensest pleasure," when they retired within the shade, and masked their beauty to the daylight—for they would, in his own phrase, "lose all their charm if, flaunting on the highway, they cried out: 'Admire me, I am a violet!'"

It was here he may have been first enslaved by the vision of Madeleine, herself the very lily of the valley, sleeping among her kindred blossoms, and this is her picture sketched on a scrap of foolscap, and afterwards twisted among her auburn tresses.

" Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon perplex'd she lay,
 Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed
 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."

And in these lone meadows he would still wander on until his large blue eyes were lighted up by the young May moon that rose over Box Hill, and flickering among the shadows, glistened on the ripples of the Mole. He had thrown himself on the grass, and opening a page of his Lemprière, he murmured in soft yet passionate accents : "Endymion, 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 —" He was checked by a man of thoughtful eye, who had come down from the grave of Labellier on this very brow, with his quarto Chalmers under his arm.

"Ah, foolish boy," he muttered, "mad and moon-struck as young Percy Shelley."

"Shelley," exclaimed John Keats, "would I were mad as he—oh, for the flash of Shelley's fine frenzy, that shames my sandy scribbling !—oh, for the gush of deep and burning passion that courses through his rich Saxon blood and burnishes his downy cheek !—would I were stricken with midsummer madness like his. And yet I fear to know him : he would mould me as his own, my poor faint heart would burst with the bounding thought it would drink in from Shelley's flood of glory. I will bide my time, for the angels have whispered in my dream that Percy and I should slumber side by side after death, though his name be writ in gold and mine in water. I am withering fast like Kirke White, e'en now the daisies are growing over my grave." (Who knows not that this idea was realized ? In the Protestant cemetery at Rome, on the *Honorian* walls by the tomb of

Caius Cestius, believed by Petrarch and others to be that of Remus, are deposited the ashes of Keats and Shelley.)

"Endymion, hey," muttered Hazlitt, as he gazed at him, "why the myth of the Moon on Latmos will madden him outright. Hither boy—shut your Lemprière at once, and leave Endymion on Latmos where you found him—forget him—or if you must read stars, learn from the Chaldæans or my Chalmers here, thou'lt drink more wisdom in an hour, than in a month of mooning. Yet if you will sip Helicon, drink deep, 'drink deep,' as Alic Pope sings, 'or taste not the Pierian Spring,' and *down* with your dream of Endymion—nothing like scribbling to lighten a loaded brain—and heark ye, we'll bring you out, get Leigh to puff you in his 'Round Table'—and defy the lashing of the *Quarterly*." Keats shivered like an aspen at the word, as 'twere, prophetic of his fate.

"Yet methinks," continued Hazlitt, arching his brows like Fadladeen, "you're not further gone than Nat Lee, or young Southey, or little Byron, or the fool who scribbled this :—wilt guess where I found it?"

And Hazlitt read aloud the sketch that in her dream had been untwisted from a tress of Madeleine, which he had found upon the grass where she had been sleeping. As he read on, blushes suffused the rhymers' cheek, and told his secret, but Hazlitt spared his blushing, merely muttering to himself, "Guilty, by the brow of Erato!" And then, to cool his brain, the critic took the rhymers by the hand, and walked him off to the spring in Betchworth Park, that Hazlitt the waterdrinker called his Helicon, and we the Lion's Mouth. What further parlanche between

the sage and the suckling, whether John Keats on that midsummer night thought more of the beauty of Madeleine he has since coloured so highly in the "Eve of St. Agnes," or even sketched, to be polished up in Wight, his wild romance of the "Moon and the Sheepboy," we know not. It was long after midnight, however, that he ceased to gaze on the orb of night, as loth "to leave her behind him," and it was close on the dawn when Hazlitt saw him glide along like a ghost to his chamber, his lips yet murmuring in a low and wailing whisper, "Endymion, Endymion!"

Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols (1847)

On the face of it, Medwin's *Life of Shelley* is an unlikely and surprising source for a memoir of Keats. Medwin was obsessed with Shelley and his posthumous literary reputation and never actually met Keats. He was Shelley's second cousin, had attended the same preparatory school in Sussex and knew Shelley's family and early home life. He joined the 24th Light Dragoons after some years in Oxford in 1812, and spent the next seven years serving in India. He returned to Europe in 1819, and met up with Shelley in Pisa in 1820, where, for the next two years, he was to move on the margins of the Shelley circle. After Shelley's death, he embarked on a literary career which strangely shadowed many of Shelley's literary preoccupations. He published *Oswald and Edwin* in 1820, with a prefatory quotation from Shelley's *Alastor*, and translated Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* in a version which relied heavily upon the language of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. He also began a series of accounts of Shelley's life, culminating in this *Life of Shelley* (1847), which, much to Mary Shelley's annoyance, claimed a far greater intimacy with the poet than he had in fact enjoyed (see introductory note to Medwin extracts in *Lives of the Great Romantics*, Shelley).

In a short interlude in the *Life*, however, Medwin turns his attention to Keats, Shelley's friend. Besides Shelley's own memories and impressions of the poet, he relies for his account upon the evidence of 'a lady, who better even than Leigh Hunt, knew Keats'. The 'lady' was Fanny Lindon (née Brawne), and thus Medwin's account constitutes the only record, published in the nineteenth century, of the impressions which Keats made upon his famous fiancée. Brawne had been neglected by the rest of the Keats circle who were considering or compiling memoirs of their friend. Monckton Milnes considered it 'indelicate to inquire into the past affairs of a woman now married' (Bate, p. 421), and, like Leigh Hunt, did not even mention Brawne or Keats's love for her in his *Life*. Charles Brown wrote to her, asking for permission to include a reference to her, which occurred in one of Shelley's letters, in the memoir which he was writing, while assuring her that 'your name will still remain as secret to the world as before'. Brawne, suffering at the time from the double bereavement of her brother and mother, agreed reluctantly, but added: 'I fear the kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which unhappy circumstances have condemned him' (29 December 1829; see Richardson (1952), p. 121). This apparently hard-hearted reply was quickly reported around the Keats circle, so that by 1875, it had become notorious as Brawne's only comment upon her fiancée's life. Charles Dilke,

grandson of Keats's friend, gave the remark perpetual and erroneous currency: 'When the first memoir was proposed, the woman he had loved had so little belief in his poetic reputation, that she wrote to Mr Dilke, "The kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which circumstances have condemned him"' (Dilke, (1875), p. 11).

Brawne's remark became so quickly reported and believed amongst Keats's friends because they had never liked her or approved of her in Keats's lifetime. Reynolds had referred to her as 'the poor idle Thing of woman-kind', and it was his sisters' ridicule of Fanny which provoked Keats's break with the family. George Keats, Charles and Maria Dilke, Joseph Severn and even Charles Brown disapproved of Keats's attachment. Keats expressed his impatience with all of them: 'My friends laugh at you! I know some of them – when I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintance' (To Fanny Brawne, *Letters*, II, pp. 292-3; June 1820). He was determined that they would not dissuade him from his choice of love, and he spent his last months in England living with, and being cared for by, the Brawnes. But the opinions of his friends, if they could have little influence over Keats during his life, had a powerful effect over Fanny Brawne's reputation after his death. Dilke's comment was damaging. Of even more impact was the publication, in 1878, by Buxton Forman, of Keats's letters to her. The passionate letters expressed Keats's jealousy and annoyance at Fanny's flirtatiousness, as well as the intense emotions of a man who knows he is dying and so losing his love. The publication of the letters provided the final justification for the century-long demonising of Fanny, the hard-hearted woman who had caused Keats so much grief in his final months, possibly precipitating his death, and who did not deserve him. Sydney Colvin, who published his first biography of Keats in 1887, articulated the widely-held view of Fanny: 'She was certainly high-spirited, inexperienced and self-confident; as certainly, though kind and constant to her lover in spite of prospects that before long grew dark, she did not fully realise what manner he was. Both his men and women friends, without thinking unkindly of her, were apparently of one opinion in holding her no mate for him either in heart or mind, and in regarding the attachment as unlucky. So assuredly it was: so probably under the circumstances must any passion for a woman have been' (Colvin, (1887), pp. 131-2).

In contrast, Medwin's account presents a picture of a rational, clear-sighted and sympathetic woman, with a warm but understated memory of Keats. Medwin met Brawne in Heidelberg in the 1840s and discovered her connection with Keats. When Mary Shelley's edition of Shelley's *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translation and Fragments* was published, including Mr Finch's letter to Shelley claiming that Keats 'might be judged insane' in the last months of his life, Medwin wrote to Brawne to ask her whether the statement was true (Shelley, *Essays* (1840), II, p. 295). From Medwin's account, we get the

distinct impression that Brawne was extremely pleased to be asked to recount her memories of Keats and to set the record straight. Brawne's paraphrased comment that 'so well indeed did she know him, that she might have furnished materials for that life of him promised by Mr Brown' has an underlying wistfulness and resentment which must have derived from years of receiving the cold shoulder from the Keats circle. In a sense, this short memoir is a collaboration between two outsiders, Medwin and Brawne, and as a result it offers some refreshing new insights and several moments when the developing Keats myth – of the genius poet, of the weak man killed by harsh reviews – is punctured. Medwin's position as an outsider is accentuated by his vain attempts to appear knowingly an insider. The final anecdote of his visit to Rome, sent there supposedly with an important parcel by Shelley and just missing seeing Keats, constitutes, even while it tries to claim intimacy, a striking non-memoir, a failure to know his subject. And his assumed authority over who, amongst Keats's friends, is most qualified to write a biography, though in fact quite sensible, only reveals his ignorance of the bitter quarrels of the inner Keats circle.

Although only the second conventional account of Keats's life, Medwin's version had little impact upon the public reputation of Keats. It was swiftly overtaken by Milnes's more publicised *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*, the authorised production of the Keats circle, and, not reprinted, passed pretty much unnoticed.

Leigh Hunt was then living at Hampstead, and here Shelley also, I believe, first met Keats.

I have been furnished by a lady, who, better even than Leigh Hunt, knew Keats, with the means of supplying many interesting particulars respecting him; so well indeed did she know him, that she might have furnished materials for that life of him promised by Mr. Brown, who unfortu-

nately died in New Zealand before it was completed, and where Keats's MSS. and papers are said to have been lost. Keats was left fatherless at an early age, and when he came to years of discretion, was apprenticed to an apothecary, but the sight of suffering humanity, and the anatomical school, soon disgusted him with the pursuit, and he abandoned the profession of medicine, but not originally to follow the ill-named flowery paths of poetry; for an authentic anecdote is told of him, corroborative of this remark. One day, sitting dreamily over his desk, he was endeavouring to while away a tedious hour by copying some verses from memory; one of his brother apprentices looking over his shoulder, said, "Keats, what are you a poet?" It is added, he was much piqued at the *accusation*, and replied, "Poet indeed! I never composed a line in my life." The same story is told of Walter Scott, who in crossing over one of the Scotch lakes, endeavoured to put his ideas into verse, but on landing had only made two bad rhymes, and observed to

the friend who accompanied him, "I shall never do for a poet." But Keats, no less than the Wizard of the North, falsified his own prophecy. Keats was ever a constant reader of Shakspeare, and I have before me a folio edition of the great dramatist's works, with notes and comments on *Troilus and Cressida*, and containing at the end of the volume an ode, evidently a very early attempt, which, properly for his fame, he did not publish. He might also have forborne giving to the world some other of the short poems, his first attempts in the art. We are certainly indebted for the discovery of the poetic vein in him to Leigh Hunt, and his encouragement of his young friend. But it is equally owing to Leigh Hunt that the disciple enrolled himself in what has been termed the Cockney school, and fell into a pale imitation of the Elizabethan writers, and the adoption of a language, neither Shakspearean nor Spenserian—a language neither belonging to his own time, nor to society. How well does Quintilian designate some author of his day