

Ode to a Nightingale
(John Keats)

The poem, Ode to a nightingale has been composed by John Keats. This is the most representative poem of John Keats' mode of perception of the world of nature. He has set forth human life as well as his concept of the poetic creation very impressively in this poem.

The opening stanzas of the poem reveal Keats as a hungry grabber of the pleasures of the senses that nature provides to men: the pleasure of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. The singing of nightingale of summer in full-throated ease shows his acute and intense sensitiveness to the loud and ecstatic song of the bird. The place where the bird is singing is full of all sorts of sweet-smelling flowers. The poet does not waste many words to make us conscious of this richness of sweet smell. Short phrases, like 'melodious plot', 'emerald-dyed darkness' and soft incense procure to our nose the entire wealth of the senses, scents.

The picture of the beaker filled with the wine is so vivid, concrete and intensely gazing at us that it may make our tongue water at it. The pettiest detail of the thing under observation is caught by his imagination and flashed out with such a blaze of clarity that the whole object is thoroughly visualised to our vision. This is not a description of a particular plot the nature's kingdom but the painting of the very figure of the month of May. Violets, hawthorn, musk rose, and the pastoral eglantine are the representatives of the details of May's wealth that brings into our vision the entire richness of the season. Our sight can have nothing better to enjoy, not even the real scene can provide such a pleasure as the scope of our vision is limited, while here we have the best

ones from all the nook and corners in the wide kingdom of nature. The way to truth is through the way of ecstasy. Ecstasy is induced through keen perception of things attacking the poet's senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The weaving mind - 'the dull brain' as Keats called it - having been made powerless. The spirit of the poet embraces and emerges itself into the spirit - the absolute reality of things observed. This is the vision of truth, enlivening and blessing the mind with the perception of beauty in its real term.

The richness of the pleasures received through senses and the weaving of a glittering web of images are unsurpassed here. His technique of description to choose the most significant details of an object and bring those petty details into a full blaze of words, makes the vision of the object thoroughly complete and intensely living. Keats, like other poets of the Romantic Age, tries to present the dead and inanimate objects of nature in breathing and feeling moods like human beings. All these merits of Keats are fully illustrated in this poem.

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