

1819

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IF BY DULL RHYMES OUR ENGLISH  
MUST BE CHAIN'D

John Keats

**Keats, John (1795-1821) - Widely regarded as the most talented of the English romantic poets, Keats, whose work was poorly received during his lifetime, could not have foreseen his later recognition. Ironically, he wrote for his own epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd (1819) - Keats' attempt to develop a new form of sonnet. Opening lines: If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd, / And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet ...**

**IF BY DULL RHYMES**

If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,  
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet  
Fetter'd in spite of pained loveliness,  
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,  
Sandals more interwoven and complete  
To fit the naked foot of Poesy:  
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress  
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd  
By ear industrious and attention meet;  
Misers of sound and syllable, no less  
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be  
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;  
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,  
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

**THE END**