

**1819**

**ODE ON MELANCHOLY**

**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." Ode on Melancholy (1819) Opening lines: No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist / Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine; ...**

## ODE ON MELANCHOLY

### I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist  
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. -

### II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. -

### III

She dwells with Beauty- Beauty that must die;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
 Ay, in the very temple of delight  
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

**THE END**