

**1819**

**ON FAME**

**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." On Fame (1819) - Opening lines: How fevered is the man who cannot look / Upon his mortal days with temperate blood, ...**

**ON FAME**

You cannot eat your cake and have it too.

Proverb-

How fever'd is the man who cannot look  
 Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,  
 Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,  
 And robs his fair name of its maidenhood;  
 It is as if the rose should pluck herself,  
 Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,  
 As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,  
 Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom:  
 But the rose leaves herself upon the briar  
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,  
 And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,  
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space;  
 Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,  
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?

**THE END**