

1817

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

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." When I have fears that I may cease to be (1817) - Opening lines: When I have fears that I may cease to be / Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain, ...

WHEN I HAVE FEARS

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books in charact'ry
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.

THE END