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1818

TO AILSA ROCK

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." To Ailsa Rock (1818) Opening lines: Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid! / Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams! ...

TO AILSA ROCK

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is't since the mighty Power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid?
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep;
Thy life is but two dead eternities
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

THE END