

1817

TO MRS. REYNOLDS'S CAT

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 Mrs Reynolds's Cat (1817) - Opening lines: Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric, / How many mice and rats hast in thy days ...

TO MRS. REYNOLDS'S CAT

Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric,
How many mice and rats hast in thy days
Destroy'd?- How many tit bits stolen? Gaze
With those bright languid segments green, and prick
Those velvet ears- but pr'ythee do not stick
Thy latent talons in me- and upraise
Thy gentle mew- and tell me all thy frays
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick.
Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists
For all the wheezy asthma,- and for all
Thy tail's tip is nick'd off- and though the fists
Of many a maid have given thee many a maul,
Still is that fur as soft as when the lists
In youth thou enter'dst on glass-bottled wall.

THE END