

# La Belle Dame Sans Merci

John Keats, 1795 - 1821

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
Alone and palely loitering;  
The sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,  
So haggard and so woe-begone?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.

I see a lilly on thy brow,  
With anguish moist and fever dew;  
And on thy cheek a fading rose  
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads  
Full beautiful, a faery's child;  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long;  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She looked at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew;  
And sure in language strange she said,  
I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she gazed and sighed deep,  
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—  
So kissed to sleep.

And there we slumbered on the moss,  
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dreamed  
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
Who cried—"La belle Dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam  
With horrid warning gaped wide,  
And I awoke, and found me here  
On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,  
And no birds sing.