

## One Sentence Reviews, culled from the letters of John Keats<sup>1</sup>

*Mr. Keats is not in a forgiving mood. We leave it to the reader to determine which poetical works of today have aroused his displeasure—one sincerely hopes that none of yours have been “inspirational.”*

“[A] fresh swarm of flies.”<sup>2</sup>

“[T]his alone is a good morning's work.”<sup>3</sup>

“I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the Sea where I hope they will breed Storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia.”<sup>4</sup>

“There is no grater[sic] Sin after the 7 deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet.”<sup>5</sup>

“[I]t is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the Tower of Babel.”<sup>6</sup>

“[A]fter dinner flushings.”<sup>7</sup>

“Now is not all this a most paultry thing to think about?”<sup>8</sup>

“Well, it cannot be helped: he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit.”<sup>9</sup>

“[W]ith a look and a speech almost stupid.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes taken from The Letters, on [http://www.john-keats.com/briefe/briefe\\_index.htm](http://www.john-keats.com/briefe/briefe_index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> To John Hamilton Reynolds March 17, 1817

<sup>3</sup> To John Hamilton Reynolds, April 17, 1817

<sup>4</sup> To Leigh Hunt, May 10, 1817

<sup>5</sup> To Benjamin Robert Haydon, May 10, 1817

<sup>6</sup> To Fanny Keats, 8/10/17

<sup>7</sup> To Mariane Reynolds, 9/14/17

<sup>8</sup> To Benjamin Bailey, 10/8/17

<sup>9</sup> To Benjamin Bailey 11.22.17

<sup>10</sup> To Benjamin Bailey 1.23.18)

“[T]hings and circumstances become so jumbled in his mind, that he knows not what, or what not, he has said.”<sup>11</sup>

“[F]or it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving.”<sup>12</sup>

“Now I am sensible all this is a mere sophistication.”<sup>13</sup>

“I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity.”<sup>14</sup>

“But it is easier to think what poetry should be, than to write it.”<sup>15</sup>

“That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all.”<sup>16</sup>

“When a poor devil is drowning, it is said he comes thrice to the surface, ere he makes his final sink.”<sup>17</sup>

“[Q]uaint and free of Tropes and figures.”<sup>18</sup>

“[T]hey are formed into regular phalanges of savers and gainers.”<sup>19</sup>

“[I]nteresting and a thousand other pretty things to which I gave no heed, not being partial to 9 days wonders.”<sup>20</sup>

“I am in a very little time annihilated.”<sup>21</sup>

“ Nothing worth speaking of.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> To George and Thomas Keats, February 14, 1818

<sup>12</sup> To John Hamilton Reynolds, February 19, 1818

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> To John Taylor February 27, 1818

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> To Benjamin Bailey March 13, 1818

<sup>18</sup> To John Hamilton Reynolds May 13, 1818

<sup>19</sup> To John Taylor, July 9, 1818

<sup>20</sup> To George and Georgiana Keats, October 25, 1818

<sup>21</sup> To Richard Woodhouse October 27, 1818

<sup>22</sup> To George and Georgianna Keats, February 14, 1819

“[A]ll very dull.”<sup>23</sup>

“[N]ow this is abominable.”<sup>24</sup>

“[M]ess after mess.”<sup>25</sup>

“[I]n consequence of which she lays an infinite number of Eggs.”<sup>26</sup>

“[T]hey did not make me love them.”<sup>27</sup>

“[I]ndolent and supremely careless.”<sup>28</sup>

“I must call it Laziness.”<sup>29</sup>

“[S]ome meretricious motive has sullied their greatness.”<sup>30</sup>

“[B]athe him for his health with a Necklace of good snubby stones about his Neck.”<sup>31</sup>

“Thoughts like these came very feebly.”<sup>32</sup>

“A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> To Fanny Brawne July 25, 1819

<sup>32</sup> To Fanny Brawne, February, 1820

<sup>33</sup> To Shelley, August 16, 1820