

John Keat's poems, On First Looking into Chapman's Homer, and On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for

the First Time, express an irresistible, poetical imagination. They convey a sense of atmosphere to the

reader. In comparison they exemplify his intense love of beauty. The connection between these two

poems is not so much in subject, but the feeling of awe. Both these poems show more emotion and

amazement in the experience of discovering something new. Keats looked with eyes of wonder at

new adventures and expressed them verbally with delicacy and reserve.

In the poem On First Looking into Chapman's Homer, the description of his experiences

overflows with youth and excitement. But as the poem continues the writing is toned down to

convey the most important and meaningful experience. Keats describes how after traveling in lands

of gold, and seeing many great states and kingdoms, he never truly realized the wonders of these

things until reading Chapman's translation of Homer. Crossing many western islands bards have

sung about, he never was able to comprehend their true serene nature until reading man's wondrous

words. This narration explains that though these were sights well visited, their beauty and Keats

imagination kept them alive. Having read Chapman's translation till dawn with his teacher, he was so

moved he wrote this his first great poem and mailed it by ten A.M. that day.

In On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time, the description of his experiences overflows

with depression and experience. As the poem continues you see his sad point of view has faded. It

gives it a familiarity that hides its true serene character. He describes how his spirit is weak (mortality)

and his wonderful memories have faded in his mind due to worries and unrest at his coming death.

It should be said death does play a key role in this poem and is the main reason behind all his

dreariness and heavy heart. His self-pity masks the appreciation that he was granted this length of

time to even experience them. Having viewed these time worn memorials of Grecian skill, in this

poem he expressed the indescribable feelings of wonder .

In comparison Keats expresses similarities in his concreteness of description in which all the

senses combine to give the total comprehension of an experience (new or old). He writes with an

intense delight at the sheer existence of things outside himself, and seems to lose himself in his own

mortality and the identification of the object he contemplates. His imagination is unleashed on the

works of poetry and art that so amazed him. Keats style of poetry speaks of truth in beauty.

His motto is captured in a line of his own poetry -"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."