

## "Adonais" Summary

Writer: Percy Bysshe Shelley | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

**Shelley Begins to Mourn:** Shelley starts the poem with deep sadness. He cries that Adonais (John Keats) is dead. He feels broken and hopeless. He calls everyone to mourn with him. Shelley also asks the "sad Hour" to join in the mourning. In the second stanza, he calls on Urania. She is a goddess and the symbolic mother of Keats. He asks her where she was when Keats died. He is angry because she did not save her son.

In the next stanzas, Shelley tells her to wake up and feel the pain. Keats is now cold and dead. Death has taken away his voice and beauty. Shelley says death laughs at their sorrow. Keats now lies with flowers and faded melodies. His body is silent, but his spirit is not gone.

**Urania's Loss and Keats's Greatness:** Shelley continues to talk to Urania. He reminds her that Keats was her youngest and most loved child. He was gentle and full of hope. Now, like a broken lily or a pale flower, he lies dead. His great future is lost. Shelley says that Keats's poetic dreams are now silent. His thoughts, once full of beauty, are now gone.

The stanzas also show how deeply Shelley respected Keats as a poet. His imagination and poetic skill were rich and full of life. Shelley mourns that these gifts will no longer move from mind to mind. They now rest with Keats in the grave.

**Nature Shares the Sorrow:** Shelley shows that not only humans, but also Nature itself is mourning the death of Keats. Everything that once gave joy now becomes sad and silent. Shelley says that all parts of Nature loved Keats. The sea is quiet. The winds are wild and restless. The mountains are still. The birds are silent. Spring, which is usually full of new life and color, now throws away her flowers in grief. She does not want to bloom because her beloved poet is gone.

Shelley brings in the figure of Echo. Echo is a spirit who once repeated the voices of others. She loved to mimic the sounds of Nature. But now, Echo is silent. She sits in the quiet mountains and does not reply to the winds or to the fountains. She is filled with sadness. Echo cannot repeat the voice of Keats, because it was more dear and lovely than any other voice. Shelley uses this image to show how powerful Keats's poetry was. It touched not only people but also the spirit of Nature.

The poet says that even Narcissus, a symbol of beauty and self-love, does not feel joy anymore. Shelley believes that Keats had a greater connection with Nature than even Narcissus. Echo once loved Narcissus, but now, she loves Keats more. This shows how deeply the natural world respected Keats. Everything that once gave happiness is now dull without him.

**Shelley Blames the Critics:** Shelley turns his sorrow into anger. He now blames the critic who attacked Keats's poetry in a harsh review. Shelley believes that this critic is one of the reasons why Keats died. He says the critic used cruel words like weapons. These words hurt Keats deeply. They pierced his heart like a dark arrow. Shelley calls this man a murderer and compares him to Cain. In the Bible, Cain killed his own brother.

Shelley curses this critic. He says a heavy punishment should fall on his head. He says this man scared away the angel soul that lived in Keats's body. The critic did not understand poetry or beauty. His words were full of hate and jealousy.

Shelley's voice is strong and full of pain here. He defends his friend Keats with great passion. He believes that poets are like messengers of beauty and truth. When such people are attacked, the world loses something very valuable.

**Shelley's Personal Grief:** Shelley speaks from his heart. He shows his personal sorrow for the loss of Keats. He says that even though winter is over and spring has come, his grief remains. Nature is full of new life. Trees are green, flowers bloom, rivers flow, and birds sing. But Shelley feels no joy. His heart is still full of pain. The world around him is beautiful, but he cannot enjoy it because of his deep sadness.

Shelley says that grief returns with every new year. Even when the Earth becomes lively again, his sorrow remains strong. He feels separated from the joy of the world. Everything reminds him of the poet who is no longer alive. He remembers Keats's voice, his thoughts, and his dreams. Shelley says that death takes away the body, but not the spirit. The soul of Keats is still alive, but the pain of his loss is still fresh.

Shelley speaks of the power of Nature to give life. He says the Earth has a "quickenning life." This life flows through the sea, the land, and the sky. But even this strong life cannot heal his sorrow. Shelley believes that nothing truly dies. Yet, he cannot stop grieving. His heart still feels empty.

**Urania Feels the Loss:** Urania finally wakes up from her silent rest. She now feels the great pain of losing her son, Adonais. She rushes from heaven. She is moved by memory and sorrow. She goes straight to the place where Keats's body lies. She is no longer calm or peaceful. She

is full of sadness and regret. Shelley shows that even a goddess cannot stay untouched by death. Her son's death pulls her down to earth.

Shelley also brings back the image of critics. He calls them wolves, vultures, and ravens. These animals feed on the dead. He compares the critics to them. He claims they took joy in attacking Keats. Their words were like sharp claws and beaks. Shelley calls them shameful and evil. He also remembers the poet Byron, who also spoke against such critics. Byron becomes a strong figure here, like Apollo, the god who killed the serpent Python.

**Poets and Mourners Gather:** Shelley now imagines a group of mourners coming to cry for Keats. These are not common people. They are poets and artists. They are the true lovers of beauty and art. He calls them "mountain shepherds." It is a symbol for poets in classical poems. Among them is Byron, whom Shelley praises highly. He calls Byron "the Pilgrim of Eternity" and says his fame is like the sky above his head. Byron is seen as a great poet who understands sorrow and deep thought.

Shelley also includes himself in the group of mourners. He speaks of his own soul, which is sad and alone. He says he does not belong to any country or place. He lives only in his thoughts and feelings. Shelley sees himself as someone who is always wandering, always searching for truth. He feels connected to Keats because both of them are poets who were hurt by the world. This part of the poem shows how Shelley feels close to other poets who understand grief.

**From Mourning to Hope:** Shelley begins to change his thoughts. He starts to feel a kind of peace. His sorrow turns into quiet reflection. He thinks that Keats is not really gone. Instead, his spirit has returned to the place it came from—the divine source of life. Shelley believes that the soul does not die. It goes back to its origin, full of beauty and power. He says that Keats has escaped the pain of the world. He has left behind the struggle, fear, and sadness of human life.

Shelley then gives a strong and surprising idea. He says that we, the living, are the ones who are asleep. Keats has awakened from the "dream of life." He has become free. We are still trapped in illusions and painful thoughts. This is a big turning point in the poem. Shelley stops crying and starts to feel hope. He says we should not mourn anymore. Keats is alive in a higher way.

**Keats Becomes Part of Nature:** Shelley now says that Keats is not only alive in spirit, but also present in the natural world. He has become a part of all things beautiful. He is in the stars, the wind, the light, and the sea. Shelley says that Keats now adds to the beauty of the world. He once wrote about Nature with love, and now he has joined it forever.

Shelley believes that great poets like Keats do not really die. They become one with the eternal spirit that moves through all things. This idea gives Shelley comfort. He no longer sees Keats as lost. He sees him as part of the world's soul—a force that never ends. Shelley also says that Keats made the world more lovely when he was alive. Now, as part of Nature, he continues to spread beauty.

**Shelley's Longing for Death:** Now, Shelley looks into his own heart. He feels that life without Keats is empty. He does not fear death anymore. He wishes to follow Keats. He hears Keats's spirit calling him. He asks himself why he should stay on earth. Shelley says life is full of pain and separation. Death can bring peace and unity. He wants to be with his friend again. He feels that death is not the end, but a return to love and truth. Shelley writes with deep emotion here. He speaks of his own tired heart, his loneliness, and his dream of reunion.

**Final Vision of Peace:** In the last stanzas, Shelley gives a final picture of peace. He tells the earth to give rest to Adonais's body. He says the body lies quietly under the sky, near Rome. But the soul is free. It has flown far above the clouds and stars. Shelley imagines the spirit of Keats rising into the sky, glowing like light. He says the spirit is not touched by darkness or death. It shines forever.

Shelley ends the poem with calm and peace. He tells himself not to fear. The soul cannot die. Keats lives on. And one day, Shelley will join him. This ending brings comfort, not sadness. Shelley's mourning has changed into hope. He no longer cries. He believes in eternal life and beauty.