



A tale of Enchantment

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Cover; *Young lover's embracing*

By Antoine-Jean Gros 1771-1835

For those who keep fables and romance alive

Glory and loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wonder out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.

John Keats

A tale of Enchantment

As a young boy, Adam was tall, slight, delicately built and narrow- chested, with a complexion both fair and ruddy; his innocent face closer to being long than oval.

His features, not regularly handsome, were set off by a wild profusion of silky brown hair that curled naturally; his countenance radiating an enchanting receptiveness.

If he became aroused and excited his high pitched voice broke into strangely modulated tones and his prominent blue eyes would flash to show the fire of his intelligence.

Always preferring universal and transcendental concerns to the practical ones, his intellectual ambition was feral, causing him to fly or leap over the facts of ordinary life.

His swift intake of books and surprizing memory fed his daring and lawless imagination which preferred speed of realisation to the pedantic demands of artistic perfection.

The princely character of this gentle and brave boy was not clear to all so many of his contemporaries missed the kind geniality that was so agreeably compounded in him.

While the delicacy and simplicity in his manners was not a source of honour and utility to boys, it did nevertheless make him suitably attractive to many of the female sex.

His talk hypnotised women and his words could pierce an innocent heart; their pathos so deep, he could make female tears gush involuntarily from unsuspecting eyes.

His admiration and love for women caused an etiquette to flourish that fixed the simple grace of his movements and expressed his sympathy for a noble feminine ideal.

During early illnesses he devised a private world to cope with isolation and later, rejected by his peers, his bruised sensitivity refabricated this world as an inborn morality.

Maybe his first contact with life elicited inherent moral qualities, but his need of friendship, his hatred of tyranny and aggression were powered by life's harsh encounters.

If he heard of or read about any flagrant act of injustice, oppression, or cruelty, then the sharpest marks of horror and indignation were quickly visible in his countenance.

Drawing inspiration from kindness and from his soul in solitude, he tended his honourable visions rigorously and these sustained him when his creative spirit grew wilder.

The penalty of isolation brought painful episodes, but the reward he reaped was a nobler realization of his best self, a quality that was unavailable to many of his colleagues.

Tamed by affection, unconquered by blows, passion was his resistance to injury and ambition for love, but it was singing that endowed his passion with the noblest spirit.

Enamoured of ideal loveliness, he longed for the mortal realisation of his passion and pursued the vision in a vain hope that his thirst for a fiery ardour might be assuaged.

Deeming it awful that flesh and blood must live without connection and realising the impossibility of ideal love, he sought faithfulness to his desire by composing songs.

Like a chivalrous troubadour he sang songs of courtly love in bars; his voice, tremulous with lyrical vibration, intent upon avowing love in all its metaphysical majesty.

One night, sharing the stage with Ida, a singer, fair as a swan, his eye took in her beauty and, believing himself home at last, imagined his long neck entwined with hers.

Each night he watched and listened to Ida knowing they could not share the same room without his heart stirring, aching as though under attack from a wretched malady.

Her guitar strings echoed his name, her sad, tender voice filled his heart; each day Ida's lovely figure pervaded his vision and at night he wept in his pillow while dreaming.

From the tone of her voice, from a look he read as love, Adam was lifted out of winter into summer and wanted only to bath lazily in the ripe warmth of Ida's seduction.

She sang of amorous days triggered by cupid's darts and he, blissfully happy, wrote hearty love songs revering the sweet inspiration born of her heart's fragrant perfumes.

Each lovely day

*I gazed at her today, could my eye ever lie?
I gazed at her today as she passed by,
I gazed at her today; she took my breath away,
Oh my heart it sang and played this lovely day.*

*He gazed at me today, could my eye ever lie?
He gazed at me today as I passed by,
He gazed at me today; he took my breath away,
Oh my heart it sang and played this lovely day.*

*Come back another day, will you try, will you try?
Come back another day and pass me by,
Come back another day to take my heart away,
And dance my eyes in play each lovely day.*

*I'll go another day, I will try; I will try,
I'll go another day and pass you by,
I'll go another day to give my heart away,
And dance your eyes in play each lovely day.*

*We'll play another day; we'll give our hearts away,
And dance our eyes in play each lovely day.
We'll dance our eyes in play each lovely day.*

In my arms tonight

Like an eagle high on the wing

Like a leopard pausing to spring

Like a bee preserving its sting

I'm hoping this will turn out right

Like a singer waiting to sing

Like a drummer ready to swing

Like a juggler eager to fling

I'm hoping it will happen tonight

Hold me, I am feeling distraught

Don't say love counts more than it ought

Need to win this battle I fought

And hold you in my arms tonight

Like a flower opening to spring

Like a bell resounding its ring

Like the zest when it's got its zing

I know I just saw the light

Like a couple out on a fling

Like a prince, now become king

Like a bride revealing her ring

I'm so happy I just might ignite

If my feet have now left the ground

Lord knows I might be heaven bound

Hold on tight and don't make a sound

And stay tight in my arms tonight

Its love I rehearse

I was feeling so low 'til I kissed you and hugged you

No sign of a glow 'til the moment I loved you

You charm broken senses, inspire deep devotion

Mend my fallen fences, keep my heart in motion

With your hugs and your caresses

Its love I rehearse

And when you reply with your smiles and your yesses

Then all my sad mists disperse

By cobwebs you pull me through gates and passed fences

Your promise enthrals when smiles get intensive

You charm broken senses, I know you by heart

It's certain I love you; that we'll never part

With your hugs and your caresses

Its love I rehearse

And when you reply with your smiles and your yesses

Then all my sad mists disperse

You charm broken senses, inspire deep devotion

Mend my fallen fences, keep my heart in motion

And when you reply with your smiles and your yesses

Then all my sad mists disperse

Yes all my sad mists, my cloudy old mists

My difficult mists disperse

Dancing romance tonight

*That was not dance last night
We had romance in sight
We met love gliding 'cross the floor
I adore your allure, of that I am sure,
Come back through that door for some more*

*I can hear the wonder
Like the sound of thunder
I can hear my glad heart roar
I adore your allure, of that I am sure,
Come back through that door for some more*

*From a simple request, who could have guessed
That hands could feel so caressed
My senses aflame, I'll return again
To go with chance and join you in dance,
A dance of romance tonight*

*That was not dance last night
We had romance in sight
Like bees dancing round a hive
Oh it shook me alive, yes it took me alive,
With you as my hive I'd survive*

*I can hear the wonder
Like the sound of thunder
Move over I want to drive*

*Oh it shook me alive, yes it took me alive,
With you as my hive I'd survive*

*This simple rhythm, cosmic collision,
Igniting sweet ambition
With senses aflame, we're here again
Not for a dance, but for romance
A romantic romance
That could take us all night
If we keep it in sight
And play romance right
Dancing romance tonight*

My little spark

Tried passing the buck

Skating on thin ice

Kept trying my luck

'Til I wore out the dice

But it never quite hit the mark

I was living in the dark

'Til you, my little spark

Lit up my heart

I'd gone with the blows

And searched for bright lights

I flowed with the flows

And I toured all the sights

But it never quite hit the mark

I was living in the dark

'Til you, my little spark

Lit up my heart

Played chance like a cat

Used eight of nine lives

Would've eaten my hat

If you hadn't arrived

And then you just hit the mark

Stopped me living in the dark

When you, my little spark

Lit up my heart, lit up my heart

When you, my little spark, lit up my heart

My love is yours today

*I hear your voice, it tunes my ears
You make life sweet, you conquer fears
You make me strong; invite my play
My love is yours today*

*Please say that we, will never part
It was your key, unlocked my heart
I'll nestle close, I'm here to stay
My love is yours today*

*You're the vision drifting through my nights
You're my hunger, my fanciful flights
You're the magnet that brings me right back
You're the compass that keeps me on track*

*When you are gone, my eyes don't see
With your caress, my dreams run free
The worlds on fire, it's never grey
My love is yours today*

*I hear your voice, it tunes my ears
You make life sweet, you conquer fears
You make me strong; invite my play
My love is yours today*

*You're the vision drifting through my nights
You're my hunger, my fanciful flights
You're the magnet that brings me right back
You're the compass that keeps me on track*

Between them lay discord - he was rejected like a signet hatched with a hen's brood of ducklings and in days his ruined, underfed emotions began to intensify and fester.

His reactions were immature and deficient and for all his poetic qualities, his glaring distress produced such anger that no estimate by his friends could have predicted it.

His gift was friendship, not untameable passion, and in a furious tirade he revisited old concerns, unearthing truths beneath all the shams and fictions woven by his society.

Then his intricate aims and complex faculties, driven by the sickness and isolation of his early years, hurled him into an inflated warfare with dull and customary opinion.

It was his frequent tirades against the hood-winked and the blind, the slaves to bureaucracy, those who prefer dead custom to human feeling that swelled his isolation.

He needed adoring attention and the fire of love in his veins if the dissonances of his youth were to melt, but with such care we might all forge articulate harmony.

His love was extinguished when his talents were still in the ascendant, when his creative life had just taken a first breath, like a tiny babe delivered from an angel's hands.

He bid his heart, beating in his chest, to write of his love, but fear stifled him, pushed away resolve and made him know the meekness of a child when he craved to be wild.

Anguished lovelorn misery filled his dreary nights until, going to her in pieces like a rose blown apart, he offered Ida songs from a doubt-filled heart which frightened her.

Foolish heart

*Fell for you when we met
Haven't quite got up yet
Foolish heart is to blame
It just won't let me forget.*

*The sight of you, it lights my flame
Each day is just the same
I've lost control; what can I say?
My heart must take the blame*

*Wasn't a craze that grew
It came in from the blue
Foolish heart is to blame
And all the little things you do.*

*The sight of you, it lights my flame
Each day is just the same
I've lost control; what can I say?
My heart must take the blame*

*I'll leave and go away
I'll not disturb your play
Foolish heart is to blame
That tricky old thing lead me astray
The sight of you, it lights my flame
Each day is just the same
I've lost control; what can I say?
My heart must take the blame*

I love it

I love it when our hands entwine

Nestling in like tiny birds

I love it when my heart beats time

To the magic of your words

I can dance with you for hours

My heart living in my eyes

Breathe in your scent of flowers

Knowing love that never dies

I love it when we first connect

Mixing joy and instant peace

I love it 'cos we both expect

Our heart beats to increase

I can dance with you for days

My eyes feasting on your lips

On your smile like bright sun rays

On the movement of your hips

I love it when you fly at me

Attaching us at lightning speeds

I love it when our dance is free

For graceful moves and cheeky deeds

I can dance with you all week

Dream of kisses kissing deep

Dream of dancing cheek to cheek

When I'm dancing in my sleep

Want to dream dreams

You're my love, there's nothing else to say

There's no excuse, there is no other way

Hold me tight, I don't want to fight

Want to dream dreams with you here tonight.

Dump the job, forget the early start

You have no past, you have no broken heart

Sit here close, so you can hold me tight

Want to dream dreams with you here tonight.

Please don't grab your coat, put back your hat

It's warm here, I just want to chat

Look, enjoy the view, the city sights

Want to dream dreams with you tonight.

You're the one that I've been waiting for

Take my hand and please don't hug that door

Your heart's fine, it's best when it's alight

Want to dream dreams with you here tonight.

Dump the shoes and rest your weary feet

Please don't fret, you know I'll be so sweet

Drop the shade and I will dim the light

Want to dream dreams with you here tonight.

You know you can cure my lonesome blues

You've nothing to fear or to lose

Who but you would choose to have a fight?

Want to dream dreams with you tonight.

Smile for me

*When your eyes invite a smile
I miss their gaze by a mile
Smile for me once in a while*

*My bright heart it wanes each day
And my dreams refuse to play
Smile my way, stop the decay*

*You've said no a thousand times
When yes once beguiled me
Sight of you inspired these rhymes
When smiles reconciled me
Let me sing songs that set off alarms
Sweet songs of praise to your charms
Use that smile of yours it has style
Wont you mile for me once in a while*

*Gloomy hearts they sigh a lot
Release me love from this plot
Stop the rot your smile is hot*

*Stop my gloom, I'll be so true
Bond with me and stick like glue
I'll be new, smiling for you*

*You've said no a thousand times
When yes once beguiled me
Sight of you inspired these rhymes
When smiles reconciled me
Let me sing songs that set off alarms
Sweet songs of praise to your charms
Use that smile of yours it has style
Wont you mile for me once in a while*

Use a kiss to talk to me

*Give me a kiss, don't talk at me
There's more to this than what we say
Harsh words will drown out all the love that I see
And drive me away.*

*Let me convey my sweetest dreams
What is this thing if not romance
Unpick my love, I'll come apart at the seams
Why not take a chance.*

*Loving ways need more than chatter
Won't you set your sweet heart free
A warm embrace is now what matters
Use a kiss to talk to me.*

*The only sound I want to hear
Is beating rhythms in your heart
Let me express the dreams I'm holding so dear
Or we'll drift apart.*

*I've kisses in my memory
I've often prayed to skies above
Do something more than say you're counting on me
To explain my love.*

*Loving ways need more than chatter
Won't you set your sweet heart free
A warm embrace is now what matters
Use a kiss to talk to me.*

But he wasn't the first to startle this fragile bird of prey; with cries of harassment and a careful transferal of guilt Ida had habitually ended trysts that outlasted a welcome.

He knew it was useless, that it was worse than useless to regret the unredeemable, but still he mourned the fate of his budding intimacy that had bloomed but gave no fruit.

What can be worse, for one as he, than the dawning of a jubilant romance that promised glorious days of warmth, when lying awake, shivering in daybreak's meagre heat?

After similar catastrophes many held love in reserve for old age, but Adam cried out in lamentation that deceitful passion too easily gains its repute from glorified failures.

Sceptical that spring creates fruits too rarely, he declared a mistrust of fate, a hatred that it so consistently fostered brief moments of ardour before withdrawing its favours.

He never persuaded himself, as some did, that we enjoy our best feelings of affection when fresh; he never wanted the possibility of love to be a fugitive muse untimely slain.

How could he applaud an aria cut off in its prime, before the sound of its grand finale has had the vital opportunity of bequeathing its life giving unction to his ailing heart?

No shallow optimism for him, no fallacious beliefs in kind consolation, no bowing low in silence to the laws of waste in nature for the sake of form and social approval.

His patience at an end, finding no reparation in human justice, no scaffold for his helplessness, Adam composed songs with a daemonic, reckless and obsessional temper.

When my rhythm falters

*Leave me, bring me tears
Flood my drowned terrain
Leave me to my fears
Drive me insane again*

*Refusing troubled waters
I'll sing sweet songs all day
And when my rhythm falters
I'll sing them anyway*

*Sack my melodies
Hound my faithful heart
We're the enemies
Who live sad lives apart*

*Refusing troubled waters
I'll sing of lonesome news
And when my rhythm falters
I make your heart my muse.*

*Make love come to nought
Make love sound untrue
You're my lonely thought
It's sad but it is true.*

*Refusing troubled waters
I'll sing all night and day
And when my rhythm falters
I'll give my love away.*

If your miles away

*You knew I had the eye for you
You hid behind your eyes
You wrecked the smile I made for you
Made me apologize*

*There's something about you I shouldn't pursue
Tried everything I could, just to get through
But if your miles away from me, what can I do?*

*You knew that I could die for you
That I don't tell you lies
Spent days and days reminding you
My love was no surprise*

*First you're arriving and then you depart
Always hiding behind your heart
But if your miles away from me, what can I do?*

*You knew how hard I tried for you
I waited for replies
Forgot that I'd invited you
Went dancing in disguise*

*Why are truth and fiction always apart?
These fragile connections will break my heart
But if your miles away from me, what can I do?*

*You knew that I could fly with you
And all that this implies
Now I'm a thousand miles from you
Receiving alibis
It's silly living, this contradiction
When there's no love beneath the fiction
But if your miles away from me, what can I do?*

*You made me say goodbye to you
The truth was in my eyes
Because I gave my eye to you
You ordered my demise
My heart's without its jurisdiction
Love ain't rising above the friction
But if your miles away from me, what can I do?*

About wanting you

*I studied you when - your flirting began
And now number ten - takes you for a gem
'Cos they wanted you
It's now true to say - it's all gone your way
I took the survey - down by the café
'Cos I wanted to*

*Had to know if my love could be wasted
Had to taste how an aching heart tasted
Had to sense how to feel isolated
When I wanted you*

*But behind your door - your days were a chore
Your stories a bore - what's there to adore?
I still wanted you
It wasn't your fault - it was my somersault
A loud thunderbolt - you took for assault
Didn't want it to*

*Had to know if this was love I was feeling
Had to see how it looked from the ceiling
Had to grasp what it might be revealing
This wanting you*

*The fact is we played - down lover's arcade
Some long lost decade - when I made the grade
And I still want to
I was in the frame - my heart was aflame*

*We played out this game - beyond feeling shame
'Cos we wanted to
Had to see if we could share this notion
Had to drown in your strange secret ocean
Had to know how you kept us in motion
And still wanting you*

*So then I was tossed - my affections quashed
You dished out the frost - when I was still lost
Who'd do that to you?
With side step ballet - I kept far away
Never more to stray - or my thoughts betray
About wanting you
Had to moan 'cos we were nicely teamed
Had to shout, 'cos your ego intervened
Had to suffer affections guillotined
Couldn't find the glue*

*This game you adore - bizarre and obscure
It has no allure - I'll take a detour
And stop wanting you
There's no silly law - for life on the floor
But now it is sure - our days are no more
Just hullabaloo
Had to cry so that love could be redeemed
Had to share loving visions I had dreamed
Had to say it just wasn't what it seemed
My wanting you*

Before we learned to fight

I plan my words for you

And practise with great care

To dodge your probing view

So my thoughts of love aren't stripped bare.

Oh I dream of us when we were young

We loved both day and night

So many times the moonlight shined

Before we learned to fight.

When your fiery heart waned

I just sat on the floor

But my longing remained

Awaiting your sweet knock on the door.

Yes I dream of us when we were young

We loved both day and night

So many times the moonlight shined

Before we learned to fight.

Why was my love for you

A weight like sacks of sand

Cut short, we never grew

But I'm still in the palm of your hand.

Yes I dream of us when we were young

We loved both day and night

So many times the moonlight shined

Before we learned to fight.

A vision of Ida in a cage came to him one night – her lustrous lips and glossy hair were lifeless, her bruised cheeks lined with channels etched by the flow of tears.

From her pale shadow came a tremulous shaking sound, a hoarse, ghostly moan vibrating in air, yet this was Ida, striving with a piteous tongue to speak as she once had.

He converted these sounds to harp strings and imagined eyes pining for love until he saw fear there, a plea that he stem the tide of his isolating misery and murderous spite.

Picturing a hand grabbing her heart, he realised his love had wanted tenure of her fleeting, sporadic passions and, outraged by his stupidity, he destroyed the aberrant cage.

Ida lifted her swan-like wings, fanned him and flew off, leaving Adam clasping his cold head, his hands shaking, sure that his love, his hope and sorrow would never die.

On the sill, like dew upon a flower, lay a tear fallen from her cheek and following her exit he saw his swan gliding across a still, moonlit lake as if propelled by fairy power.

This melancholy sight turned his heart another way, to
echo a far off day when his spirit first knew grief and he
begged fate to give him one more chance to savour love.

Sighing, Adam wrote this final song to honour his brief
celebration of love with Ida and after, knowing his life
depended upon it, he believed his caged vision was real.

I'm not singing one more love song

I'm not singing one more love song

It's too hard, I'm going to cry

I've no feelings that remain strong

When I look up to the sky

You and I had only just begun

Final exits always break a heart

Here beneath a cool and fading sun

You and I are now apart

I'd make ev'ry sacrifice for you

If fate would give me one final chance

And let me make a paradise for you

As your partner in this dance

*I'm not telling one more story
About a love that has no trace
How we soared when we knew glory
Those sweet hours I can't replace*

*You and I had only just begun
Final exits always break a heart
Here beneath a cool and fading sun
You and I are now apart
I'd make ev'ry sacrifice for you
If fate would give me one final chance
And let me make a paradise for you
As your partner in this dance*

*And I will not speak of feelings
Then you're with me in a flash
I must live for borrowed meanings
Tears that dry and turn to ash*

*Once again I've only just begun
Hoping trials can mend a broken heart
Here beneath a cool and fading sun
Finding grace to make a start
Knowing what the sacrifice would be
Hoping fate will give me one last chance
Knowing what a paradise could be
With a partner in this dance*

Afterword

I am writing this Afterword to offer my thanks to those who deserve credits and to give a reasoned argument for the manner in which I brought their writing into the work. For some, exposing a methodology is unwelcome for it causes the loss of its magic. If this is true for you then read no further; this is not a crucial piece of writing.

I wove a collage of many parts into this work and it needed constant editing to clarify meaning and achieve unity. Even now I'm only vaguely confident that the work has lucidity. Given that love songs are often allegorical, born of a desire to express a relationship to enchantment rather than a loved one, clarity is open to interpretation.

The form of this work is unusual - a series of three-line stanzas in blank verse interspersed between a series of song lyrics. It's entirely accidental and has probably never been used to create a narrative before now. If there is a resemblance between this and any other form of writing then the closest example is probably the biography of a poet. In some ways it started life here, but only after I had written the stanzas and joined them to the lyrics. I wrote the lyrics first, working on them intermittently over a period of a year. The blank verse stanzas I wrote in two weeks towards the end of the process and once they were completed I interspersed them between the song lyrics and endlessly edited the complete text to achieve a narrative.

Collage plays an important role in much of my work. In addition to collaging the two main elements I also used collage to develop the two components. For the lyrics I had different starting points. Some I started with existing love songs and adapted them, others I had a loose form of words first before borrowing the meter of existing songs, which helped to hone the rhythms, and some are entirely original. Whatever the starting point was, I spent so many months editing the lyrics and judging their suitability by singing them that any resemblance to the originals is now entirely submerged in the process. I had no idea that I was going to collage these lyrics to another text.

One day, when I was short of reading material, I came across a small second hand shop that had only one piece of literature in it; a book on Shelley by J A Symonds. (MacMillan 1902) From the second I picked it up I adored the rich tone of the writing. After reading it I started purposefully and speedily darting round the first chapters, chancing upon material, moving in close and writing sections of it before I had time to question my inspiration. There was no structure to this method, it was simply a colourful tactic to distract my decision making and locate myself in that place where marvellous accidents might occur. This is not the first time I have dived into a book like this, taking snatches of it here and there, creating a new text as a homage to the writer.

Thank you John Addington Symonds, thank you very much. I really hope you are not averse to my ambition of dancing with you.

My next important decision was to turn the text into a series of three-line stanzas. Why this I have no idea. It was done quickly and adhered to faithfully. I like it that it is the cause of my editing decisions and that it accompanies my thoughts about meaning so gently and unobtrusively. Next, in order to make the narrative work, I had to move the stanzas around and constantly question meaning. Then, once the work had a recognisable form, I looked for further inspiration to help achieve an appropriate ending. While ambling casually through poems, I found the extraordinary dream sequence that John Keats wrote for his, *Isabella, or The Pot or Basil – A story by Boccaccio*. I consumed it and once again engaged in the process of changing it to suit my purposes. Then, for the final stanzas I needed of one last piece of the jigsaw, and, turning to Shelley I found an exquisite section from his poem, *Adonais*. Finally, when the collection of material was getting close to making sense I joined the three-line stanzas to the lyrics, edited them again and found a million other reasons to edit until I felt satisfied about its sense, its unity and its possible relevance.

I can hear many complaints though. ‘Surely you can’t just borrow swathes of another author’s text, willy-nilly, its plagiarism.’

Well its only plagiarism if I present the work as my own and besides, the collage technique is so complex and detailed, it would take forever to unpick all the phrases I used and allocate them to the original author. Then of course one would have to argue about the efficacy of these decisions based upon the extent to which the original was changed. That's too much work and in the meantime we would simply forget the possibility of engaging with it.

These days the crisis of authenticity is obsessive. From my viewpoint we should accept that art connects with previous art and that we each have the right to express our particular position in this arena. I don't have a moral position on it. As far as I am aware I write without any clear knowledge or forethought about what my intensions are. When my writing comes directly from reading I am moving with intense inspiration over its landscape and things I am attracted to attach themselves to me instantly. I don't believe I'm stealing; I'm not pinching anyone's feelings or pretending their skills are mine, I'm just flying through the landscape gathering my own thoughts.

The literary attitude towards borrowing has not always been so negative. In his *Life of Keats*, (MacMillan 1917) Sidney Colvin writes, "Shakespeare's hint for his Oberon and Titania was taken, as is well known, from the French prose romance *Huon of Bordeaux* translated by Lord Berners." Colvin also writes approvingly of Keats's inspirational reading.

“But the main interest of the sonnet (on Chapman’s Homer) is its comparison of the working of Keats’s miscellaneous poetic reading in his mind and memory with the effect of the confused but harmonious sounds of evening on the ear, - a frank and illuminating comment by himself on those stray echoes and reminiscences of the older poets which we catch now and again throughout his work. Such echoes and reminiscences are always permitted to genius, because genius cannot help turning whatever it takes into something new of its own: and Keats showed himself from the first one of those chartered borrowers who have the right to draw inspiration as they please, whether direct from nature or, in the phrase of Wordsworth, (The Prelude, book V)

*From the great Nature that exists in works
Of mighty poets.*

I suppose the question is, are we in the 21st century, on the grounds of equality, allowed to presume the same rights. That we must each decide. In addition to this I might also add that I do not regard myself as a writer. I think of myself as an artist whose medium happens to be words, a sculptor who sculpts narratives. In my art I play with collage and I am no more a plagiarist than Picasso was when he painted his version of old master paintings. He honoured them and invited us to look at them afresh; he used them for aesthetic reasons and I use Mr Symonds, Keats and Shelly in a similar manner.

This you might argue is too clever by half, but I must come clean; it is how I am. I limp along at speed without having any clear idea about what I am up to and my conduct is full of mischief; only the qualities of truth and musicality are fixed firmly in my sights. I am in every sense a slave to concentration, but I often stop writing to address my empty room with a reading of the text. My only hope is that I am capable of honesty and integrity when using this very particular method of production.

It's a multi-layered collage, a quilt of many different materials that work together in an opaque way and out of which the narrative rises up in the most unpredictable fashion. Speed, chance and open play are crucial to its development, for these elements are capable of keeping preconceptions at bay. It is an exercise in acceptance, taking what I find when I find it and joining it together before I have time to judge its importance. I still can't judge its effectiveness or whether it's worth very much.

There are many advantages to the use of unconscious starting points, but one that I like is that it offers me an insight into the nature of my roaming; I should know the places I roam to. Unconscious play might also be regarded as a refusal to join the conventional literary game and that is also fine with me. I like a strategy that offers me new places to play in and results that surprise me. I really don't mind that its relevance and significance is small and rather vulnerable for that seems to suit my profile admirably.