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Haggard and woe-begone: The Arundels' Tomb and John Keats's

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

Richard Marggraf-Turley and Jennifer Squire

Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', composed in April 1819, is considered one of Romanticism's most inconclusive works. Mysterious, condensed, parabolic, recursive, the poem – Jack Stillinger observes – seems to 'demand interpretation' while offering 'little clarity about anything'.¹ Over the past half century or so, various critiques have attempted to resolve the poem's allegory, its symbolism, textual problems and gendered cruxes, but Stillinger is surely right to suggest that the ballad remains 'cloudy', an adjective fittingly suggestive of both opaqueness and apparent immateriality.² The poem's unclosed ambiguities are also felt internally: the first act of heurism is the errant knight's own, prompted by the unnamed interlocuter's invitation to self-diagnosis ('O what can ail thee?'). The knight's conclusions are partial, setting the pattern for subsequent interpretations.

Readers often note how the poem appears 'abruptly' in a journal letter to George and Georgiana Keats.³ Its apparently unheralded arrival, together with the draft's crossings out and substituted words, increases our sense of the ballad's spontaneity, its unprovenanced nature, its status as an inevitable leaf on a tree.⁴ The poem seems impossible to locate, its coordinates unfixed. 'And that is why I sojourn here', submits the knight-at-arms mock-syllogistically, after giving an account of an encounter that seems to do anything but explain anything at all, and which ends with yet another conundrum. Where is *here*? The knight, much like the ballad itself, seems to exist in uncoordinated, mythic, self-referential space. Our aim in this essay is *precisely* to address place, the 'here' of the poem, since we would contend the effort takes us some way towards settling a few of the poem's 'whys'. Two places, specifically: Chichester

cathedral in West Sussex, with its medieval effigies of Richard FitzAlan and Eleanor of Lancaster – alabaster templates, we propose, for the angst-ridden knight-at-arms and belle dame; and nearby Bedhampton in Hampshire, whose granary, mill lake and largest field, Bidbury Mead, we believe, supplied Keats with key elements of the imaginative topography in which the ballad’s central characters’ drama of separation plays out.

1. Chichester

On Monday, 18 January 1819, barely recovered from his recurring ‘sore throat’, Keats left the semi-detached Hampstead villa he shared with his friend Charles Brown for lodgings in historical Chichester, some sixty-five miles south west of London. The break was envisaged as an opportunity for Keats to recoup some emotional strength after the death of his brother Tom the previous month. The walled city, with its medieval buildings laid out on a Roman grid, would also be an ideal place in which to work on his gothic romance, *The Eve of St Agnes*. After an eleven-hour journey, Keats’s coach pulled up outside The Dolphin Inn, opposite the cathedral that tourists celebrated for its detached bell tower, richly ornamented capitals, elegant cinque-foil arches, double aisles, and brass and stone effigies. From the coach stop, Keats made his way to his lodgings on Eastgate Square, where Brown, who had gone on ahead, was waiting.⁵

During the four-day stay, the friends explored their surroundings and Keats visited the cathedral, where surrounded by effigies he read a letter from his sister Fanny.⁶ Our interest lies with two statues in particular, which we think caught Keats’s eye: namely, a recumbent alabaster knight in the north aisle depicting Richard FitzAlan, tenth Earl of Arundel, and a wimpled, veiled lady. Readers today are familiar with these statues from one of Philip Larkin’s best-loved poems, ‘An Arundel Tomb’. Larkin visited the cathedral in 1956, when the

Arundels' imposing stone memorial appeared much as it does today – free-standing, fully (and controversially) restored, the Arundels' avatars gleaming and rejuvenated (Fig. 1).⁷ The sight of the brawny, chain-mailed earl holding his wife's hand in a tableau of conjugal affection inspired one of Larkin's most-quoted lines: 'What will survive of us is love'. By contrast, the cathedral's gothic interior and contents do not seem to have made an immediate impression on Keats. Writing about his stay in Chichester and Bedhampton, he remarked to his brother and sister-in-law: 'Nothing worth speaking of happened at either place' (*LJK*, II, 58). However, we think something did happen – in both places; moreover, something that was to prove imaginatively lasting and transformative.

Importantly, when Keats visited Chichester cathedral in 1819, the Arundels were in a very different condition to when Larkin saw them almost a century and a half later. To begin with, their effigies were not conjoined but disarticulated, and not free-standing but stowed unceremoniously, head-to-toe, along the north aisle wall. The linear arrangement is recorded in the *Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet* for 1803, which describes the 'effigies of a man in armour, and a lady at his feet'.⁸ *A History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex* (1815) also mentions two recumbent statues in the cathedral, which it is conjectured were 'originally one ... divided for convenience of space'.⁹ According to the 1849 guidebook written by sexton and poet Charles Crocker, *A Visit to Chichester Cathedral*, the lady was 'partly built into the wall under the window'.¹⁰

In Keats's day, the statues were also badly damaged. The British Museum possesses two early nineteenth-century sketches depicting the knight-at-arms. Fig. 2. was drawn by John Flaxman around 1826, and shows a woman perched on the end of the tomb, apparently reading – or perhaps writing – a letter, which recalls Keats's own action of taking a letter from his sister

into the cathedral to peruse in private. Fig. 3. shows Edward Vernon Utterson's sketch from 1817, made just two years before Keats visited the cathedral. Both drawings clearly show the lamentable state of the 'wounded', dismembered knight – less a knight-at-arms than a knight-without-arms, or at any rate missing his most important arm, the one that reaches affectionately for his Countess. If we are right that the separated effigies inspired Keats when he came to write his ballad that April, then the damage to FitzAlan's right arm adds a not-so-subtle layer of irony to Keats's name for his male protagonist.¹¹

The damage suffered by the sepulchral lovers seems to have occurred at some point between their ejection from their original resting place at Lewes Priory in 1537 during the Dissolution, and their final move into Chichester cathedral, the earliest certain record of which dates from 1635. The century they spent outdoors in the elements gave both effigies a weathered appearance that could perhaps be described as 'haggard'. Their injuries were extensive: the knight existed in twenty-one pieces and the lady in eight. Both were missing fingers, thumbs and noses – 'woe-begone', indeed. The Arundels were also covered in graffiti when Keats visited the cathedral. As recorded by *The Antiquarian and Architectural Yearbook* for 1845, the 'sadly mutilated' effigies were 'covered with dates and initials of the mischievous and ignorant', the earliest inscriptions going back to 1604.¹² In addition, the effigies retained traces of original medieval paint, which were removed during later restoration: in the *Yearbook's* description, 'small portions of colour existed on the effigies', including 'small quantities of crimson' (p. 285). This fact that may throw light on the 'fading rose' that Keats describes as lingering on the cheeks of the feverish knight: 'And on thy cheeks a fading rose/ Fast withereth too'. At any rate, 'fading' gives a good sense of the original colour having been rubbed or washed away.¹³

A third image of the unrestored knight-at-arms appeared in *Winkles's Architectural and Picturesque Illustrations of the Cathedral Churches of England and Wales 1836-1842*, published just before restoration work began:¹⁴ Fig. 4 shows an engraving of an original drawing by Hablot Brown, in which FitzAlan's effigy can be clearly made out lying against the north wall. The statue's right arm is missing and its head is pressed up against a pillar. Another pillar rises at its feet, forming a physical barrier that separates FitzAlan's effigy from his wife's own.

In 1843, some 24 years after Keats's visit, Victorian sculptor and archaeologist Edward Richardson began an extensive programme of renovation. Richardson was a divisive figure, whose restoration in 1842 of the monumental effigies of the knights templar in the Temple Church, London, had caused heated controversy.¹⁵ On the one hand, the *Antiquarian Journal* hailed the 'indefatigable restorer of Monumental Effigies'; the *Gentleman's Magazine* lauded Richardson's 'intelligence and reverential accuracy'; and the *Herald and Genealogist* praised his 'careful' restoration.¹⁶ Others, however, thought the work heavy handed and insensitive, bordering on vandalism, since Richardson's preference was to plane down the surface of his statues, removing any paint, dirt, whitewash, signs of decay or patina to restore them to a 'pristine condition'.¹⁷ In his guide to the county's antiquarian heritage, *Sussex* (1894), Augustus J. C. Hare dubbed the restorer a 'charlatan sculptor' who had ruined the Temple Church effigies.¹⁸ Hare took a similarly dim view of Richardson's sterilising work on the FitzAlans, declaring that the 'imposter' had 'utterly ruined' the tomb (p. 180), along with other similarly sanitised monuments in Chichester cathedral, by 'paring them down to a uniform dulness' (p. 177).

Perhaps Richardson's most important intervention, certainly in terms of impact on literary history, was his decision to fashion a new arm for the Earl, allowing the re-conjoined FitzAlans to hold hands once again. The stone for the knight's arm, along with the other missing pieces, was taken from the table part of the tomb in order to ensure that the restored portions were moulded from the original stone (Crocker, p. 15). Richardson also moved the tomb to a more prominent position, twelve feet south of the north aisle wall, where it remains today. For Larkin, then, who saw the FitzAlans' tomb after Richardson's restoration, the effigies represented the 'tender shock' of enduring devotion, embodying a love capable of surviving mortality and the ravages of time (at any rate, Larkin's poem holds out the possibility of such a redemptive reading). We want to suggest that a century and a half before the FitzAlans' effigies moved Larkin to an uncharacteristically apparently optimistic view of love, they had already inspired an even more famous poem, though one whose outlook was more obviously and distinctly jaundiced. In 1819, the not-yet reunited Arundels, we believe, prompted Keats to a more pessimistic vision of separation, isolation and insulation. The disarticulated tomb may also have activated a particular set of anxieties around Keats's budding relationship with Fanny Brawne, which due to illness and financial difficulties would steadily petrify as it moved into the spring.

To finish this section with a sidelight on the imaginative power of the Arundels' tomb, the effigies also inspired a third poetic response in the shape of a sonnet by Chichester poet Charles Crocker, friend of Robert Southey and sexton of the cathedral. Crocker's paeon to Richardson's 'renovating hand' appeared in the *Antiquarian and Architectural Yearbook* for 1845:¹⁹

Sonnet

On the Restoration of the Effigies of the Earl and

Countess of Arundel, in Chichester Cathedral

Thanks, Richardson, whose renovating hand,
Guided by talent, skill, and taste refined,
Hath given to the eye of cultured mind
This relic of a bye-gone age, to stand
In all its pristine beauty; and command
Our reverence for the Piety, combined
With Art, whereby the gifted of our kind
Have gloriously adorned this happy land.
And faithful hearts rejoice to see the day,
When, strong in truth, and warmed with holy zeal,
The Church puts on magnificent array,
And bids her sons a kindred spirit feel: –
Her sons obey her voice – and far and near
Memorials of their careful toil appear.

Charles Crocker

Chichester, Oct. 8, 1844

2. Bedhampton

On Saturday, 23 January, five days after arriving in Chichester, Keats and Charles Brown walked thirteen miles to Bedhampton to stay at Lower Mill with John and Letitia Snook, prosperous millers and corn merchants.²⁰ Keats was unwell throughout his ten-day sojourn in the village, suffering from an intermittent sore throat, an early symptom of the disease that was to kill him. A working mill house would have been the very worst place for someone with a

bronchial-pulmonary condition like Keats. In their respective novels set in mills, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *The Trumpet Major* (1880), George Eliot and Thomas Hardy both remark on the fact that the air in these places was full of motes of dust and husks (both writers conducted their research in situ). This feature of mill life resulted in many lung problems, including ‘farmers’ lung’, especially in damp winters, when spores were likely to grow on stores of flour and grain and the inevitable residues of the milling process. It perhaps helps to explain why Keats, who was already showing early symptoms of tuberculosis, fell ill for the entirety of his stay with the Snooks.²¹ At any rate, in January and early February, for Keats the question of what could ail one – physically and emotionally – was pressing.

Despite illness, Keats was productive at Lower Mill, finishing a complete draft of *The Eve of St Agnes*, including (significantly, we believe) the scene where Porphyro sings an ‘ancient ditty ... in Provence called, “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”’ into the sleeping Madeline’s ear.²² In a letter to his sister Fanny written shortly after returning to London, Keats remarked that owing to poor health he ‘did not go out of the Garden Gate but twice or thrice during the fortnight I was there’ (*LJK*, II, 38). We think that what he found, both at Lower Mill – located at the bottom of Bedhampton Hill – and, on those two or three occasions when he ventured beyond the garden gate, in the village itself, was poetically catalysing. Indeed, Bedhampton and Lower Mill seem to have provided key features and locations that, along with the Chichester effigies, would cohere in Keats’s famously mysterious ballad: the ‘squirrel’s granary’; the meads where the knight meets the belle dame; and the lake on the cold hill’s side, where the knight awakes.

The ballad’s references to the ‘harvest’ being ‘done’ and to the ‘squirrel’s granary’ being full are often interpreted as poetic shorthand for an autumnal timeframe. However, they make just as much sense in terms of what Keats would actually have seen while lodging at Lower Mill

in January and February – namely, produce from the *previous* year’s harvest stored in a miller’s granary prior to processing. Just beyond the Snooks’s garden gate, the immediate landscape was dominated by lakes: by the mill pond itself and by Mill Lake, and just up from the well-kept mill, by sedgier lakescapes. This sedge would have withered back from the water’s edge in winter, when Keats visited. Just to the left of Lower Mill, immediately behind the mill buildings, was the village’s Water Mead, so named because it was liable to flooding. A short walk from Lower Mill up into the centre of the village would have brought Keats to Bidbury Mead, the largest single meadow in Bedhampton, mainly used for its crop of hay – today a local authority recreation ground. To the north west, and visible from Lower Mill, lies Bedhampton Hill, completing the topographies that feature that in ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’.

Similar to Chichester cathedral’s gothic effigies, all four physical locations – hill, meads, lake and granary – would seem to have undergone imaginative transformation. The ballad’s geography, that is, need no longer be considered as ‘cloudy’, mythic, unplaceable space, but rather recognised for the first time as a figurative transposition of actual topographies known to Keats, in keeping with Keats’s wider poetic practice.²³ The birds who do not sing in the ballad may also have their origins in a real absence. In summer, the damp, wetland habitat around Lower Mill’s lakes made a perfect home for sedge warblers. These chattering passerines would have been wintering in sub-Saharan Africa during Keats’s ten-day sojourn in the village, returning to Hampshire in early May, as the *Monthly Magazine* records in 1810.²⁴ Perhaps we can now accurately imagine the sound of one of poetry’s most famous silences.

On Valentine’s Day, 14 February 1819, Keats returned to Hampstead. Writing to his brother and sister-in-law, he reported that he hadn’t been in ‘great cue for writing lately’ (*LJK*, II, 62).

It's a slightly odd pronouncement, given that he managed to draft *The Eve of St Agnes* at Bedhampton. It is certainly the case, though, that the first draft of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' did not appear until almost ten weeks later on 21 April, in Hampstead, cued up by Keats's jotted down impressions of Barker's Arctic panorama. The latency between initial inspiration in Chichester and Bedhampton and actual poetic execution in Hampstead perhaps accounts for an apparent oddness about the seasons in the ballad. The opening and closing stanzas invoke a wintry lakescape with withered sedge, migrated birds and the harvest done – Bedhampton in January and February. The middle section, where the knight rides with the belle dame to her elfin grot, is spring-like – Hampstead Heath's huddled copses in April. The poem's salient territories, its imaginative topographies, are split between two seasons, two locations, reflecting the original places of inspiration on the one hand, and place and time of actual composition on the other.

3.

Stillinger calls biographical readings of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' 'old school', inherently limited, often suggestive but unverifiable. To our minds, though, the FitzAlans' dislocated rapport, lensed through Keats's relationship with Fanny Brawne – or should that be the other way round? – provided significant prompts and provocations that help to account materially for the ballad's own separation anxieties and haggard vision. The Fitzalans were originally laid to rest at Lewes Priory, then languished outside, where they were exposed to the elements, before being conveyed into Chichester cathedral. If our suppositions are correct, Keats moved them once again, transposing them from the cathedral's north aisle wall into imaginative versions of Bedhampton's sedgy topography and Hampstead's grassy heathland. He briefly enacts a reunification of his own in the 'elfin grot', before subjecting them to another traumatic parting. By the end of April 1819, the FitzAlans' drama of separation would help Keats to

understand his own predicament, his own allegory vis-à-vis his relationship with Fanny Brawne, deadlocked due to illness and financial worries. Where a pillar separated the Arundels along a cathedral wall in Chichester built from stone brought from Quarr on the Isle of Wight (one of Keats's favourite haunts), a party wall of ash and clay 'place bricks' separated the poet from his fiancé at Wentworth Place in Hampstead.²⁵

Poems can rarely be chased back to a single source of inspiration. The poetic imagination simply does not work in that way. Nevertheless, Chichester cathedral's gothic lovers, usually associated with Larkin's 'An Arundel Tomb', together with Lower Mill at Bedhampton and the surrounding village geography, deserve to be considered as part of the mix of passions, locations and circumstances that produced a lover's complaint that has haunted readers for generations. Larkin's transcendent final line, 'all that is left of us is love', is well-earned, by poetic lineage.²⁶

Figs

Fig 1: Fourteenth-century effigies of Richard FitzAlan and Eleanor of Lancaster in Chichester Cathedral.

Fig 1: Sketch of a lady seated on a knight's tomb – which also has a missing arm – in Chichester Cathedral, made by John Flaxman in 1826. ©Trustees of the British Museum

Fig 2: Edward Vernon Utterson: sketch of the Tomb of the Earl of Arundel in Chichester Cathedral, with effigy as a knight, head to left, his right arm missing. Made in 1817. © Trustees of the British Museum

Fig 3: Engraving of an original drawing by Hablot Brown in *Winkles's Architectural and Picturesque Illustrations of the Cathedral Churches of England and Wales 1836-1842*, 3 vols (1836-1842), II, plate between pages 36 and 37.

¹ Jack Stillinger, *Romantic Complexity* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 70.

In addition to the poem's heuristic challenges, the letter draft, subsequent transcripts made by Keats's friends, and the variant published in Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* also present textual and reception conundrums. See Theresa M. Kelley, 'Poetics and the Politics of Reception: Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"', in *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*, ed. Karl Kroeber and Gene W. Ruoff (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

² In the *Indicator* variant, Hunt provided almost two pages of prefatory comments, bringing Alain Chartier's fourteenth-century crossed-rhyme lyric on courtly love of the same name within the orbit of Keats's ballad, asserting that Chartier's title had 'suggested the verses'.² However, the style and tonality of Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' owe at least as much to the confections of the roundelay from Chatterton's *Aella* and the woebegone wights of Walter Scott's verse novel *Marmion* (1808) as they do to Chartier, and the ballad's text-world bears little comparison to that created by the French poet

³ The adverb is Jonathan Ellis's; see *Letter Writing Among Poets from William Wordsworth to Elizabeth Bishop* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2015), p. 41.

⁴ It is not quite true that the ballad appears without preamble. The draft is time-stamped ‘– Wednesday Evening –’ (*LJK*, II, 95), and transcribed, or composed in real time, immediately after Keats’s thumb sketch of Henry Aston Barker’s Arctic panorama of Franklin’s ships anchored off Spitzbergen, visited earlier that day in the Leicester Square Rotunda. Keats reports being ‘very much pleased’ with ‘the icebergs, the Mountains, the Bears the Walrus ... and a large whale floating back above the water’. It was ‘impossible to describe the place’, he declares, immediately prior to writing out the ballad (*LJK*, II, 95). An argument could be made about the applicability to the ballad’s own effects of Barker’s self-enclosing, transporting, highly immersive illusion. Certainly, there’s something intriguing about the way in which the journal jumps from a description of frozen vistas and northern seas to the withered wastes of lakes and meads, as Keats’s ballad creates a self-contained, panoramic illusion of its own.

⁵ See *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I, 147, II, 15. Hereafter, *LJK*. Keats was staying with his friend Charles Dilke’s parents.

⁶ See Andrew Motion, *Keats* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), p. 344.

⁷ Since the Arundels’ bodies are buried elsewhere, the ‘tomb’ is technically a memorial.

⁸ Frederic Shoberl, et al, *The Beauties of England and Wales; Or, Delineations Topographical, Historical and Descriptive of Each County*, 18 vols (J. Harris, 1801-1815), 14 (1813), 44.

⁹ James Dallaway, *A History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex* (Arundel: T. Bensley, 1815), I, 134.

¹⁰ Charles Crocker, *A Visit to Chichester Cathedral*, 2nd edn (Chichester: William Hayley Mason, 1849), p. 14.

¹¹ Nicholas Roe suggests a stoney origin for other characters in ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’, proposing that the ballad’s ‘pale kings and princes’ (stanza 10) were inspired by the sight of

carved stone effigies of Scottish kings and warriors on the island of Iona, which Keats visited, again Charles Brown, in the summer of 1818. See *John Keats: A New Life*, (Yale University Press, 2012) p. 256). Keats described the scene for Tom: '[M]any tombs of Highland Chieftains – their effigies in armour face upwards – black and moss covered' (*LJK*, I, 348). Keats often drew inspiration from stone carvings. We might think of the leaf-fringed legends on various urns and vases that contributed to the imagery in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', as well as that ode's marble 'heifer lowing at the skies', whose moo-ing cameo owes its existence to a sculpted cow on the Parthenon frieze seen in the British museum. Visual prompts for the Titans in *The Fall of Hyperion* were likely provided by Cibber's stone statues depicting manic and melancholic madness adorning the gateposts of Bethlem Hospital, which Keats knew as a boy growing up in Moorfields

¹² *The Antiquarian and Architectural Yearbook* (London: T. C. Newby, 1845), p. 284.

¹³ The first version of this phrase in the letter draft reads 'death's fading rose', which is even more suggestive in the context of a sepulchral monument.

¹⁴ *Winkles's Architectural and Picturesque Illustrations of the Cathedral Churches of England and Wales 1836-1842*, 3 vols (1836-1842), II, between page 36 and 37.

¹⁵ Richardson describes the work in *The Monumental Effigies of the Temple Church: With an Account of Their Restoration, in the Year 1842* (London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1843), p. 18.

¹⁶ *Antiquarian Journal*, 6 (1849), p. 99; *Gentleman's Magazine*, n.s. 38 (1852), p. 66; *Herald and Genealogist*, 3 (1866), p. 102.

¹⁷ *The Antiquarian and Architectural Yearbook*, p. 284. Also see *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, ed. Robin Griffith-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), p. 105.

¹⁸ Augustus Hare, *Sussex* (London: G. Allen, 1896), pp. 177.

¹⁹ *The Antiquarian and Architectural Yearbook*, p. 287. Crocker has faded from view, but is known in Romantic Studies as a ‘labourer poet’. He had been a shoe-maker, but turned to poetry after receiving inspiration from hearing the radical John Thelwall speak. Crocker’s *Kingley Vale and Other Poems* (1830) found a popularity that allowed him to abandon his trade. Southey is said to have praised Crocker’s sonnet ‘The British Oak’ as ‘one of the finest, if not the finest’ in the English language; see the obituary of Crocker published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 12 n.s. (1862), p. 782. Also see Sarah Zimmerman, *The Romantic Literary Lecture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 89.

²⁰ After the severe weather of December 1818, it was ‘generally very mild’ in the first two months of 1819; see *The Family Magazine; or, Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge*, 8 (1840), p. 388). It is likely that Keats and Brown had an enjoyable enough trek. Their route took them across the county line of West Sussex and Hampshire, through the village of Bosham and the hamlet of Old Fishbourne, through the tything of Nutbourne with its ancient corn mill, and through the more substantial towns of Emsworth and Havant. They arrived in Bedhampton, according to Brown, at three in the afternoon.

²¹ We are grateful to Jayne Archer for the observations contained in this paragraph.

²² Keats knew the title of Chartier’s 1424 ‘ancient ditty’ from Richard Roos’s fifteenth-century translation, then wrongly ascribed to Chaucer, in his friend Charles Cowden Clarke’s copy of *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. John Bell, 14 vols (Apollo Press: Edinburgh, 1782). For a recent appraisal of Keats and Chartier, see Marcus Tomalin, *The French Language and British Literature, 1756-1830* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 46-47.

²³ Objects and characters in Keats’s work often take their cues from physical objects. Think of the ‘heifer lowing at the skies’ in ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, whose moo-ing cameo owes its

existence to a sculpted cow on the Parthenon frieze that Keats saw in the British museum. Similarly, the Titans in *The Fall of Hyperion* were likely to have been inspired in part by the grimacing statues depicting manic and melancholic madness that adorned the gateposts of Bethlem Hospital – the Moorfields coaching inn where Keats grew up looked out onto the hospital for ‘lunatics’. We suggest that the knight-at-arms and belle dame may have a similarly stoney origin. Keats also drew on locations in and around various towns and cities that he visited as templates for imaginative vistas in poems such as *Endymion* and *Isabella*. For the relation between physical and figurative place in Keats’s poetry, see Richard Marggraf Turley (ed.), *Keats’s Places* (2018).

²⁴ ‘May 6th – the sedge-warbler (*motacilla salicaria*) is arrived’. See ‘Naturalist’s Monthly Report’, *Monthly Magazine*, 29 (1810), p. 619.

²⁵ This tantalising proximity is depicted powerfully in Jane Campion’s 2009 film, *Bright Stars*, in which Keats and Fanny are depicted placing their hands in the same spot either side of the party wall.

²⁶ Our thanks to Jayne Archer for this insight.