

**11 October, 1819**

College Street -

My sweet Girl,

I am living to day in yesterday: I was in a complete fa[s]cination all day. I feel myself at your mercy. Write me ever so few lines and tell you [*for me*] you will never for ever be less kind to me than yesterday - You dazzled me - There is nothing in the world so bright and delicate - When Brown came out with that seemingly true story again[ s]t me last night, I felt it would be death to me if you had ever believed it - though against anyone else I could muster up my obstinacy - Before I knew Brown could disprove it I was for the moment miserable. When shall we pass a day alone? I have had a thousand kisses, for which with my whole soul I thank love - but if you should deny me the thousand and first - 't would put me to the proof how great a misery I could live through. If you should ever carry your threat yesterday into execution - believe me 't is not my pride, my vanity or any petty passion would torment me - really 't would hurt my - heart - I could not bear it - I have seen Mrs Dilke this morning - she says she will come with me any fine day-

Ever yours

John Keats

Ah hertè mine!

**13 October 1819**

25 College Street

My dearest Girl,

This moment I have set myself to copy some verses out fair. I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in dismissing you from my Mind for ever so short a time. Upon my Soul I can think of nothing else - The time is passed when I had power to advise and warn you again[s]t the unpromising morning of my Life - My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you - I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again - my Life seems to stop there - I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving - I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? I have no limit now to my love - You note came in just here - I cannot be happier away from you - 'T is richer than an Argosy of Pearles. Do not threat me even in jest. I have been astonished that Men could die Martyrs for religion - I have shudder'd at it - I shudder no more - I could be martyr'd for my Religion - Love is my religion - I could die for that - I could die for you. My Creed is Love and you are its only tenet - You have ravish'd me away by a Power I cannot resist: and yet I could resist till I saw you; and even since I have seen you I have endeavoured often "to reason against the reasons of my Love." I can do that no more - the pain would be too great - My Love is selfish - I cannot breathe without you.

Yours for ever

John Keats

**19 October 1819**

Great Smith Street  
Tuesday Morn -

My sweet Fanny,

On awakening from my three days dream ("I cry to dream again") I find one and another astonish'd at my idleness and thoughtlessness - I was miserable last night - the morning is always restorative - I must be busy, or try to be so. I have several things to speak to you of tomorrow morning. Mrs Dilke I should think will tell you that I purpose living at Hampstead - I must impose chains upon myself - I shall be able to do nothing - I sho[ u ]ld like to cast the die for Love or death - I have no Patience with any thing else - if you ever intend to be cruel to me as you say in jest now but perhaps may sometimes be in earnest be so now and I will - my mind is in a tremble, I cannot tell what I am writing.

Ever my love yours

John Keats

**10 (?) February 1820**

My dearest Girl -

If illness makes such an agreeable variety in the manner of you eyes I should wish you sometimes to be ill. I wish I had read your note before you went last night that I might have assured you how far I was from suspecting any coldness: You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks so plainly to you. You must believe you shall, you will that I can do nothing say nothing think nothing of you but what has its spring in the Love which has so long been my pleasure and torment. On the night I was taken ill when so violent a rush of blood came to my Lungs that I felt nearly suffocated - I assure you I felt it possible I might not survive and at that moment though[ t ] of nothing but you - When I said to Brown 'this is unfortunate' I thought of you - 'T is true that since the first two or three days other subjects have entered my head - I shall be looking forward to Health and the Spring and a regular routine of our old Walks. Your affectionate

J.K -

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**February (?) 1820**

My sweet love, I shall wait patiently till tomorrow before I see you, and in the mean time, if there is any need of such a thing, assure you by your Beauty, that whenever I have at any .time written on a certain unpleasant subject, .it has been with your welfare impress'd upon my mind. How hurt I should have been had you ever acceded to what is, notwithstanding, very reasonable! How much the more do I love you from the general result! In my present state of Health I feel too much separated from you and could almost speak to you in the words of Lorenzo's Ghost to Isabella

Your Beauty grows upon me and I feel  
A greater love through all my essence steal.

My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of you being a little inclined to the Cressid; but that suspicion I dismiss utterly and remain happy in the surety of your Love, which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight. Send me the words "Good night" to put under my pillow.

Dearest Fanny,  
Your affectionate  
J.K.

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February (?) 1820

My dearest Girl,

According to all appearances I am to be separated from you as much as possible. How I shall be able to bear it, or whether it will not be worse than your presence now and then, I cannot tell. I must be patient, and in the meantime you must think of it as little as possible. Let me not longer detain you from going to Town - there may be no end to this imprisoning of you. Perhaps you had better not come before tomorrow evening: send me however without fail a good night You know our situation - what hope is there if I should be recovered ever so soon - my very health with [*for will*] not suffer me to make any great exertion. I am recommended not even to read poetry much less write it. I wish I had even a little hope. I cannot say forget me - but I would mention that there are impossibilities in the world. No more of this - I am not strong enough to be weaned - take no notice of it in your good night. Happen what may I shall ever be my dearest Love

Your affectionate  
J-K-

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February (?) 1820

My dearest Girl, how could it ever have been my wish to forget you? how could I have said such a thing? The utmost stretch my mind has been capable of was to endeavour to forget you for your own sake seeing what a change [*for chance*] there was of my remaining in a precarious state of health. I would have borne it as I would bear death if fate was in that humour: but I should as soon think of choosing to die as to part from you. Believe too my Love that our friends think and speak for the best, and if their best is not our best it is not their fault, When I am better I will speak with you at large on these subjects, if there is any occasion - I think there is none. I am rather nervous to day perhaps from being a little recovered and suffering my mind to take little excursions beyond the doors and windows. I take it for a good sign, but as it must not be encouraged you had better delay seeing me till tomorrow. Do not take the trouble of writing much: merely send me my goodnight. Remember me to your Mother and Margaret. Your affectionate

J-K-

February (?) 1820

My dearest Fanny,

I read your note in bed last night, and that might be the reason of my sleeping so much better. I th[i]nk Mr Brown is right in supposing you may stop too long with me, so very nervous as I am. Send me every evening a written Good night. If you come for a few minutes about six it may be the best time. Should you ever fancy me too low-spirited I must warn you to ascribe [*for* ascribe] it to the medicine I am at present taking which is of a nerve-shaking nature - I shall impute any depression I may experience to this cause. I have been writing with a vile old pen the whole week, which is excessively ungallant. The fault is in the Quill: I have mended it and still it is very much inclin'd to make blind es. However these last lines are in a much better style of penmanship tho' [*for* though] a little disfigured by the smear of black currant jelly; which has made a little mark on one of the Pages of Brown's Ben Jonson, the very best book he has. I have lick'd it but it remains very purplue [*for* purple]. I did not know whether to say purple or blue, so in the mixture of the thought wrote purplue which may be an excellent name for a colour made up of those two, and would suit well to start next spring. Be very careful of open doors and windows and going without your duffle grey God bless you Love ! -

J. Keats-

P.S. I am sitting in the back room - Remember me to your Mother -

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February (?) 1820

My dear Fanny,

Do not let your mother suppose that you hurt me by writing at night. For some reason or other your last night's note was not so treasureable as former ones. I would fain that you call me Love still. To see you happy and in high spirits is a great consolation to me - still let me believe that you are not half so happy as my restoration would make you. I am nervous, I own, and may think myself worse than I really am; if so you must indulge me, and pamper with that sort of tenderness you have: manifested towards me in different Letters. My sweet creature when I look back upon the pains and torments I have suffer'd for you from the day I left you to go to the Isle of Wight; the ecstasies in which I have pass'd some days and the miseries in their turn, I wonder the more at the Beauty which has kept up the spell so fervently. When I send this round I shall be in the front parlour watching to see you show yourself for a minute in the garden. How illness stands as a barrier betwixt me and you! Even if I was well - I must make myself as good a Philosopher as possible. Now I have had opportunities of passing nights anxious and awake I have found other thoughts intrude upon me. "If I should die," said I to myself, "I have left no immortal work behind me - nothing to make my friends proud of my memory - but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remember'd." Thoughts like these came very feebly whilst I was in health and every pulse beat for you - now you divide with this (may I say it?) "last infirmity of noble minds" all my reflection.

God bless you, Love.

J. Keats.

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24 (?) February 1820

My dearest Girl,

Indeed I will not deceive you with respect to my Health. This is the fact as far as I know. I have been confined three weeks and am not yet well - this proves that there is something wrong about me which my constitution will either conquer or give way to - Let us hope for the best. Do you hear the Thrush singing over the field? I think it is a sign of mild weather - so much the better for me. Like all Sinners now I am ill I philosophise aye out of my attachment to every thing, Trees, flowers, Thrushes Sp[ r]ing, Summer, Claret &c &c aye [e ]very thing but you - - my Sister would be glad of my company a little longer. That Thrush - is a fine fellow I hope he was fortunate in his choice this year - Do not send any more of my Books home. I have a great pleasure in the thought of you looking on them.

Ever yours  
my sweet Fanny  
J-K-

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27 (?) February 1820

My dearest Fanny,

I had a better night last night than I have had since my attack, and this morning I am the same as when you saw me. I have been turning over two volumes of Letters written between Ro[u]sseau and two Ladies in the perplexed strain of mingled finesse and sentiment in which the Ladies and gentlemen of those days were so clever, and which is still prevalent among Ladies of this Country who live in a state of reasoning romance. The Likeness however only extends to the mannerism not to the dexterity. What would Rousseau have said at seeing our little correspondence! What would his Ladies have said! I don't care much - I would sooner have Shakspeare's opinion about the matter. The common gossiping of washerwomen must be less disgusting than the continual and eternal fence and attack of Rousseau and these sublime Petticoats. One calls herself Clara and her friend Julia two of Ro[u]sseau's Heroines - they all the same time christen poor Jean Jacques St Preux - who is the pure cavalier of his famous novel. Thank God I am born in England with our own great Men before my eyes - Thank god that you are fair and can love me without being Letter-written and sentimentaliz'd into it - Mr Barry Cornwall has sent me another Book, his first, with a polite note - I must do what I can to make him sensible of the esteem I have for his kindness. If this north east would take a turn it would be so much the better for me. Good bye, my love, my dear love, my beauty-

love me for ever-  
J-K-

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29 (?) February 1820

My dear Fanny,

I think you had better not make any long stay with me when Mr Brown is at home-wh[en]ever he goes out you may bring your work. You will have a pleasant walk to day. I shall see you pass. I shall follow you with my eyes over the Heath. Will you come towards evening instead of before dinner - when you are gone, 't is past - if you do not come till the evening I have something to look forward to all day. Come round to my window for a moment when you have read this. Thank your Mother, for the preserves, for me. The raspberry will be too sweet not having any acid; therefore as you are so good a girl I shall make you a present of it. Good bye

My sweet Love!

J. Keats

March (?) 1820

Sweetest Fanny,

You fear, sometimes, I do not love you so much as you wish? My dear Girl I love you ever and ever and without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I lov'd. In every way - even my jealousies have been agonies of Love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. I have vex'd you too much. But for Love! Can I help it? You are always new. The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest; the last smile the brightest; the last movement the gracefulest. When you pass'd my window .home yesterday, I was fill'd with as much admiration as if I had then seen you for the first time. You uttered a half complaint once that I only lov'd your Beauty. Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do not I see a heart naturally furnish'd with wings imprison itself with me? No ill prospect has been able .to turn your thoughts a moment from me. This perhaps should be as much a subject of sorrow as joy - but I will not talk of that. Even if you did not love me I could not help an entire devotion to you: how much more deeply then must I feel for you knowing you love me. My Mind has been the most discontented and restless one that ever was put into a body too small for it. I never felt my Mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment - upon no person but you. When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of window: you always concentrate my whole senses. The anxiety shown about our Loves in your last note is an immense pleasure to me: however you must not suffer such speculations to molest you any more: nor will I any more believe you can have the least pique against me. Brown is gone out - but here is Mrs. Wylie - when she is gone I shall be awake for you. - Remembrances to your Mother.

Your affectionate

J. Keats.

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March (?) 1820

My dear Fanny,

I am much better this morning than I was a week ago: indeed I improve a little every day. I rely upon taking a walk with you upon the first of may: in the mean time undergoing a babylonish captivity I shall not be jew enough to hang up my harp upon a willow, but rather endeavour to clear up my arrears in versifying and with returning health begin upon something new: pursuant to which resolution it will be necessary to have my or rather Tavior's manuscript, which you, if you please, will send by my Messenger either to day or tomorrow. Is Mr D with you today? You appear'd very much fatigued last night: you must look a little brighter this morning. I shall not suffer my little girl ever to be obscured like glass breath'd upon but always bright as it is her nature to. Feeding upon sham victuals and sitting by the fire will completely annul me. I have no need of an enchanted wax figure to duplicate me for I am melting in my proper person before the fire. If you meet with any thing better (worse) than common in your Magazines let me see it.

Good bye my  
sweetest Girl  
J- K-

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March (?) 1820

My dearest Fanny, I slept well last night and am no worse this morning for it. Day by day if I am not deceived I get a more unrestrain'd use of my Chest. The nearer a racer gets to the Goal the more his anxiety becomes so I lingering upon the borders of health feel my impatience increase. Perhaps on your account I have imagined my illness more serious than it is: how horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms - the difference is amazing Love - Death must come at last; Man must die, as Shallow says; but before that is my fate I feign would try what more pleasures than you have given so sweet a creature as you can give. Let me have another op[p]ortunity of years before me and I will not die without being remember'd. Take care of yourself dear that we may both be well in the Summer. I do not at all fatigue myself with writing, having merely to put a line or two here and there, a Task which would worry a stout state of the body and mind, but which just suits me as I can do no more.

Your affectionate  
J.K-

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March (?) 1820

My dearest Fanny, Though I shall see you in so short a time I cannot forbear sending you a few lines. You say I did not give you yesterday a minute account of my health. To-day I have left off the Medicine which I took to keep the pulse down and I find I can do very well without it, which is a very favourable sign, as it shows there is no inflammation remaining. You think I may be wearied at night you say: it is my best time; I am at my best about eight o'Clock. I received a Note from Mr. Proctor today. He says he cannot pay me a visit this weather as he is fearful of an

inflammation in the Chest. What a horrid climate this is? or what careless inhabitants it has? You are one of them. My dear girl do not make a joke of it: do not expose yourself to the cold. There's the Thrush again - I can't afford it - he'll run me up a pretty Bill for Music-besides he ought to know I deal at Clementi's. How can you bear so long an imprisonment at Hampstead? I shall always remember it with all the gusto that a monopolizing carle should. I could build an Altar to you for it.

Your affectionate  
J.K.

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March (?) 1820

My dearest Girl,

In consequence of our company I suppose I shall not see you before tomorrow. I am much better to day - indeed all I have to complain of is want of strength and a little tightness in the Chest. I envied Sam's walk with you to day; which I will not do again as I may get very tired of envying. I imagine you now sitting in your new black dress which I like so much and if I were a little less selfish and more enthusiastic I should run round and surprise you with a knock at the door. I fear I am too prudent for a dying kind of Lover. Yet, there is a great difference between going off in warm blood like Romeo, and making one's exit like a frog in a frost - I had nothing particular to say to day, but not intending that there shall be any interruption to our correspondence (which at some future time I propose offering to Murray) I write something I God bless you my sweet Love Illness is a long lane, but I see you at the end of it, and shall mend my pace as well as possible

J-K

May (?)1820

Tuesday Morn -

My dearest Girl,

I wrote a Letter for you yesterday expecting to have seen your mother. I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavour as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you. You could not step or move an eyelid but it would shoot to my heart - I am greedy of you - Do not think of any thing but me. Do not live as if I was not existing - Do not forget me - But have I any right to say you forget me? Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? You would forgive me for wishing it, if you knew the extreme passion I have that you should love me - and for you to love me as I do you, you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence. Yesterday and this morning I have been haunted with .a sweet vision - I have seen you the whole time in your shepherdess dress. How my senses have ached at it! How my heart has been devoted to it! How my eyes have been full of Tears at it! I[n]deed I think a real Love is enough to occupy the widest heart - Your



going to town alone, when I heard of it was a shock to me - yet I expected it - *promise me you will not for some time, till I get better*. Promise me this and fill the paper full of the most endearing names [for names]. If you cannot do so with good will, do my Love tell me - say what you think - confess if your heart is too much fasten'd on the world. Perhaps then I may see you at a greater distance, I may not be able to appropriate you so closely to myself. Were you to lose a favorite bird from the cage, how would your eyes ache after it as long as it was in sight; when out of sight you would recover a little. Perhaps if you would, if so it is, confess to me how many things are necessary to you besides me, I might be happier, by being less tantaliz'd. Well may you exclaim, how selfish, how cruel, not to let me enjoy my youth! to wish me to be unhappy! You must be so if you love me - upon my Soul I can be contented with nothing else. If you could really what is call'd enjoy yourself at a Party - if you can smile in peoples faces, and wish them to admire you now, you never have nor ever will love me - I see life in nothing but the certainty of your Love - convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinc'd I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do - I cannot brook the wolfsbane of fashion and foppery and tattle. You must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you. I do not pretend to say I have more feeling than my fellows - but I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create - My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit to me if you are not all mine when I am well. For god's sake save me - or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you. Again God bless you

J.K.

No-my sweet Fanny-I am wrong. I do not want you to be unhappy - and yet I do, I must while there is so sweet a Beauty - my loveliest my darling! Good bye! I kiss you - O the torments!

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May (?) 1820

Wednesday Mornng.

My dearest Girl,

I have been a walk this morning with a book in my hand, but as usual I have been occupied with nothing but you: I wish I could say in an agreeable manner. I am tormented day and night. They talk of my going to Italy. 'Tis certain I shall never recover if I am to be so long separate from you: yet with all this devotion to you I cannot persuade myself into any confidence of you. Past experience connected with the fact of my long separation from you gives me agonies which are scarcely to be talked of. When your mother comes I shall be very sudden and expert in asking her whether you have been to Mrs. Dilke's, for she might say no to make me easy. I am literally worn to death, which seems my only recourse. I cannot forget what has pass'd. What? nothing : with a man of the world, but to me deathful. I will get rid of this as much as possible. When you were in the habit of flirting with Brown you would have left off, could your own heart have felt one half of one pang mine did. Brown is a good sort of Man - he did not know he was doing me to death by inches. I feel the effect of everyone of those hours in my side now; and for that cause, though he has done me many services, though I know his love and friendship for me, though at this moment I should be without pence were it not for his assistance, I will never see or speak .to him until we are both old men, if we are to be. I *will* resent my .heart having been made a football. You will call this madness. I have heard you say that it was not unpleasant to wait a few years -

you have amusements - your mind is away - you have not brooded over one idea as I have, and how should you? You are to me an object intensely desireable - the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you - no - you can wait - you have a thousand activities - you can be happy without me. Any party, any thing to fill up the day has been enough. How have you pass'd this month? Who have you smil'd with? All this may seem savage in me. You do not feel as I do--you do not know what it is to love - one day you may - your time is not come. Ask yourself how many unhappy hours Keats has caused you in Loneliness. For myself I have been a Martyr the whole time, and for this reason I speak; the confession is forc'd from me by the torture. I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in: Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. You may have altered - if you have not - if you still behave in dancing rooms and other societies as I have seen you - I do not want to live - if you have done so I wish this coming night may be my last. I cannot live without you, and not only you but *chaste you; virtuous you*. The Sun rises and sets, the day passes, and you follow the bent of your inclination to a certain extent - you have no conception of the quantity of miserable feeling that passes through me in a day. Be serious ! Love is not a plaything - and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience. I would sooner die for want of you than -

Yours for ever  
J. Keats.