QUESTIONINGS.

Hath this world, without me wrought,
Other substance than my thought?
Lives it by my sense alone,
Or by essence of its own?
Will its life, with mine began,
Cease to be when that is done,
Or another consciousness
With the self-same forms impress?

Both you fireball, poised in air,
Hang by my permission there?
Are the clouds that wander by,
But the offspring of mine eye,
Borne with every glance I cast,
Perishing when that is past?
And those thousand, thousand eyes,
Scattered through the twinkling skies,
Do they draw their life from mine,
Or, of their own beauty shine?

Now I close my eyes, my ears,
And creation disappears;
Yet if I but speak the word,
All creation is restored.
Or—more wonderful—within,
New creations do begin;
Hues more bright and forms more rare.
Than reality doth wear,
Flash across my inward sense.
Born of the mind’s omnipotence.

Soul! that all informest, say!
Shall these glories pass away?
Will those planets cease to blaze,
When these eyes no longer gaze?
And the life of things be o’er,
When these pulses beat no more?

Art thou not thyself, perchance,
But the universe in trance?
A reflection inly flung
By that world thou fanciest sprung
From thyself;—thyself a dream;
Of the world’s thinking thou the theme.

Be it thus, or be thy birth
From a source above the earth.

ENDYMION.

Ye, it is the queenly Moon,
Gilding through her starred saloon,
Silvering all she looks upon;
I am her Endymion.

But by night she comes to me;
O, I love her wondrously!

She, into my window looks,
As I sit with lamp and books,
When the night-breeze stirs the leaves;
And the dew drops down the eaves;
O'er my shoulder peepeth she;
O, she loves me royally!

Then she tells me many a tale,
With her smile so sheeny pale,
Till my soul is overcast
With such dream-light of the past,
That I saddened needs must be,
And I love her mournfully.

Or I gaze up in her eyes,
Raying light through winter skies;
Far away she saileth on;
I am no Endymion,
For she is too high for me,
And I love her hopelessly.

Now she comes to me again,
And we mingle joy and pain;
Now she walks no more afar,
Regal with train-bearing star,
But she bends and kisses me,
O we love now mutually!

Source: The Dial (January 1841) pp. 291