

How to Make a Soul: The Wisdom of John Keats

Eric G. Wilson

Northwestern University Press (Nov 30, 2015)

Softcover \$21.95 (176pp)

978-0-8101-3193-4

A mesmerizing account of the life of John Keats set against the background of spiritual pursuits.

Part literary criticism and part memoir, this empathetic analysis of renowned poet John Keats probes the hidden nature of spirituality. *How to Make a Soul*, by Eric G. Wilson, examines the life and verse of the sensitive writer who died of tuberculosis at age twenty-five, while it simultaneously reveals the author's own struggle with depression during a particularly difficult period.

Keats believed the human soul is created. It is on this premise that Wilson builds his scholarly evaluation. The book also serves as a biographical record, incorporating events that impacted Keats with the greatest intensity, crucial points that altered the course of his existence. Integrated are Wilson's reactions as he traveled to key places central to the life of youthful, yet morbidly ill, Keats, a philosophical man with a profound gift for fashioning words. Apparently unaware of the mark he would leave on the world, Keats lived his dramatically shortened days with a fiery desire to find beauty in those that remained.

Annotated and indexed, Wilson's educational undertaking successfully bridges the chasm between college classroom and general readership, making this mesmerizing title appropriate for both worlds. Discussion of his own problems are kept to a discreet minimum while he focuses on the genius who gained maturity well beyond his years to write some of the most memorable and outstanding poems in the poetic canon. Presented as a source of knowledge and comfort, even a refuge of healing wisdom for a troubled spirit, Wilson's approach is one of respect and admiration for Keats. No dispassionate lectern-stance academic-speak here. Deeply felt, yet professionally delivered, every chapter breaks down the tumultuous career of the illustrious bard, shining a spotlight on an ode or a sonnet, emphasizing its significance to Keats and its posthumous meaning.

Wilson is an acclaimed author and English professor at Wake Forest University. *How to Make a Soul* is a touching tribute to Keats and a critical look at the art of the talented poet who made every moment in his life count.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Spring 2016)

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