

Lamia

By John Keats (1795-1821)

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine --
Unweave a rainbow, as it erstwhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.
[229-238]

The bald-headed philosopher
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
[245-248]

Keats: Newton's *Optics* "had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colors."