

## ***Los 'at the Forge' with Loge***

1.

An epic check is sometimes forged  
By an impertinent sort of person  
Like Chatterton or like Macpherson.  
Obtusely by the critics scourged

For an imaginative act  
Of a high order, they give new  
Life to a dead age. Faining's true  
Feigning discovers a strange tract

Between the Nightmare History's  
Time and Dream Time: Malvern the place,  
Rowley the monk dwell in a space  
That is so purely poetry's

That they, like Beauty, are their own  
Excuse for being. Call them spurious,  
If ye will, scholars, and wax furious  
At having had your ignorance shown,

And dismiss Rowley's or MacPherson's  
Work as a literary mockery, full  
Of trumped-up episodes apocryphal—  
*And such disreputable persons!*

*'Tis true, one was a 'marvellous boy  
Who perished in his pride', but mad.  
What nerve this Bristol orphan had  
To perpetrate this insolent ploy!*

What's forgery but plagiarism  
Of works that happen not to exist?  
Thus adding a delicious twist  
To literary vandalism.

2.

Ah, Chatterton, poor, hungry, lone  
Genius! Each line of verse he forges  
Has that peculiarly gorgeous  
Finish that stamps it as his own.



I lectured on you, marvellous 'whelp'.  
(My notes were plagiarised; my grief  
Is real.) Set drifting like a leaf  
In London, with so little help,

Prolific in satiric rhymes,  
Too proud to admit your hunger and  
Accept a meal, cursed with too grand  
A talent for such prosy times,

For livelihood in vain you cast  
About and, lonely in your garret,  
Struggled on till you could not bear it  
And turned to arsenic at last.

So it was left to Shelley, Keats,  
Wordsworth and Coleridge, too late,  
To shower on your gifts, how great!  
The honour out of which Fate cheats

Time and again the living poet.  
You, more precocious than Rimbaud,  
Your genius keep in youthful glow  
Who were not destined to outgrow it.

*'It is wonderful how the whelp has  
written such things'.—Samuel Johnson*



*Like Keats and Shelley; unlike  
Coleridge and Wordsworth.*

