converge at the scene, which is now a plaza, and is known as the Piazza del Popolo. Smollett apparently missed the show, but it was not unusual to find condemned criminals on public display in the gate, often tortured for the entertainment of the citizenry. The obelisk Smollett described was moved to the Porta del Popolo in 1589 from its previous home at the Circus Maximus. The two churches—the Santa Maria dei Miracoli and the Santa Maria di Monte Santo, were erected in the 1660s by the architect Carlo Rainaldi. In 1655, Queen Christina of Sweden, who abdicated her throne after converting to Catholicism, arrived in the Eternal City on the Via Flaminia. She stopped at the gate to find it featuring a plaque engraved in her honor by the baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini, with the words: "Felice Fausto Ingressuit," meaning "a happy and blessed arrival."

Romantic Poets in Rome

The Eternal City played an important role in the lives of the three great poets of the Romantic age: Byron, Keats, and Shelley. Indeed, Lord Byron reserved a prominent place for Rome in one of his most famous works, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, while Shelley drew on his knowledge of the city's history and its people while authoring his play, The Cenci. Certainly, Shelley's dark story of a murderous Italian family does not rank among the poet's most important works—few contemporary theatrical groups attempt to tackle the tragedy—nevertheless, the somber mood of the play can probably be attributed to the fact that Shelley wrote the tragedy shortly after the death of his young son.

As for John Keats, the poet lived in Rome for just a few months before his death—hoping that the warm Mediterranean breezes would cure his tuberculosis. He is believed to have done little or no writing while living in a home at the foot of the Spanish Steps, the Scalinata di Trinita dei Monti. Sickly, melancholy, bitter over his treatment by the British literary critics and separated from Fanny Brawne, the woman he loved, Keats died in 1821 at the age of twenty-five. It is truly sad that while living
in Rome Keats was probably too ill to write; surely, he would have been inspired by the boat-shaped La Baraccia fountain just outside his door as well as the sweeping vista of steps leading up to the Spanish embassy to the Vatican, erected in 1725 by the wealthy French diplomat Etienne Gueffier, who felt that the muddy slope on the west side of the Trinita dei Monti church was in need of a more agreeable mode of egress. Certainly, authors who saw the steps long after Keats died were impressed with the view and inspired to express their thoughts in words. Wrote H.V. Morton:

As I looked down the long sweep of steps I could see the flower sellers at the bottom putting up their umbrellas, then walking over to the strangest of fountains, La Baraccia, the work of Bernini's father, to refresh their carnations and maidenhair fern. I suppose the Spanish steps have given as much pleasure as any of Rome's outdoor monuments. There can be few strangers who have not sat there on some sunny day, gathering strength for the ascent, and they remain in the memory, with that vivid splash of floral colour at their feet, as if they were one of Rome's finest palaces. (Morton, 22)

Morton wondered what Keats would have thought of the steps. He wrote, "I cannot look at them without remembering that they were the last earthly sight upon which the eyes of the dying Keats rested as he glanced from the windows of the sienna-brown house at the foot of the Steps." (Morton, 22–23).

Keats is buried in the cypress tree-covered Protestant Cemetery, the Cimitero Protestante, near the Gate of St. Paul just inside the city's ancient wall. The cemetery is also called the English Cemetery. Just beyond the grounds of the cemetery is an Egyptian-style pyramid, about 118 feet tall, that is said to house the tomb of an ancient Roman magistrate named Cestius.

Severn proved to be a devoted friend to the poet, nursing Keats through the final months of his life. Just before he died, Keats showed bitterness toward his critics when he asked that his grave-

stone be inscribed with the words: "Here lies one whose name is writ in water." Severn intended to carry out the poet's last wish, but following Keats's death a friend, Charles Brown, interceded, and instead had the gravestone inscribed with these words: "This Grave contains all that was Mortal, of a young English poet Who, on his Death Bed, in the Bitterness of his Heart, at the Malicious Power of his Enemies, Desired these Words to be Engraven on his Tomb Stone—Here lies One Whose Name was writ on Water, Feb. 24th, 1821." (http://poetgraves.co.uk) Above the inscription is a carving of a lyre with half its strings missing. The image was designed by Severn.

SHELLEY AND THE CENCI

Percy Bysshe Shelley provided an equally heartfelt eulogy to Keats. His poem, "Adonais," is a tribute to Keats and a defense of the dead poet's work. In his preface to the poem, Shelley wrote: "John Keats died at Rome of a consumption ... and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space, among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." (Shelley, 484) In the poem, Shelly described Keats's gravesite:

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant corpses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

(Shelley, 497)
Also, Shelley would join Keats in the Protestant Cemetery in just a year's time. He was killed at sea, drowned during a storm on July 8, 1822, while sailing along the Italian coast from Livorno to Le Spezia to meet his friend, the poet Leigh Hunt. Shelley's body washed ashore ten days later at Viareggio, where Hunt and Lord Byron burned the body on the beach. The poet's heart was retrieved from the funeral pyre by a family friend, the British writer Edward John Trelawny, and given to Shelley's widow, the novelist Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Under her husband's guidance six years earlier, Mary Shelley wrote the horror classic *Frankenstein*. Mary pressed her husband's heart between the pages of a copy of "Adonais" years later, she took her husband's heart with her into her own grave in Bournemouth on the southern coast of England.

Shelley's ashes were taken to the Protestant Cemetery where they were interred not far from Keats's grave. Unlike Keats, Shelley had lived for some time in Italy before his death, drawing inspiration from the country and the city of Rome for several of his works. Born in 1792 and educated at Eton and Oxford—until he was expelled for authoring a pamphlet defending atheism—Shelley first married in 1811, taking as a wife the teenage daughter of a London coffeehouse keeper. Soon, Shelley found himself influenced by the anarchist writer William Godwin. By 1814, Shelley had grown weary of his first wife; he obtained a divorce and married Godwin's daughter Mary, who was sixteen when she eloped with the poet. The Shelleys headed for the Continent, spending time in France and Switzerland—where, on the shores of Lake Geneva Mary wrote *Frankenstein*—and, finally, Rome, where they arrived in 1818. By now, the Shelleys were traveling with Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron as well as a number of other odd and eccentric characters. For Shelley, it would prove to be a most productive time. During this period, Shelley wrote some of his most important verse, including "Ode to the West Wind" and "Ozymandias." But in 1819, the Shelleys' young son William died. grief-stricken, Percy and Mary left Rome, taking a home

in Livorno where Mary could be consoled by her friend Maria Gisborne.

Percy Shelley showed his grief through his work, writing the dark tragedy *The Cenci*. It is a story of a prominent and wealthy Roman family whose history dates back to the tenth century. One of the Cenci became Pope John X; four other members of the family were elevated to the rank of cardinal. In the late sixteenth century, though, the family was headed by Francesco Cenci, a man so evil that Pope Clement VIII banished him from Rome. It is likely that Francesco escaped much more severe punishment by providing sufficient bribe money to keep himself out of prison. In any event, under Clement's orders Francesco moved his family to Monte Porcella near the village of Rieti south of Rome. Now, well hidden in the mountainous countryside, Francesco subjected his hapless family to the totality of his wrath, beating his wife Lucrèzia as well as his sons, Giacomo and Bernardo, and raping his daughter Beatrice. By 1598, the Cenci could endure no more and decided to murder Francesco. The crime was carried out by Giacomo Cenci, who with the help of a servant robbed the old man's body over the wall of the family villa, hoping to convince the authorities that Francesco's death was an accident.

Investigators soon got to the bottom of the story and arrested the family members. Hoping to save himself, Giacomo accused the others of committing the murder. Clement VIII—seeing the opportunity to add the Cenci family fortune to the Vatican coffers—showed the conspirators no mercy, ordering the executions of all family members except Bernardo, who was considered too young to be put to death. His punishment was life imprisonment. He was also ordered to witness the executions of his stepmother, brother and sister. Indeed, even though Beatrice was regarded as an innocent victim of a cruel father, she was executed as well. She was held in the prison at Castel Sant'Angelo, which was built by the Emperor Hadrian in 135 A.D. The castle—which is also featured prominently in Puccini's opera
Tosca as the place where the heroine Tosca plunges to her death from the battlements—it just east of Vatican City, along the banks of the Tiber River. Wrote H.V. Morton, "She was executed on a September morning on a scaffold at the end of the bridge facing Sant'Angelo. As the beautiful head of Beatrice bowed to the headman's axe, romance and poetry claimed her forever, and it is as La bella Cenci that she has continued to live in the memory of Rome and the world." (Morton, 398–99)

Shelley was taken with the story of Beatrice and engrained by her beauty, having seen a portrait of the girl painted by the artist Guido Reni while she was imprisoned in Castel Sant'Angelo. Today, Reni's portrait of the doomed girl hangs in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, a national art gallery established in the palace of the Corsini family on the Palazzo Corsini along the Via della Lungara west of the Tiber River. In his preface to the play, Shelley wrote:

There is a fixed and pale composure upon her features: she seems sad and slumbered down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The modelling of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and listless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole micro there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are irresistibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world. (Shelley, 302)

The Cenci family's story did not end with the executions of Beatrice and the others. Beatrice was buried beneath the altar at the church of San Pietro in Montorio on the Via Garibaldi just below the Palazzo Corsini. The family's home and lands in Rome were confiscated. The family home, featuring a medieval arch, is still standing on the Piazza Cenci, along the Via Garibaldi near the eastern banks of the Tiber. It is in private ownership. Shelley called the Cenci home "a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture," adding that "one of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly." (Shelley, 302–03)

CITY OF BYRON'S SOUL

During much of the time the Shelles lived in Switzerland and then Italy they were accompanied by Percy's longtime friend, Lord Byron. Born George Gordon in 1788, he assumed the title of sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale at the age of ten. Alas, there was hardly a family fortune to accompany so noble a rank. His father, a man with an insatiable appetite for rakish behavior, died when Byron was three. His mother entrusted young George to the care of gloomy servants and tutors who raised him amid the stifling atmosphere of Calvinism. To escape, the boy adopted an appetite of his own for debauchery. Byron also turned to poetry and literature, creating what would come to be known as the Byronic hero: the strong yet often troubled individual making his way through the world on his own.

He left England in 1816 on the heels of a scandal and would never return. Byron joined the Shelles at Lake Geneva, then accompanied them to Italy. Although he spent most of his time in Pisa and Venice, where he maintained an open relationship with the married Teresa Guiccioli, the Eternal City would leave a deep impression on Byron—despite the fact that he is believed
to have spent a mere twenty-three days in Rome. Sitting at a marble table, Byron sipped English tea at the Caffè Greco on the Via Condotti. Mostly, his days in Rome were spent on horseback, seeing the sights as any tourist would, soaking up the culture and history. His brief tour of Rome was enough to inspire him to write extensively about the city in the fourth canto of Childe Harold, which he completed in 1818. Calling his protagonist “the wandering outlaw of his own dark mind,” (Byron, 203) the poem follows its hero on travels through Europe as he wrestles with guilt over sins of the past. In the fourth canto, the brooding and remorseful traveler arrives in Rome. As he gazes on the ruins of the Roman Empire, Harold finds strength believing that his troubled spirit may stand as a “ruin amidst ruins.” (Byron, 224)

Though the passage is done, to be sure, during his brief stay in Rome, Byron was hardly the personification of his protagonist Harold. Evidently, during his visit he stepped down from the saddle long enough to pose for a bust by the sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen. During the sitting, Byron insisted on wearing a melancholy expression. Thorwaldsen protested, knowing Byron was attempting to adopt the personality of Harold. When the bust was finished, Byron was surprised to find that

Keats-Shelley Memorial House

The home John Keats shared with the artist Joseph Severn is located at Piazza di Spagna 26 in the square that takes its name from the nearby Spanish Embassy. Formerly known as the Casa Rossa, or Little Red House, the building was acquired in 1906 by the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, a group based in England and dedicated to preserving the home as a memorial to Keats and his fellow Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, who died in a shipwreck in 1822 near Viareggio.

The Keats house has been converted into a library that includes some 10,000 volumes of Romantic literature. Inside, a lock of the poet’s hair has been preserved. So has his death mask, the wax rendering of the dead poet’s face. Visitors will also find an urn holding pieces of Shelley’s charred skeleton; after Shelley’s body washed up on shore it was burned by his friends, Lord Byron and Leigh Hunt.

The house contains an extensive collection of paintings, objects, and manuscripts celebrating the lives of Keats, Shelley, and Byron as well as a manuscript and poem by Oscar Wilde, and first editions and letters by William Wordsworth and Robert Browning, among others.

During World War II it was feared the Germans would burn or otherwise desecrate the library as well as the other contents of the home, so custodians made efforts to protect the collection by masking the home’s appearance—they removed the exterior plaques that designated the house as a museum of British literature, thus helping the house blend into the architecture of the neighborhood.

The library remained on the shelves, but some of the most priceless items were stored in unmarked crates and hidden in a church in the nearby town of Cassino. Contents of the crates included the last drawing of Keats by Severn, first editions of Keats’s volumes Endymion and Lycidas, locks of Keats’s and Shelley’s hair, and letters of Shelley, Byron, Leigh Hunt, Edward John Trelawny, Mary Shelley, and the Brownings.

Following the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943, the German Army established a defense at Cassino. The church was searched by German troops, but the crates containing the items from the Keats house escaped their attention; a church worker hid them among his own possessions. Following the liberation of Rome, the crates were returned to their home at the Piazza di Spagna.
Thorwaldsen had rendered his image wearing something of a gay expression. Byron fumed, complaining that the bust didn't look a bit like him but Thorwaldsen knew better. Wrote Morson, "The reader thinks of some sensitive soul weeping in the Forum and choking back a sob on the Via Appia, while all the time Byron was leading a healthy, manly life in the saddle, hastily and inaccurately observing the scene, but nevertheless soaking up out of the air, as it were, the essence of Rome."

(Morson, 61)

Later, Byron was devastated by Shelley's death. With no reason to remain in Italy, the poet left the country—although it was during this period that Byron wrote his most acclaimed work, Don Juan. Soon, though, the poet was drawn to the plights of Greek independence. Byron joined an army of insurgents taking up arms against the Turks. Arriving in the Greek city of Missolonghi, Byron helped recruit and finance a regiment. "I have a presentiment I shall die in Greece," he wrote. (Byron, viii) That prediction would prove accurate. On April 18, 1824, at the age of thirty-six, Lord Byron died of fever. He is buried in Mycenae, Greece.

GOETHE AND THE CORSO

The English Romantics weren't the only writers of the era to find inspiration in the Eternal City as well as other cities in Italy. Charles Dickens wrote Pictures of Italy after touring the country in 1844 and 1845. Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning made their home in Florence from 1846 to 1861, where Elizabeth died. George Eliot lived in Florence as well while Algernon Swinburne visited Sicily in 1864. The American poet James Russell Lowell spent several months in 1851 and 1852 in Rome, writing Verses on Italy and Leaves from a Journal in Italy and Elsewhere. Herman Melville visited Italy. Nathaniel Hawthorne spent more than a year in Rome, where he started work on The Marble Faun.

The German poet and novelist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—known mostly for his masterpiece Faust—visited Rome well before all those authors, arriving in 1786. He spent two years traveling throughout the country, producing a book of poems titled Roman Elegies that celebrated his experiences in Rome—both cultural and amorous. Later, in his 1816 book Travels in Italy, he again told of his visit to Rome. During his time in Rome, Goethe shared a room with his friend, the painter Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein. Goethe arrived in Rome on October 29, 1786, moving into room 5 at Via del Corso 18, which was owned by a coachman who took in boarders.

Goethe has said that his time spent in Italy was the happiest period of his life—the fulfillment of a life-long dream. Indeed, upon arriving in Rome, he wrote these words: "Now, at last, I have arrived in the First City of the world!" (www.eastern-romanticism.org) His excitement was probably due in no small part to the neighborhood he chose: the Via del Corso had always been one of Rome's liveliest thoroughfares; during ancient times, it was known simply as Via Lata—the Wide Street. In the fifteenth century, Pope Paul II decided to put a stop to the debauchery that marked the pre-Lenten Roman Carnivals staged in the nearby Testaccio district. He moved the carnival to the Wide Street, location of his Palazzo Venezia, where he could keep a closer eye on the revelers. As for the street, the pope had it paved and renamed il Corso, which means "the avenue." By the time Goethe unpacked his bags on the Via del Corso, the annual Roman Carnival had achieved something of a reputation for riotous behavior. Here is how Goethe described the street in his book, Travels in Italy:

The Roman Carnival collects in the Corso. This street limits and determines the public celebration of these days. Anywhere else it would be a different sort of festival, and we have therefore first of all to describe the Corso.

Like several long streets of Italian towns, it derives its name from the horse-races which conclude the entertainment of each Carnival evening, and with which too, in other
places, other festivals, such as that of the patron saint or the consecration of a church, are ended.

The street runs in a straight line from the Piazza del Popolo to the Piazza di Venezia about three thousand five hundred paces long, and enclosed by high, mostly splendid buildings. Its breadth is not proportionate to its length, nor to the height of its edifices. The pavements for foot passengers take up on both sides from six to eight feet. The space in the middle for carriages is at most places from twelve to fourteen feet wide, and therefore, as will be readily calculated, allows but three vehicles at the most to drive abreast.

The obelisk on the Piazza del Popolo is, during the Carnival, the extreme limit of this street at the lower end, the Venetian Palace at the upper. (Goethe, 519)

Goethe also found that the Corso is "one of the few streets in Rome which are kept clean the whole year." (Goethe, 521) He witnessed balconies and windows decorated with tapestries, commenting: "The rooms of smaller houses and all children are in the street, which now ceases to be a street, and resembles a large festive salon, a vast adorned gallery." (Goethe, 522-23) As for the revelers, Goethe reported that they dressed in colorful costumes and masks. "Here comes a Punchinello," he wrote, "running with a large horn attached to bright cords dangling about his haunches. By a slight motion, while entertaining himself with the women, he contrives to assume the impudent shape of the old god of the gardens in holy Rome, and his insolence excites more mirth than indignation." (Goethe, 523)

At night, Goethe attended plays and operas just off the Corso at the Teatro di Roma Argentina—the Argentina Theater, which was built in 1732, as well as other theaters that have since fallen victim to one calamity or another. The great Tordinone theater, he explains, burned down but was quickly rebuilt, only to collapse. Sadly, Goethe observes, the Tordinone "no longer entertains the people with its blood-and-thunder tragedies and other wondrous representations." (Goethe, 539)
Goethe witnessed the horse races that concluded each day of the carnival; the masked balls attended by the gentry, commenting that when danced in Rome, "the minuet, in particular, is looked upon as a work of art" (Goethe, 540), and the raucous night-time candlelit ceremony and feast on the eve of Ash Wednesday that ended the carnival. Wrote Goethe, "Seeing that life as a whole, like the Roman Carnival, stretches far beyond our ken, and is full of troubles and vexations, we would desire that every one should with us be reminded by this careless crowd of markers of the importance of every momentary, and often apparently trivial enjoyment of life." (Goethe, 544)

STENDHAL’S ROMAN JOURNAL
The French novelist Marie-Henri Beyle is the author of a well-respected account of his travels through Rome. Beyle, who wrote under the name Stendhal, served as a diplomat in Napoleon's government, but Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815 spelled an end to Stendhal’s career in the diplomatic corps. Following Napoleon’s defeat, Stendhal settled in Milan where he remained until 1821 before returning to Paris. During his period in Italy he wrote history books and biographies, which were hardly regarded as literary achievements. His acclaim would come later with publication of his novels The Red and the Black, which told the story of a young soldier torn between his duty to the monarchy and the call for liberty, and The Charterhouse of Parma, a fictional retelling of how Alessandro Farnese of Rome rose to the papacy with the help of a devious aunt.

Stendhal’s major work on Rome, though, was A Roman Journal, essentially a tour guide of the Eternal City chronicling the writer’s experiences in Rome from 1827 to 1829. It is more than just a guidebook for the nineteenth century tourist. At the time, Stendhal was down on his luck in Paris when a cousin suggested the project. Stendhal immediately saw the book as an opportunity to provide a lively eyewitness account of Europe’s most intriguing city that would delve into the history of Rome.
as well as his impressions of the people, the architecture and the culture. Years later, the University of California literature professor Haakon Chevalier, who translated *A Roman Journal* into English, wrote that readers at first accepted the book “as a diary of a cultivated man traveling in a pleasant company ... bent on getting the most out of a one-to-two-years’ visit to Rome.” (Stendhal, 13) The book, Chevalier wrote, turned out to be much more. “It was a circumstantial eyewitness account of endless visits, walks, conversations, encounters, receptions at embassies and palaces, full of anecdotes and adventures of all sorts, broken by a series of longish stories that foreshadow the themes of later novels. It was alert, informative, diverting; readers were convinced and delighted.” (Stendhal, 13)

Stendhal took his readers around the city, providing vivid descriptions of the sights, smells and sounds of nineteenth-century Rome. Typical was his description of the Colosseum. He started by giving a brief history of the Colosseum—built by the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus with the labor of 12,000 Jewish prisoners of war, completed in 80 A.D. “The world has seen nothing so magnificent as this monument,” Stendhal wrote, “its total height is 157 feet, and its outer circumference 1,641 feet. The arena where the gladiators fought is 285 feet in length by 182 in width. On the occasion of the dedication of the Colosseum by Titus, the Roman people had the pleasure of seeing 5,000 lions, tigers and other animals put to death, as well as nearly 3,000 gladiators. The games lasted one hundred days.” (Stendhal, 33) Stendhal observed, for the record, that the bottommost seats in the arena were protected from the sandy floor by a very high wall, erected so that the lions and tigers could not leap at the spectators. He noted that the spectators at the contemporary bullrings he saw in Spain are similarly protected, and speculated that the Spanish got the idea for the design from Vespasian’s architects.

Stendhal also took his readers up the Colosseum’s steps so he could share the view with them. He wrote, “One climbs the passageways of the upper stories by stairs that are in a fair state of repair ... On reaching the highest story of the ruins, still on the north side, you view, across from where you are standing, behind tall trees and almost at the same height, San Pietro in Vincoli, a church famous for the tomb of Julius II and Michelangelo’s Moses.” (Stendhal, 31)

*A Roman Journal* moved on to describe the artwork that Stendhal saw as well as what he knew about the Roman masters—after examining Raphael’s skull, Stendhal made the observation that the painter was “very short in stature.” (Stendhal, 47). He delved into the history of the walls surrounding the city, noting for his readers that the walls stretch a mere sixteen miles, and that their construction commenced in 402 A.D. on the orders of the Emperor Honorius. He complained about bagpipe music that woke him at 4 o’clock in the morning, played on the streets below his lodgings by peasant musicians in a pre-Christmas ritual. “Nothing is so infuriating as to be awakened in the middle of the night by the lugubrious sound of the bagpipes of these people,” he huffed. (Stendhal, 105). He lamented discovering the rundown condition of the Forum, which was stripped of its treasures and desecrated during an invasion of Gauls in the eleventh century. By the time Stendhal arrived, the Romans were using the Forum as a cattle market.

Still, Stendhal liked most of what he saw and never tired of his tour. “We feel a kind of passion for the renowned city,” he said, “no detail is too severe or too minute for us. We are thirsty for everything that belongs to the object that we are examining.” (Stendhal, 249)

**FLAMES OF NATIONALISM**

While writers from England, France, and Germany were finding inspiration in the Eternal City, the era’s Italian writers were drawing their influence from events occurring elsewhere in Europe. For years, the cities and states of the Italian peninsula had been dominated by foreign conquerors. In 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy. The French easily overran the Italian defenders and in 1797, the Treaty of Campo Formio partitioned
the country among the French and Austrians. By 1810, Rome was part of the French Empire although in 1815, the Congress of Vienna placed it under papal authority.

Throughout Italy, the flames of nationalism burned within the country's literary community. The writers and poets of the era called for a unification of the country under a single monarch. During this period, the city of Milan was regarded as the literary capital of the Italian peninsula; still, many Italian poets and writers spent time in Rome and drew inspiration from the Eternal City.

The poet Vincenzo Monti lived in Rome from 1778 to 1797. Monti's 1793 poem "La Bassiilliana," tells the story of a French official named Hugo Bassville who arrived in Rome to promote revolution in the style that had just unseated the French monarchy. He was met by hostility on the Roman streets and killed by a mob. Monti's poem denounced the revolution, depicting Bassville's soul visiting the scenes of France's Reign of Terror, describing in detail the murders of priests and execution of Louis XVI. Later, Monti's poems and plays called for a unified, self-governed Italy. "The garden of nature," he wrote, "is not for barbarians." (Wilkins, 377)

Another poet of the era was Giacomo Leopardi, who was born in Recanati, a town in central Italy near the Adriatic coast. He ached to leave Recanati and, at the age of twenty-four, finally made his way to Rome. He arrived in the fall of 1822 and spent just a few months in the city, fighting loneliness while finding himself hardly impressed with the scholarship of the Roman literary community. In the spring of 1823, he returned to Recanati. Later, he traveled extensively through Pisa, Florence, Naples, and Bologna.

Leopardi is regarded as one of Italy's greatest lyric poets. While much of his work centers on such classical poetic themes as the search for truth, love, and beauty, Leopardi was fervently nationalistic and longed for a united Italy. He wrote, "Oh my fatherland, I see the walls and the arches and the columns and the images and the lonely towers of our ancestors, but I see not their glory, I see not the laurel and the steel that our ancient fathers bore." (Wilkins, 400)

The most nationalistic Italian writer of the mid-1800s was Giuseppe Mazzini, a literary critic, translator, and essayist born in Genoa in 1805. He was also an agitator, calling for a unified Italy with Rome as its capital city. In 1830, Mazzini helped found the Young Italy organization, established while the essayist was living in exile in France. Young Italy's goal was unification of the nation under a single monarch. It would be eighteen years before Mazzini set foot again in Italy; during his time in exile he supported himself by writing literary criticism.

The 1848 uprising in Austria that drove Prince Metternich from power spilled over into Italy, where a popular insurgency in Milan ousted Austrian troops from the city. Revolution spread into other cities on the peninsula, but there were setbacks. For the nationalists, a unified Italy remained out of reach. Still, Mazzini returned to the peninsula and participated in an uprising that drove Pope Pius IX from Rome. For three months, Rome was a republic—with Mazzini serving as one of three governors—but French troops invaded the city and, despite gallant resistance led by Giuseppe Garibaldi, returned the pope to power.

Unification would eventually come to the Italian peninsula. Indeed, the fires of Italian nationalism were kept aflame by Mazzini's powerful words. He once wrote that his role is to ...