

1832

SONG (“DOST THOU IDLY ASK TO HEAR”)

William Cullen Bryant

Bryant, William Cullen (1794-1878) - American poet and editor of the New York Evening Post who practiced law before devoting his life to writing. A master of blank verse, Bryant's earliest works are considered his best. Song ("Dost thou idly ask to hear") (1832) - Opening lines: Dost thou idly ask to hear / At what gentle seasons...

SONG DOST THOU IDLY ASK TO HEAR

Dost thou idly ask to hear
At what gentle seasons
Nymphs relent, when lovers near
Press the tenderest reasons?
Ah, they give their faith too oft
To the careless wooer;
Maidens' hearts are always soft:
Would that men's were truer!

Woo the fair one when around
Early birds are singing;
When, o'er all the fragrant ground,
Early herbs are springing:
When the brookside, bank, and grove,
All with blossoms laden,
Shine with beauty, breathe of love,
Woo the timid maiden.

Woo her when, with rosy blush,
Summer eve is sinking;
When, on rills that softly gush,
Stars are softly winking;
When through boughs that knit the bower
Moonlight gleams are stealing;
Woo her, till the gentle hour
Wake a gentler feeling.

Woo her when autumnal dyes
Tinge the woody mountain;
When the dropping foliage lies
In the weedy fountain;
Let the scene, that tells how fast
Youth is passing over,
Warn her, ere her bloom is past,
To secure her lover.

Woo her when the north winds call
At the lattice nightly;
When, within the cheerful hall,
Blaze the fagots brightly;
While the wintry tempest round

Sweeps the landscape hoary,
Sweeter in her ear shall sound
Love's delightful story.

THE END