

1830

HYMN OF THE CITY

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. Hymn of the City (1830) - A complementary poem to A Forest Hymn. Opening lines: Not in the solitude / Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see,...

HYMN OF THE CITY

Not in the solitude
 Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see,
 Only in savage wood
 And sunny vale, the present Deity;
 Or only hear his voice
 Where the winds whisper and the waves rejoice.

Even here do I behold
 Thy steps, Almighty!- here, amidst the crowd
 Through the great city rolled,
 With everlasting murmur deep and loud
 Choking the ways that wind
 'Mongst the proud piles, the work of human kind.

Thy golden sunshine comes
 From the round heaven, and on their dwellings lies
 And lights their inner homes;
 For them thou fill'st with air the unbounded skies,
 And givest them the stores
 Of ocean, and the harvests of its shores.

Thy Spirit is around,
 Quickening the restless mass that sweeps along;
 And this eternal sound
 Voices and footfalls of the numberless throng
 Like the resounding sea,
 Or like the rainy tempest, speaks of Thee.

And when the hour of rest
 Comes, like a calm upon the mid-sea brine,
 Hushing its billowy breast
 The quiet of that moment too is thine;
 It breathes of Him who keeps
 The vast and helpless city while it sleeps.

THE END