

1826

**“I CANNOT FORGET WITH WHAT
FERVID DEVOTION”**

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. "I Cannot Forget with What Fervid Devotion" (1826) - Possibly penned as early as 1815, this nostalgic poem was first published in 1826 then revised in 1832. Opening lines: I cannot forget with what fervid devotion / I worshipped the visions of verse and of fame;...

I CANNOT FORGET WITH WHAT FERVID DEVOTION

I cannot forget with what fervid devotion
 I worshipped the visions of verse and of fame;
 Each gaze at the glories of earth, sky, and ocean,
 To my kindled emotions, was wind over flame.

And deep were my musings in life's early blossom,
 Mid the twilight of mountain-groves wandering long;
 How thrilled my young veins, and how throbbed my full bosom,
 When o'er me descended the spirit of song!

'Mong the deep-cloven fells that for ages had listened
 To the rush of the pebble-paved river between,
 Where the kingfisher screamed and gray precipice glistened,
 All breathless with awe have I gazed on the scene;

Till I felt the dark power o'er my reveries stealing,
 From the gloom of the thicket that over me hung,
 And the thoughts that awoke, in that rapture of feeling,
 Were formed into verse as they rose to my tongue.

Bright visions! I mixed with the world, and ye faded,
 No longer your pure rural worshipper now;
 In the haunts your continual presence pervaded,
 Ye shrink from the signet of care on my brow.

In the old mossy groves on the breast of the mountain,
 In deep lonely glens where the waters complain,
 By the shade of the rock, by the gush of the fountain,
 I seek your loved footsteps, but seek them in vain.

Oh, leave not, forlorn and forever forsaken,
 Your pupil and victim, to life and its tears!
 But sometimes return, and in mercy awaken
 The glories ye showed to his earlier years.

THE END