

1820

“OH FAIREST OF THE RURAL MAIDS”

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. "Oh Fairest of the Rural Maids" (1820) - Written for Frances Fairchild who subsequently became Bryant's wife. Opening lines: Oh fairest of the rural maids! / Thy birth was in the forest shades;...

OH FAIREST OF THE RURAL MAIDS

Oh fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye.
Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.
The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.
Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.
The forest depths, by foot unpresse,
Are not more sinless than thy breast;
The holy peace, that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes, is there.

THE END