

1824

SONG OF THE GREEK AMAZON

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 of the Greek Amazon (1824) - Voiced by a young woman whose lover was killed by the Turks. Opening lines: I buckle to my slender side / The pistol and the scimitar,...

SONG OF THE GREEK AMAZON

I buckle to my slender side
 The pistol and the scimitar,
 And in my maiden flower and pride
 Am come to share the task of war.
 And yonder stands the fiery steed,
 That paws the ground and neighs to go,
 My charger of the Arab breed
 I took him from the routed foe.

My mirror is the mountain-spring,
 At which I dress my ruffled hair;
 My dimmed and dusty arms I bring,
 And wash away the blood-stain there.
 Why should I guard from wind and sun
 This cheek, whose virgin rose is fled?
 It was for one- oh, only one
 I kept its bloom, and he is dead.

But they who slew him- unaware

Of coward murderers lurking nigh
 And left him to the fowls of air,
 Are yet alive- and they must die!
 They slew him- and my virgin years
 Are vowed to Greece and vengeance now,
 And many an Othman dame, in tears,
 Shall rue the Grecian maiden's vow.

I touched the lute in better days,
 I led in dance the joyous band;
 Ah! they may move to mirthful lays
 Whose hands can touch a lover's hand.
 The march of hosts that haste to meet
 Seems gayer than the dance to me;
 The lute's sweet tones are not so sweet
 As the fierce shout of victory.

THE END