

**1815**

**TO A WATERFOWL**

**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. To a Waterfowl (1815) - Bryant's description of the flight of a bird. This delicate poem illustrates the poet's belief in divine guidance. Opening lines: Whither, midst falling dew, / While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,...**

## **TO A WATERFOWL**

Whither, midst falling dew,  
 While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
 Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
 Thy solitary way?  
 Vainly the fowler's eye  
 Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
 As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,  
 Thy figure floats along.  
 Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
 Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,  
 Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
 On the chafed ocean-side?  
 There is a Power whose care  
 Teaches thy way along that pathless coast  
 The desert and illimitable air  
 Lone wandering, but not lost.  
 All day thy wings have fanned,  
 At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,  
 Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
 Though the dark night is near.  
 And soon that toil shall end;  
 Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,  
 And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,  
 Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.  
 Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
 Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart  
 Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
 And shall not soon depart.  
 He who, from zone to zone,  
 Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
 In the long way that I must tread alone,  
 Will lead my steps aright.

**THE END**