

1829

TO COLE, THE PAINTER, DEPARTING FOR EUROPE

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 Cole, the Painter, Departing for Europe (1829) - Written for Bryant's friend, the wellknown landscape artist Thomas Cole. Opening lines: Thine eyes shall see the light of distant skies; / Yet, Cole! thy heart shall bear to Europe's strand...

TO COLE THE PAINTER DEPARTING FOR EUROPE

Thine eyes shall see the light of distant skies;
Yet, Cole! thy heart shall bear to Europe's strand
A living image of our own bright land,
Such as upon thy glorious canvas lies;
Lone lakes- savannas where the bison roves
Rocks rich with summer garlands- solemn streams
Skies, where the desert eagle wheels and screams
Spring bloom and autumn blaze of boundless groves.
Fair scenes shall greet thee where thou goest- fair,
But different- everywhere the trace of men,
Paths, homes, graves, ruins, from the lowest glen
To where life shrinks from the fierce Alpine air.
Gaze on them, till the tears shall dim thy sight,
But keep that earlier, wilder image bright.

THE END