

**1864**

**A DREAM**

**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. *A Dream* (1864) - Opening lines: I had a dream- a strange, wild dream- / Said a dear voice at early light;...A DREAMI had a dream- a strange, wild dream

## A DREAM

Said a dear voice at early light;  
 And even yet its shadows seem  
 To linger in my waking sight.  
 Earth, green with spring, and fresh with dew,

And bright with morn, before me stood;  
 And airs just wakened softly blew  
 On the young blossoms of the wood.  
 Birds sang within the sprouting shade,

Bees hummed amid the whispering grass,  
 And children prattled as they played  
 Beside the rivulet's dimpling glass.  
 Fast climbed the sun: the flowers were flown,

There played no children in the glen;  
 For some were gone, and some were grown  
 To blooming dames and bearded men.  
 'Twas noon, 'twas summer: I beheld

Woods darkening in the flush of day,  
 And that bright rivulet spread and swelled,  
 A mighty stream, with creek and bay.  
 And here was love, and there was strife,

And mirthful shouts, and wrathful cries,  
 And strong men, struggling as for life,  
 With knotted limbs and angry eyes.  
 Now stooped the sun- the shades grew thin;

The rustling paths were piled with leaves,  
 And sunburnt groups were gathering in,  
 From the shorn field, its fruits and sheaves.  
 The river heaved with sullen sounds;

The chilly wind was sad with moans;  
 Black hearses passed, and burial-grounds  
 Grew thick with monumental stones.  
 Still waned the day; the wind that chased

The jagged clouds blew chiller yet;

The woods were stripped, the fields were waste,  
The wintry sun was near his set.  
And of the young, and strong, and fair,

A lonely-remnant, gray and weak,  
Lingered, and shivered to the air  
Of that bleak shore and water bleak,  
Ah! age is drear, and death is cold!

I turned to thee, for thou wert near,  
And saw thee withered, bowed, and old,  
And woke all faint with sudden fear.  
'Twas thus I heard the dreamer say,

And bade her clear her clouded brow;  
"For thou and I, since childhood's day,  
Have walked in such a dream till now.  
"Watch we in calmness, as they rise,

The changes of that rapid dream,  
And note its lessons, till our eyes  
Shall open in the morning beam."

**THE END**