

Pupils  
Reading  
Circle  
Award

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT  
1794-1878

William Cullen Bryant was born in Cummington, Massachusetts, in 1794. When thirteen years old he wrote 'The Embargo,' a satire. This youthful poet was admitted to the bar in 1815 but after ten years he quit his profession and went to New York to reside where he devoted himself to literary pursuits. He was editor of two New York newspapers during his residence there. As a prose writer his style was pure, easy and idiomatic. Few who have been compelled by circumstances to write so much have written so uniformly well. Bryant died in New York, June 12, 1878.

'To the Waterfowl' and 'The Past' are considered among his best poems. 'Thanatopsis,' the unrivaled production of a youth of only eighteen years, was published in 1816, the last stanza being a splendid one to memorize:

So live, that when thy summons  
comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, which  
moves  
To that mysterious realm, where  
each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls  
of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-  
slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but,  
sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach  
thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery  
of his couch  
About him, and lies down to  
pleasant dreams.

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WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT  
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Knox County Public Schools

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