

# The Death of Flowers

William Cullen Bryant

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.  
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;  
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;  
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,  
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood  
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?  
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers  
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.  
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain  
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,  
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;  
But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,  
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,  
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,  
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,  
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;  
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,  
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,  
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,  
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,  
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.  
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,  
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:  
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,  
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.