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## Select Poetry.

### A Rain Dream.

BY WILLIAM CLELLAN BRYANT.

These stiffs, these tremblers of the noisy world,  
Where Fraud, the coward, tracks his prey by stealth,  
And straggles the ruffian, glories in his guilt,  
Oppress the heart with anguish. Oh, my friend,  
In what serene mood we look upon  
The gloomiest aspect of the elements  
Among the woods and fields! Let us awhile,  
As the slow wind is rolling up the storm,  
In fancy leave this maze of dusty streets,  
For ever shaken by the importunate air  
Of commerce, and upon the darkening air  
Look from the sunshine populous, its close  
Who is not awed that listens to the Rain,  
Sending his voice before him? Mighty Rain!  
The upland steeps are shrouded by thy mists;  
The valleys gleam with dew, and in the pools  
No longer glimmer, and the silvery streams  
Darken to veins of lead at thy approach,  
Oh, mighty Rain! already thou art here;  
And every roof is beaten by thy spring  
And at thy presence, every leaf is sprung  
Grows rough, and every leaf in all the woods  
Is struck and quivers. All the hill-top slakes  
Their thirst from thee; a thousand languishing  
fields

A thousand fainting gardens are refreshed;  
A thousand idle rivulets start to speed,  
And with the gravel murmur of thy rain  
Blend their light voices as they hurry on.  
Thou fillst the circle of the atmosphere  
Above; there is no living thing abroad,  
No bird to wing the air, nor beast to walk  
The field; the equities of the forest seek  
His hollow tree; the marmot of the field  
Has scampered to his den; the butterfly  
Hides under his broad leaf; the insect crowd  
That made the sunshine populous, its close  
In their mysterious shelter, whence the sun  
Will summon them again. The mighty Rain!  
Holds the vast empire of the sky alone.  
The sun's rays, the moon's light, the stars' gleam,  
The friendly clouds drop down spring vales,  
And summer columbines, and all the flowers  
That tuft the woodland floor, or overarch  
The streamlet—spiky grass for green June,  
Brown harvests for the scolding husbandman,  
And for the woods a deluge of fresh leaves.  
I see these myriad drops that shake the dust,  
Gather in glorious streams, or rolling like  
In billows on the sea, or in the daisy,  
And bearing navies. I behold them change  
To threads of crystal as they sink in earth,  
And leave its stains behind, to rise again  
In pleasant nooks and corners of the child,  
Thirsty with play, in both his little hands  
Shall take the cool clear water, raising it  
To wet his pretty lips. To-morrow noon  
How proudly will the sun-dried grass  
The winking pool, or cloaking like a green,  
Her circle of broad leaves. In lonely wastes,  
When next the sunshine makes them beautiful,  
Gay troops of butterflies shall light to drink  
At the replenished hollow of the daisy.  
Now slowly falls the dull black night,  
And still.  
All through the starless hours, the mighty Rain  
Smiles with purple and blue, and in the air  
And beats the matted grass, and still the earth  
Drinks the unstinted bounty of the clouds.  
Drinks for her cottage wells, her woodland  
brooks,  
Drinks for the springing trout, the toiling bee,  
And brooding bird, drinks for her tender fowls,  
Tall trees, and all the herbage of her hills.  
A melancholy sound is in the air.  
A deep sigh in the distance, a shrill wail  
Around my dwelling. 'Tis the wind of night,  
A lonely wanderer from earth and cloud,  
In the black shadow and the chilly mist,  
Along the streaming mountain side, and through  
The dripping woods, and o'er the plashy fields,  
Roaming and sorrowing still, like one who makes  
The journey of life, and in the leaves  
A welcome or a friend, and still goes on  
In darkness. Yet awhile, a little while,  
And he shall toss the glittering leaves in play,  
And dally with the wind, and in the air  
The slender reed, pressed low by weight of rain,  
And drive, in joyous triumph, through the sky,  
White clouds, the leagard remnants of the storm.

## Miscellaneous.

### FANNY NEALL.

I am a bachelor! Don't smile or pass judgment rashly upon me—I must tell you what I am.  
I can scarcely remember when my father removed to the new village of Brookville. It seems, too, that there is a faint remembrance of an old house by the lake. It is all vague and uncertain, however. Yet I sometimes find lingering within me a vision of an old brown building, with elms in front and a sleepy lake down in the vale, such, I have heard my father say, was our home. These impressions seem to me much like dreams of realities, and no wonder either, for the foot-steps of long years have marched over them. But I do remember distinctly a broad river, that we crossed on our way to our new home, that is the most distinct of all—its silvery waves flashing around the flat we crossed on our way to be forgotten.  
The streets of Brookville were not cleared of stumps when there was a little cottage on the main street. There was a newness and freshness about everything there. It was not long before it came to assume a busy character, as new settlers came in, and new stores and shops went up. My father was a bricklayer, and I carried some of the brick and mortar, that went into what is now called "the old Court House at Brookville," and I helped to rear its brown walls. Time flies!  
Among others who came to Brookville was a man named Neal. He had been a merchant in one of the seaport cities, but failing by specious speculations, he had retired with a little fortune, to the new village, either to rest, or to spend the evening of his life in quiet. I never knew which. He had been a hard drinker during the few last years—the demon in the wine glass had been his main rock on which he wrecked his life, and his wife he left in the city, in the hands of his slaves and a creditor. So said the old shoemaker who came with Neal from the city.  
Nannie Neal was like a bright star gleaming in the stormy night among the clouds. She was the only child of the corner, and a loving wife she was! She was just my age, or nearly, not quite so young as I am now, and she was the difference, I believe, between me and Neal.  
Neal managed to get a house a few rods from ours; and with his daughter, a sour old dame of a housekeeper, and the old shoemaker, both of whom came with him, constituted his family.  
Neal and I were not long in becoming fast friends; we met one sunny afternoon

down in the clearing on the brookside, after which the village was named, and there for a full hour we played "captive's base" among the broad walnut and poplar stumps that stood like watching sentinels in the vale.  
The very next day we went out together on the hills, with our baskets, to gather wildflowers, and talked and played among the rocks, and when we grew tired sat down and she told me of her mother—of how she used to weep while she sat at her feet, and then died in the cold night with consumption and a broken heart, and that the Priest said she was to be buried with the Virgin Angel. I have since thought that her mother was perhaps a Catholic, but of this I am not certain.  
Neal put up a tavern in Brookville, and the new settlers gathered there and drank. I remember the first night there was a noise and laughing, fiddling and dancing, and singing, and I thought, it must be something very nice; but my mother told me it was a very wicked place, and that I must never go there. I often wished my mother had not told me that, for my Nannie was there, and she was my dearest friend.  
Years passed as others had, and Nannie and I grew up; she was one of the loveliest of creatures of female beauty I had ever seen. She was as gentle as the whisperings of the white-winged zephyrs among the April flowers, and as pure as the lily that bent beneath the summer breeze to the kiss of the rippling waves of the meadow rill; and yet she was reared among the wrecks of a father's fortune, and she had seen the mad and drunken course and drunken rill-drinking of drunken men around the little bar her father kept.  
Nannie was happily in possession of the virtues which ennoble and beautify woman's character. She was kind and cheerful; neither wild nor melancholy, yet the lovely calm of contentment was tinged with a shade of sadness—motion, tone, and look, were gentle as the spring-time sun-beams shimmering among the garden flowers. Nannie Neal was the loved one in Brookville.  
I loved her when we were children playing on the coast and beach, on rock and dell; and when that we were grown, and loved her with all the passionate ardor of my young manhood. Not a whisper of love ever passed our lips, and yet the secret was written in and fondly cherished by each hidden heart. Ah! we were happy in this secret heart worship. We were often together in the wild nook where we had gathered berries when children; and when the black water of the river, in the old days, had been in the river, in the old days, we would look up to heaven, we mumbled and dreamed and loved in silence, with more but nature with us. For hours we have sat on the brook bank watching the frisking fish gliding like golden creatures, with their aerial waves and the clear, raveling, fastening away, the mellow sunlight, trembling on the tree tops and falling away behind the hills, and all the time we felt that our hearts beat sweet communion in breathless whisper—this a holy tie was weaving, wove and web into our life and hopes and desires.  
Neal's business was to cut and grow and grow and grow, and he became wealthy, and his intimacy and became engaged. One evening when I had gone to spend a few hours with Nannie at her home, the old man came to the little sitting room where we were, and sternly ordered me away. I arose, and a tear drop hung upon Nannie's eyelid. I took my hat, and went out, and the old man sang out after me—'Hod carrier!'  
The old shoemaker flattened her ugly face against the glass door between the two rooms and echoed the chorus—'Hod carrier!'  
The infernal taunt rings in my ears yet.

That evening the old shoemaker saw me and told me Nannie loved me and she would see me when she could. I thanked him, and through his interference, Nannie and I met each other almost every day, and talked and loved.  
And in this way we spent some of our happiest hours, dreaming of the bliss that was to be ours, in a few short months, for when the summer was passed we were to be married. Love with us was a reality, and in the solitude about Brookville we dreamed of the bliss, as together we watched the drifting of the white clouds riding on the blue ocean of the sky.  
Our dreams were like the clouds. A cloud was in the sky with a storm in its bosom too, but we saw not.  
Christmas day we were to be married—None knew it, however, except the old shoemaker and Rob Lincoln. Rob was to convey Nannie to a neighboring house in his new sleigh, and I was to meet him there with the village groom. Such was the arrangement.  
The day before Christmas the hills and houses were white with snow. Brookville was all life for the enjoyments of the season. That morning two strangers appeared in our midst. None knew from whence they came. I met them in the streets early in the day. I disliked their looks and turned aside. There was a lurking look of sin lingering about the face of the oldest—a heartless-looking wretch. The younger appeared but little better.  
All day long the revel increased in and about Neal's house. Once or twice there came near being a fight. Just after sundown I met Rob Lincoln running towards his father's house at full speed. I had no time to ask him a single question. There was the wildest terror flashing from the brave young man's eyes. 'Run with me to Neal's—run, dreadful times there,' and he grasped my arm and I bounded away with him.  
'What! the wild blows now just as I fled by my ears as I ran up the snowy street of Brookville on that fatal evening. Draw your chair closer, I wish to speak in whispers now. Within Neal's house when we reached it, was this scene:  
The old shoemaker stood with her clasped hands folded in her yellow apron, with her face flustered against a dirty pane of glass door looking in to the tavern. A few feet from the door, a man was staggering around the room, or half-doing on the pine benches at the fire; the old shoemaker seemed pledged with Neal, who was nearly drunk, to revoke some decree of his; and my own Nannie was struggling in the arms of one of the two strangers, while the other stood a little way off grinning with grim satisfaction.

My blood boiled in every knotted vein.—When I sprang into the arena, old Neal stammered in a drunken slarg:—  
'So, ho! Mister. Hod Carrier, I've sold Nan to a city gentleman!' and he held up a rouleau of gold coin. A low laugh gurgled up from the throat of the infernal purchaser.  
Nannie sold!—  
I grew dizzy—the room with its tangle seemed to whirl around with me. I heard the familiar voice of the old shoemaker cry out:—  
'Mr. Neal, how can you barter your own child away to one whose heart is to-day as black as any purgatory, after promising your poor dead wife to be both father and mother to the dear child!'  
A drunken curse came from the hot lungs of the father against the shoemaker and his own child; a better than that of the wife of an infamously-smiling man on her damp face. I saw the old man's pitted face grinning against the glass. And then I saw the mild blue eyes of my poor, half-distracted Nannie almost starting from their sockets, and her right hand, that was free from the monster's grasp, held out imploringly to me for help. She screamed my name. I rushed to the rescue. Rob Lincoln was before me.  
Draw your chair closer.  
Old Neal was enraged that we should dare to rescue his child from the infernal clutches of the shoemaker, and grasping the old shoemaker's hammer from the bench he hurled it at us. The weapon flew close by Rob's ear, and struck the head of my poor Nannie.  
With a low murmur of 'mother, mother!' she sank in my arms to the floor. The two strangers fled forever from Brookville. I called again and again to Nannie to tell me that she had not fled from earth to heaven, but she kept her blue eyes fixed upon me, and a changeable smile lit up her damp face. And all this time the old shoemaker kept her hideous face pressed against the glass, grinning through the scene. And old Neal stood with his arms folded, clutching in one hand the rouleau of gold. I called again and again to Nannie, and like a child I whispered in her ear, 'I loved her still! but the changeable smile was the only answer. I held her head in my arms and wept. The old shoemaker ran and brought the village surgeon. He came and knelt down by her on the tavern floor, and took her pale hands in his. I loomed more than ever for holding in my arms the loved one, examining the wound, and I loved her still! but the changeable smile was the only answer. 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