

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807- 1882)

Autumn

Thou comest, Autumn, heralded by the rain,
With banners, by great gales incessant fanned,
Brighter than brightest silks of Samarcand,
And stately oxen harnessed to thy wain!
Thou standest, like imperial Charlemagne,
Upon thy bridge of gold; thy royal hand
Outstretched with benedictions o'er the land,
Blessing the farms through all thy vast domain!
Thy shield is the red harvest moon, suspended
So long beneath the heaven's o'erhanging eaves;
Thy steps are by the farmer's prayers attended;
Like flames upon an altar shine the sheaves;
And, following thee, in thy ovation splendid,
Thine almoner, the wind, scatters the golden leaves!

In *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (1845)

The Indian Hunter

When the summer harvest was gathered in,
And the sheaf of the gleaner grew white and thin,
And the ploughshare was in its furrow left,
Where the stubble land had been lately cleft,
An Indian hunter, with unstrung bow,
Looked down where the valley lay stretched below.

He was a stranger there, and all that day
Had been out on the hills, a perilous way,
But the foot of the deer was far and fleet,
And the wolf kept aloof from the hunter's feet.
And bitter feelings passed o'er him then,
As he stood by the populous haunts of men.

The winds of autumn came over the woods
As the sun stole out from their solitudes;
The moss was white on the maple's trunk,
And dead from its arms the pale vine shrunk.
And ripened the mellow fruit hung, and red
Were the tree's withered leaves round it shed.

The foot of the reaper moved slow on the lawn
And the sickle cut down the yellow core -
The mower sung loud by the meadow-side,
Where the mists of evening were spreading wide,
And the voice of the herdsmen came up the lea,
And the dance went round by the greenwood tree.

Then the hunter turned away from the scene,
Where the home of his fathers once had been,
And heard by the distant and measured stroke,
That the woodman hewed down the giant oak,
And burning thoughts flashed over his mind
Of the white man's faith, and love unkind.

The moon of the harvest grew high and bright,
As her golden horn pierced the cloud of white -
A footstep was heard in the rustling brake,
Where the beech overshadowed the misty lake,
And a mourning voice, and a plunge from shore, -
And the hunter was seen on the hills no more.

When years had passed on, by that still lakeside
The fisher looked down through the silver tide,
And there, on the smooth yellow sand displayed,
A skeleton wasted and white was laid,
And 't was seen, as the waters moved deep and slow,
That the hand was still grasping a hunter's bow.

In *The United States Literary Gazette* (1825)