

Fred Lewis Pattge, ed.
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ON THE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA¹

And Peopling the Western Country

To western woods, and lonely plains,
 Palemon from the crowd departs,
 Where Nature's wildest genius reigns,
 To tame the soil, and plant the arts —
 What wonders there shall freedom show,
 What mighty states successive grow!

From Europe's proud, despotic shores
 Hither the stranger takes his way,
 And in our new found world explores
 A happier soil, a milder sway,
 Where no proud despot holds him down,
 No slaves insult him with a crown.

What charming scenes attract the eye,
 On wild Ohio's savage stream!
 There Nature reigns, whose works outvie
 The boldest pattern art can frame;
 There ages past have rolled away,
 And forests bloomed but to decay.

From these fair plains, these rural seats,
 So long concealed, so lately known,
 The unsocial Indian far retreats,
 To make some other clime his own,
 When other streams, less pleasing, flow,
 And darker forests round him grow.

¹ First published in Bailey's *Pocket Almanac* for 1785, and reprinted almost without change in the later editions of Freneau. Text from the edition of 1809.

Great Sire* of floods! whose varied wave
 Through climes and countries takes its way,
 To whom creating Nature gave
 Ten thousand streams to swell thy sway!
 No longer shall they useless prove,
 Nor idly through the forests rove;

Nor longer shall your princely flood
 From distant lakes be swelled in vain,
 Nor longer through a darksome wood
 Advance, unnoticed, to the main,
 Far other ends, the heavens decree —
 And commerce plans new freights for thee.

While virtue warms the generous breast,
 There heaven-born freedom shall reside,
 Nor shall the voice of war molest,
 Nor Europe's all-aspiring pride —
 There Reason shall new laws devise,
 And order from confusion rise.

Forsaking kings and regal state,
 With all their pomp and fancied bliss,¹
 The traveller owns, convinced though late,
 No realm so free, so blest as this —
 The east is half to slaves consigned,
 Where kings and priests enchain the mind.²

O come the time, and haste the day,
 When man shall man no longer crush,
 When Reason shall enforce her sway,
 Nor these fair regions raise our blush,
 Where still the African complains,
 And mourns his yet unbroken chains.

* Mississippi.—*Freneau's note.*

¹ (A debt that reason deems amiss).—*Ed. 1786.*

² And half to slavery more refin'd.—*Ib.*

Far brighter scenes a future age,
The muse predicts, these States will hail,
Whose genius may the world engage,
Whose deeds may over death prevail,
And happier systems bring to view,
Than all the eastern sages knew.

[1784.]

THE SEASONS MORALIZED ¹

They who to warmer regions run,
May bless the favour of the sun,
But seek in vain what charms us here,
Life's picture, varying with the year.

Spring, and her wanton train advance
Like Youth to lead the festive dance,
All, all her scenes are mirth and play,
And blushing blossoms own her sway.

The Summer next (those blossoms blown)
Brings on the fruits that spring had sown,
Thus men advance, impelled by time,
And Nature triumphs in her prime.

Then Autumn crowns the beauteous year,
The groves a sicklier aspect wear;
And mournful she (the lot of all)
Matures her fruits, to make them fall.

Clad in the vestments of a tomb,
Old age is only Winter's gloom —
Winter, alas! shall spring restore,
But youth returns to man no more.

¹ First published in Bailey's *Pocket Almanac* for 1785. The edition of 1809 is used.