A view of the Bay of Naples from near Posilippo

Edward Lear

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Description

Edward Lear (1812-1888)
A view of the Bay of Naples from near Posilippo

Watercolour over pencil
15.2 by 34.8 cm., 6 by 13 ¾ in.

This rapidly drawn sketch is likely to date from Lear's visit to Naples with James Uwins in the summer of 1838 so it is one of his earliest Italian watercolours. Generally his early Italian drawings are in his early black chalk style which shows the influence of James Duffield Harding (see no.6) but he began to experiment in other media including oil sketches. Lear did not like cities as a rule and Naples was no exception - he found it dirty, noisy and smelly. He happened to be staying in the same hotel as Samuel Palmer and his wife Hannah who were on their Italian honeymoon and they spent time together at the more peaceful Corpo di Cava to the south-east of the city. It is possible that seeing Palmer's Italian watercolours inspired him to start working in the same medium. He also passed through Naples briefly on his way to and from Sicily in 1847.

This view is taken from the town of Posillipo to the west of the city. The Castel dell'Ovo is visible on its promontory with Mount Vesuvius beyond.

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