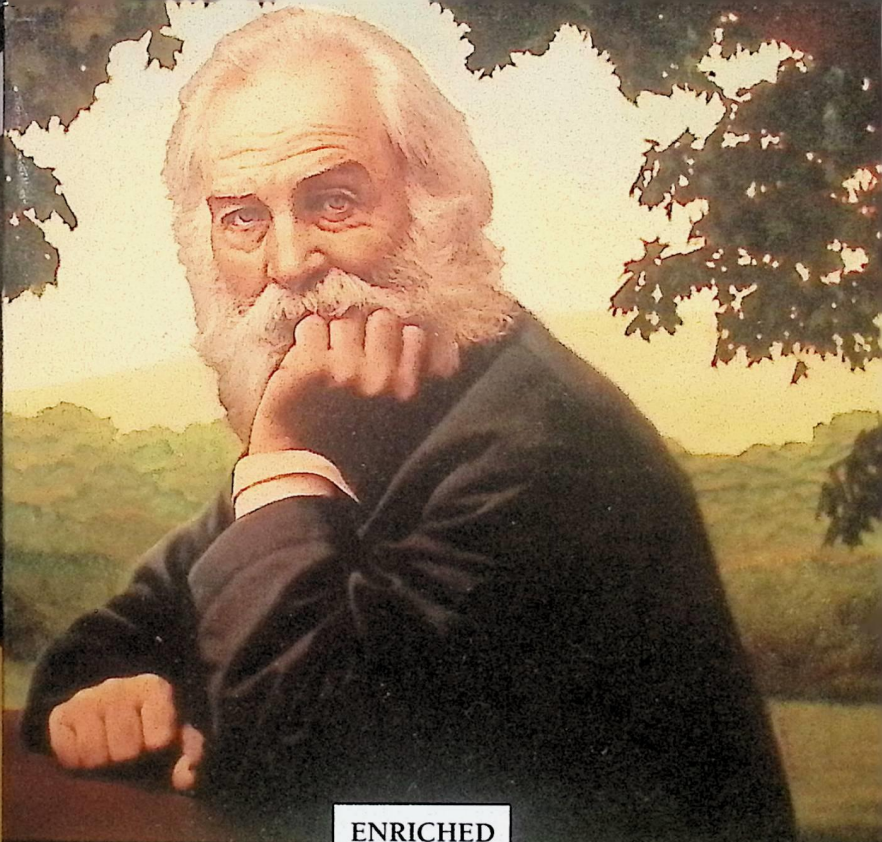


ENRICHED
CLASSIC



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LEAVES OF GRASS

WALT WHITMAN

Includes detailed explanatory notes,
an overview of key themes, and more

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AUTHOR'S NOTE FROM 1891-92 EDITION



As there are now several editions of L. of G., different text and dates, I wish to say that I prefer and recommend this present one, complete, for future printing, if there should be any; a copy and facsimile, indeed, of the text of these 438 pages. The subsequent adjusting interval which is so important to form'd and launch'd work, books especially, has pass'd; and waiting till fully after that, I have given my concluding words.

W. W.

INSCRIPTIONS

ONE'S-SELF I SING

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the
Muse,

I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

AS I PONDER'D IN SILENCE

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
The genius of poets of old lands,
As to me directing like flame its eyes,
With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
And menacing voice, *What singest thou?* it said,
Know'st thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring
bards?

And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,
The making of perfect soldiers.
Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too haughty Shade also sing war, and a longer and greater
one than any,

Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight, advance
 and retreat, victory deferr'd and wavering,
 (Yet methinks certain, or as good as certain, at the last,) the
 field the world,
 For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul,
 Lo, I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
 I above all promote brave soldiers.

IN CABIN'D SHIPS AT SEA

In cabin'd ships at sea,
 The boundless blue on every side expanding,
 With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large
 imperious waves,
 Or some lone bark buoy'd on the dense marine,
 Where joyous full of faith, spreading white sails,
 She cleaves the ether¹ mid the sparkle and the foam of day,
 or under many a star at night,
 By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the
 land, be read,
 In full rapport at last.

Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts.

*Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by
 them be said,*

*The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath
 our feet,*

*We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,
 The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of
 the briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables,
 The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage,² the melan-
 choly rhythm,*

*The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here,
 And this is ocean's poem.*

Then falter not O book, fulfil your destiny,
You not a reminiscence of the land alone,
You too as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purpos'd I know
 not whither, yet ever full of faith,
Consort to every ship that sails, sail you!
Bear forth to them folded my love, (dear mariners, for you I
 fold it here in every leaf;)
Speed on my book! spread your white sails my little bark
 athwart the imperious waves,
Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me to
 every sea,
This song for mariners and all their ships.

TO FOREIGN LANDS

I heard that you ask'd for something to prove this puzzle the
 New World,
And to define America, her athletic Democracy,
Therefore I send you my poems that you behold in them
 what you wanted.

TO A HISTORIAN

You who celebrate bygones,
Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the races,
 the life that has exhibited itself,
Who have treated of man as the creature of politics, aggre-
 gates, rulers and priests,
I, habitan¹ of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is in him-
 self in his own rights,
Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited itself,
 (the great pride of man in himself,)
Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,
I project the history of the future.

TO THEE OLD CAUSE

To thee old cause!

Thou peerless, passionate, good cause,

Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,

Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands,

After a strange sad war, great war for thee,

(I think all war through time was really fought, and ever will
be really fought, for thee,)

These chants for thee, the eternal march of thee.

(A war O soldiers not for itself alone,

Far, far more stood silently waiting behind, now to advance
in this book.)

Thou orb of many orbs!

Thou seething principle! thou well-kept, latent germ! thou
centre!

Around the idea of thee the war revolving,

With all its angry and vehement play of causes,

(With vast results to come for thrice a thousand years,)

These recitatives for thee,—my book and the war are one,

Merged in its spirit I and mine, as the contest hinged on thee,

As a wheel on its axis turns, this book unwitting to itself,

Around the idea of thee.

EIDÓLONS

I met a seer,

Passing the hues and objects of the world,

The fields of art and learning, pleasure, sense,

To glean eidólons.¹

Put in thy chants said he,

No more the puzzling hour nor day, nor segments, parts, put in,

Put first before the rest as light for all and entrance-song of all,
That of eidólons.

Ever the dim beginning,
Ever the growth, the rounding of the circle,
Ever the summit and the merge at last, (to surely start again,)
Eidólons! eidólons!

Ever the mutable,
Ever materials, changing, crumbling, re-cohering,
Ever the ateliers, the factories divine,
Issuing eidólons.

Lo, I or you,
Or woman, man, or state, known or unknown,
We seeming solid wealth, strength, beauty build,
But really build eidólons.

The ostent² evanescent,
The substance of an artist's mood or savan's studies long,
Or warrior's, martyr's, hero's toils,
To fashion his eidólon.

Of every human life,
(The units gather'd, posted, not a thought, emotion, deed,
left out,)
The whole or large or small summ'd, added up,
In its eidólon.

The old, old urge,
Based on the ancient pinnacles, lo, newer, higher pinnacles,
From science and the modern still impell'd,
The old, old urge, eidólons.

The present now and here,
 America's busy, teeming, intricate whirl,
 Of aggregate and segregate for only thence releasing,
 To-day's eidólons.

These with the past,
 Of vanish'd lands, of all the reigns of kings across the sea,
 Old conquerors, old campaigns, old sailors' voyages,
 Joining eidólons.

Densities, growth, façades,
 Strata of mountains, soils, rocks, giant trees,
 Far-born, far-dying, living long, to leave,
 Eidólons everlasting.

Exaltè, rapt, ecstatic,
 The visible but their womb of birth,
 Of orbic tendencies to shape and shape and shape,
 The mighty earth-eidólón.

All space, all time,
 (The stars, the terrible perturbations of the suns,
 Swelling, collapsing, ending, serving their longer, shorter
 use,)
 Fill'd with eidólons only.

The noiseless myriads,
 The infinite oceans where the rivers empty,
 The separate countless free identities, like eyesight,
 The true realities, eidólons.

Not this the world,
 Nor these the universes, they the universes,

Purport and end, ever the permanent life of life,
Eidólons, eidólons,

Beyond thy lectures learn'd professor,
Beyond thy telescope or spectroscope observer keen, beyond
all mathematics,
Beyond the doctor's surgery, anatomy, beyond the chemist
with his chemistry,
The entities of entities, eidólons.

Unfix'd yet fix'd,
Ever shall be, ever have been and are,
Sweeping the present to the infinite future,
Eidólons, eidólons, eidólons.

The prophet and the bard,
Shall yet maintain themselves, in higher stages yet,
Shall mediate to the Modern, to Democracy, interpret yet to
them,
God and eidólons.

And thee my soul,
Joys, ceaseless exercises, exaltations,
Thy yearning amply fed at last, prepared to meet,
Thy mates, eidólons.

Thy body permanent,
The body lurking there within thy body,
The only purport of the form thou art, the real I myself,
An image, an eidólón.

Thy very songs not in thy songs,
No special strains to sing, none for itself,

But from the whole resulting, rising at last and floating,
A round full-orb'd eidolon.

FOR HIM I SING

For him I sing,
I raise the present on the past,
(As some perennial tree out of its roots, the present on the
past,)
With time and space I him dilate and fuse the immortal laws,
To make himself by them the law unto himself.

WHEN I READ THE BOOK

When I read the book, the biography famous,
And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's life?
And so will some one when I am dead and gone write my life?
(As if any man really knew aught of my life,
Why even I myself I often think know little or nothing of my
real life,
Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
I seek for my own use to trace out here.)

BEGINNING MY STUDIES

Beginning my studies the first step pleas'd me so much,
The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of mo-
tion,
The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,
The first step I say awed me and pleas'd me so much,
I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic songs.

BEGINNERS

How they are provided for upon the earth, (appearing at
intervals,)

How dear and dreadful they are to the earth,
 How they inure to themselves as much as to any—what a
 paradox appears their age,
 How people respond to them, yet know them not,
 How there is something relentless in their fate all times,
 How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation and
 reward,
 And how the same inexorable price must still be paid for the
 same great purchase.

TO THE STATES

To the States or any one of them, or any city of the States,
 Resist much, obey little,
 Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved,
 Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city of this earth, ever
 afterward resumes its liberty.

ON JOURNEYS THROUGH THE STATES

On journeys through the States we start,
 (Ay through the world, urged by these songs,
 Sailing henceforth to every land, to every sea,)
 We willing learners of all, teachers of all, and lovers of all.

We have watch'd the seasons dispensing themselves and
 passing on,
 And have said, Why should not a man or woman do as much
 as the seasons, and effuse as much?

We dwell a while in every city and town,
 We pass through Kanada,¹ the North-east, the vast valley of
 the Mississippi, and the Southern States,
 We confer on equal terms with each of the States,
 We make trial of ourselves and invite men and women to hear,

We say to ourselves, Remember, fear not, be candid, promulge the body and the soul,
 Dwell a while and pass on, be copious, temperate, chaste, magnetic,
 And what you effuse may then return as the seasons return,
 And may be just as much as the seasons.

TO A CERTAIN CANTATRICE¹

Here, take this gift,
 I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, or general,
 One who should serve the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and freedom of the race,
 Some brave confronter of despots, some daring rebel;
 But I see that what I was reserving belongs to you just as much as to any.

ME IMPERTURBE

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,
 Master of all or mistress of all, aplomb in the midst of irrational things,
 Imbued as they, passive, receptive, silent as they,
 Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less important than I thought,
 Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Mannahatta or the Tennessee, or far north or inland,
 A river man, or a man of the woods or of any farm-life of these States or of the coast, or the lakes or Kanada,
 Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for contingencies,
 To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.

SAVANTISM

Thither as I look I see each result and glory retracing itself
and nestling close, always obligated,
Thither hours, months, years—thither trades, compacts, es-
tablishments, even the most minute,
Thither every-day life, speech, utensils, politics, persons, es-
tates;
Thither we also, I with my leaves and songs, trustful, admi-
rant,
As a father to his father going takes his children along with
him.

THE SHIP STARTING

Lo, the unbounded sea,
On its breast a ship starting, spreading all sails, carrying even
her moonsails,¹
The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so
stately—below emulous² waves press for-
ward,
They surround the ship with shining curving motions and
foam.

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves
off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter
singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the
 morning, or at noon intermission or at sun-
 down,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at
 work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young
 fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

WHAT PLACE IS BESIEGED?

What place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the siege?

Lo, I send to that place a commander, swift, brave, immortal,
 And with him horse and foot, and parks of artillery,
 And artillery-men, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

STILL THOUGH THE ONE I SING

Still though the one I sing,

(One, yet of contradictions made,) I dedicate to Nationality,
 I leave in him revolt, (O latent right of insurrection! O
 quenchless, indispensable fire!)

SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS

Shut not your doors to me proud libraries,

For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd shelves, yet
 needed most, I bring,

Forth from the war emerging, a book I have made,
 The words of my book nothing, the drift of it every thing,
 A book separate, not link'd with the rest nor felt by the intel-
 lect,

But you ye untold latencies will thrill to every page.

POETS TO COME

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater
 than before known,
 Arouse! For you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,
 I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the
 darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping,
 turns a casual look upon you and then averts
 his face,
 Leaving it to you to prove and define it,
 Expecting the main things from you.

TO YOU

Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me,
 why should you not speak to me?
 And why should I not speak to you?

THOU READER

Thou reader throbbest life and pride and love the same as I,
 Therefore for thee the following chants.

STARTING FROM PAUMANOK

I

Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
 Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother,
 After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
 Dweller in Mannahatta my city, or on southern savannas,

Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun, or a
 miner in California,
 Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat, my
 drink from the spring,
 Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep recess,
 Far from the clank of crowds intervals passing rapt and
 happy,
 Aware of the fresh free giver the flowing Missouri, aware of
 mighty Niagara,
 Aware of the buffalo herds grazing the plains, the hirsute and
 strong-breasted bull,
 Of earth, rocks, Fifth-month flowers experienced, stars, rain,
 snow, my amaze,
 Having studied the mocking-bird's tones and the flight of the
 mountain-hawk,
 And heard at dawn the unrivall'd one, the hermit thrush
 from the swamp-cedars,
 Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New World.

2

Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
 The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
 Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

This then is life,
 Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes
 and convulsions.

How curious! how real!
 Underfoot the divine soil, overhead the sun.

See revolving globe,
 The ancestor-continents away group'd together,

The present and future continents north and south, with the
isthmus between.

See, vast trackless spaces,
As in a dream they change, they swiftly fill,
Countless masses debouch¹ upon them,
They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts, institu-
tions, known.

See, projected through time,
For me an audience interminable.
With firm and regular step they wend, they never stop,
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions,
One generation playing its part and passing on,
Another generation playing its part and passing on in its turn,
With faces turn'd sideways or backward towards me to listen,
With eyes retrospective towards me.

3

Americanos! conquerors! marches humanitarian!
Foremost! century marches! Libertad!² masses!
For you a programme of chants.

Chants of the prairies,
Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to the
Mexican sea,
Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Min-
nesota,
Chants going forth from the centre from Kansas, and thence
equidistant,
Shooting in pulses of fire ceaseless to vivify all.

4

Take my leaves America, take them South and take them
 North,
 Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are your own
 offspring,
 Surround them East and West, for they would surround
 you,
 And you precedents, connect lovingly with them, for they
 connect lovingly with you.

I conn'd old times,
 I sat studying at the feet of the great masters,
 Now if eligible O that the great masters might return and
 study me.

In the name of these States shall I scorn the antique?
 Why these are the children of the antique to justify it.

5

Dead poets, philosophers, priests,
 Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments long since,
 Language-shapers on other shores,
 Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or deso-
 late,
 I dare not proceed till I respectfully credit what you have left
 wafted hither,
 I have perused it, own it is admirable, (moving awhile
 among it,)
 Think nothing can ever be greater, nothing can ever deserve
 more than it deserves,
 Regarding it all intently a long while, then dismissing it,
 I stand in my place with my own day here.

Here lands female and male,
 Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world, here the
 flame of materials,
 Here spirituality the translatress, the openly-avow'd,
 The ever-tending, the finalè of visible forms,
 The satisfier, after due long-waiting now advancing,
 Yes here comes my mistress the soul.

6

The soul,
 Forever and forever—longer than soil is brown and solid—
 longer than water ebbs and flows.

I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be
 the most spiritual poems,
 And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
 For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems of my
 soul and of immortality.

I will make a song for these States that no one State may
 under any circumstances be subjected to
 another State,
 And I will make a song that there shall be comity by day and
 by night between all the States, and
 between any two of them,
 And I will make a song for the ears of the President, full of
 weapons with menacing points,
 And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces;
 And a song make I of the One form'd out of all,
 The fang'd and glittering One whose head is over all,
 Resolute warlike One including and over all,
 (However high the head of any else that head is over all.)

I will acknowledge contemporary lands,
 I will trail the whole geography of the globe and salute courteously every city large and small,
 And employments! I will put in my poems that with you is heroism upon land and sea,
 And I will report all heroism from an American point of view.

I will sing the song of companionship,
 I will show what alone must finally compact these,
 I believe these are to found their own ideal of manly love, indicating it in me,
 I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that were threatening to consume me,
 I will lift what has too long kept down those smouldering fires,
 I will give them complete abandonment,
 I will write the evangel-poem of comrades and of love,
 For who but I should understand love with all its sorrow and joy?
 And who but I should be the poet of comrades?

7

I am the credulous man of qualities, ages, races,
 I advance from the people in their own spirit,
 Here is what sings unrestricted faith.

Omnes!^a omnes! let others ignore what they may,
 I make the poem of evil also, I commemorate that part also,
 I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is—and
 I say there is in fact no evil,
 (Or if there is I say it is just as important to you, to the land or to me, as any thing else.)

I too, following many and follow'd by many, inaugurate a religion,
 I descend into the arena,
 (It may be I am destin'd to utter the loudest cries there, the
 winner's pealing shouts,
 Who knows? they may rise from me yet, and soar above
 every thing.)

Each is not for its own sake,
 I say the whole earth and all the stars in the sky are for religion's sake.
 I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough,
 None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough,
 None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and how
 certain the future is.

I say that the real and permanent grandeur of these States must be their religion,
 Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur;
 (Nor character nor life worthy the name without religion,
 Nor land nor man or woman without religion.)

8

What are you doing young man?
 Are you so earnest, so given up to literature, science, art,
 amours?
 These ostensible realities, politics, points?
 Your ambition or business whatever it may be?

It is well—against such I say not a word, I am their poet also,
 But behold! such swiftly subside, burnt up for religion's sake,
 For not all matter is fuel to heat, impalpable flame, the essential
 life of the earth,
 Any more than such are to religion.

9

What do you seek so pensive and silent?
 What do you need camerado?⁴
 Dear son do you think it is love?

Listen dear son—listen America, daughter or son,
 It is a painful thing to love a man or woman to excess, and yet
 it satisfies, it is great,
 But there is something else very great, it makes the whole
 coincide,
 It, magnificent, beyond materials, with continuous hands
 sweeps and provides for all.

10

Know you, solely to drop in the earth the germs of a greater
 religion,
 The following chants each for its kind I sing.
 My comrade!
 For you to share with me two greatneses, and a third one
 rising inclusive and more resplendent,
 The greatness of Love and Democracy, and the greatness of
 Religion.

Melange⁵ mine own, the unseen and the seen,
 Mysterious ocean where the streams empty,
 Prophetic spirit of materials shifting and flickering around me,
 Living beings, identities now doubtless near us in the air that
 we know not of,
 Contact daily and hourly that will not release me,
 These selecting, these in hints demanded of me.

Not he with a daily kiss onward from childhood kissing me,
 Has winded and twisted around me that which holds me to him,

Any more than I am held to the heavens and all the spiritual
 world,
 After what they have done to me, suggesting themes.

O such themes—equalities! O divine average!
 Warblings under the sun, usher'd as now, or at noon, or
 setting,
 Strains musical flowing through ages, now reaching
 hither,
 I take to your reckless and composite chords, add to them,
 and cheerfully pass them forward.

11

As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,
 I have seen where the she-bird the mocking-bird sat on her
 nest in the briers hatching her brood.
 I have seen the he-bird also,
 I have paus'd to hear him near at hand inflating his throat
 and joyfully singing.

And while I paus'd it came to me that what he really sang for
 was not there only,
 Nor for his mate nor himself only, nor all sent back by the
 echoes,
 But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,
 A charge transmitted and gift occult for those being born.

12

Democracy! near at hand to you a throat is now inflating it-
 self and joyfully singing.
 Ma femme!⁶ for the brood beyond us and of us,
 For those who belong here and those to come,
 I exultant to be ready for them will now shake out carols

stronger and haughtier than have ever yet
been heard upon earth.

I will make the songs of passion to give them their way,
And your songs outlaw'd offenders, for I scan you with kin-
dred eyes, and carry you with me the same
as any.

I will make the true poem of riches,
To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres
and goes forward and is not dropt by
death;

I will effuse egotism and show it underlying all, and I will be
the bard of personality,

And I will show of male and female that either is but the
equal of the other,

And sexual organs and acts! do you concentrate in me, for I
am determin'd to tell you with courageous
clear voice to prove you illustrious,

And I will show that there is no imperfection in the present,
and can be none in the future,

And I will show that whatever happens to anybody it may be
turn'd to beautiful results,

And I will show that nothing can happen more beautiful than
death,

And I will thread a thread through my poems that time and
events are compact,

And that all the things of the universe are perfect miracles,
each as profound as any.

I will not make poems with reference to parts,
But I will make poems, songs, thoughts, with reference to
ensemble,

And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with refer-
ence to all days,

And I will not make a poem nor the least part of a poem but
has reference to the soul,

Because having look'd at the objects of the universe, I find
there is no one nor any particle of one but
has reference to the soul.

13

Was somebody asking to see the soul?

See, your own shape and countenance, persons, substances,
beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the
rocks and sands.

All hold spiritual joys and afterwards loosen them;
How can the real body ever die and be buried?

Of your real body and any man's or woman's real body,
Item for item it will elude the hands of the corpse-cleaners
and pass to fitting spheres,
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to
the moment of death.

Not the types set up by the printer return their impression,
the meaning, the main concern,
Any more than a man's substance and life or a woman's sub-
stance and life return in the body and the
soul,
Indifferently before death and after death.

Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main con-
cern, and includes and is the soul;
Whoever you are, how superb and how divine is your body,
or any part of it!

14

Whoever you are, to you endless announcements!
Daughter of the lands did you wait for your poet?
Did you wait for one with a flowing mouth and indicative hand?

Toward the male of the States, and toward the female of the
States,

Exulting words, words to Democracy's lands.

Interlink'd, food-yielding lands!

Land of coal and iron! land of gold! land of cotton, sugar,
rice!

Land of wheat, beef, pork! land of wool and hemp! land of
the apple and the grape!

Land of the pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world! land
of those sweet-air'd interminable plateaus!

Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobie!⁷

Lands where the north-west Columbia winds, and where the
south-west Colorado winds!

Land of the eastern Chesapeake! land of the Delaware!

Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!

Land of the Old Thirteen! Massachusetts land! land of Ver-
mont and Connecticut!

Land of the ocean shores! land of sierras and peaks!

Land of boatmen and sailors! fishermen's land!

Inextricable lands! the clutch'd together! the passionate ones!

The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-
limb'd!

The great women's land! the feminine! the experienced sis-
ters and the inexperienced sisters!

Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd! the di-
verse! the compact!

The Pennsylvanian! the Virginian! the double Carolinian!

O all and each well-loved by me! my intrepid nations! O I at
any rate include you all with perfect love!
I cannot be discharged from you! not from one any sooner
than another!
O death! O for all that, I am yet of you unseen this hour with
irrepressible love,
Walking New England, a friend, a traveler,
Splashing my bare feet in the edge of the summer ripples on
Paumanok's sands,
Crossing the prairies, dwelling again in Chicago, dwelling in
every town,
Observing shows, births, improvements, structures, arts,
Listening to orators and oratresses in public halls,
Of and through the States as during life, each man and
woman my neighbor,
The Louisianian, the Georgian, as near to me, and I as near
to him and her,
The Mississippian and Arkansian yet with me, and I yet with
any of them,
Yet upon the plains west of the spinal river, yet in my house
of adobie,
Yet returning eastward, yet in the Seaside State or in Mary-
land,
Yet Kanadian cheerily braving the winter, the snow and ice
welcome to me,
Yet a true son either of Maine or of the Granite State, or the
Narragansett Bay State, or the Empire
State,
Yet sailing to other shores to annex the same, yet welcoming
every new brother,
Hereby applying these leaves to the new ones from the hour
they unite with the old ones,

Coming among the new ones myself to be their companion
 and equal, coming personally to you now,
 Enjoining you to acts, characters, spectacles, with me.

15

With me with firm holding, yet haste, haste on.

For your life adhere to me,
 (I may have to be persuaded many times before I consent to
 give myself really to you, but what of that?
 Must not Nature be persuaded many times?)

No dainty dolce affettuoso⁸ I,
 Bearded, sun-burnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have arrived,
 To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the uni-
 verse,
 For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them.

16

On my way a moment I pause,
 Here for you! and here for America!
 Still the present I raise aloft, still the future of the States I
 harbinge⁹ glad and sublime,
 And for the past I pronounce what the air holds of the red
 aborigines.

The red aborigines,
 Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds, calls as of
 birds and animals in the woods, syllabled to
 us for names,
 Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez, Chat-
 tahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco,
 Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-Walla,

Leaving such to the States they melt, they depart, charging
the water and the land with names.

17

Expanding and swift, henceforth,
Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick and audacious,
A world primal again, vistas of glory incessant and branching,
A new race dominating previous ones and grander far, with
new contests,
New politics, new literatures and religions, new inventions
and arts.

These, my voice announcing—I will sleep no more but arise,
You oceans that have been calm within me! how I feel you,
fathomless, stirring, preparing unprecedented waves and storms.

18

See, steamers steaming through my poems,
See, in my poems immigrants continually coming and landing,
See, in arriere,¹⁰ the wigwam, the trail, the hunter's hut, the
flat-boat, the maize-leaf, the claim, the rude
fence, and the backwoods village,
See, on the one side the Western Sea and on the other the
Eastern Sea, how they advance and retreat
upon my poems as upon their own shores,
See, pastures and forests in my poems—see, animals wild
and tame—see, beyond the Kaw,¹¹ countless
herds of buffalo feeding on short curly
grass,
See, in my poems, cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved

streets, with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehicles, and commerce,
 See, the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press—see, the electric telegraph stretching across the continent,
 See, through Atlantica's depths pulses American Europe reaching, pulses of Europe duly return'd,
 See, the strong and quick locomotive as it departs, panting, blowing the steam-whistle,
 See, ploughmen ploughing farms—see, miners digging mines—see, the numberless factories,
 See, mechanics busy at their benches with tools—see from among them superior judges, philosophers, Presidents, emerge, drest in working dresses,
 See, lounging through the shops and fields of the States, me well-belov'd, close-held by day and night,
 Hear the loud echoes of my songs here—read the hints come at last.

19

O camerado close! O you and me at last, and us two only.
 O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly!
 O something ecstatic and undemonstrable! O music wild!
 O now I triumph—and you shall also;
 O hand in hand—O wholesome pleasure—O one more desirer and lover!
 O to haste firm holding—to haste, haste on with me.

SONG OF MYSELF

1

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
 And what I assume you shall assume,

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