
Leaves of Grass



by Walt Whitman

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BOOK I. 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 ether 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, the melancholy 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 by-gones
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, aggregates, rulers
and priests
I, habitan of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is in himself 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.

EIDOLONS

I met a seer
Passing the hues and objects of the world
The fields of art and learning, pleasure, sense
To glean eidolons.

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 eidolons.

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

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

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

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

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 eidolon.

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, eidolons.

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

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 eidolons.

Densities, growth, facades

Strata of mountains, soils, rocks, giant trees
Far-born, far-dying, living long, to leave
Eidolons everlasting.

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

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

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

Not this the world
Nor these the universes, they the universes
Purport and end, ever the permanent life of life
Eidolons, eidolons.

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

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

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 eidolons.

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

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 eidolon.

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 clues 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 motion
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, 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 CANTATRICE

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, establishments,
even the most minute
Thither every-day life, speech, utensils, politics, persons, estates;
Thither we also, I with my leaves and songs, trustful, admirant
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.
The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so stately—below
emulous waves press forward
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 deckhand
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 sundown
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 intellect
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.

BOOK II

STARTING FROM PAUMANOK

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 Nia-
gara
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 the globe

The ancestor-continent 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 debouch upon them

They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts, institutions, 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! 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 Minnesota

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 off-spring

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, philosophs, priests
 Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments long since
 Language-shapers on other shores
 Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or desolate
 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 mate-
 rials
 Here spirituality the translatress, the openly-avow'd
 The ever-tending, the finale 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 wa-
 ter 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 cir-
 cumstances 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! 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 de-
scend 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 just 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?
 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 greatnesses, and a third one rising
 inclusive and more resplendent
 The greatness of Love and Democracy, and the greatness of Religion.
 Melange 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 itself and joy-
fully singing.

Ma femme! 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 kindred 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 deter-
min'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 pro-
found 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 reference 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 substance 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 concern and in-
 cludes 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!
 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 Vermont 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 sisters and the
 inexperienced sisters!
 Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd! the diverse! 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 neigh-
 bor
 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 Maryland
 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 affettuoso I
Bearded, sun-burnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have arrived
To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the universe
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 harbinge 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, Chattahoochee
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, 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, 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 there—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.

BOOK III

SONG OF MYSELF

1

I celebrate myself, and sing myself
And what I assume you shall assume
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
I loafe and invite my soul
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.
My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their
parents the same
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin
Hoping to cease not till death.
Creeds and schools in abeyance
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard
Nature without check with original energy.

2

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded with
perfumes

I breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distillation, it is
odorless

It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath

Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread, crotch and vine
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of
blood and air through my lungs

The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark-
color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn

The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the
wind

A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around of arms

The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag

The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and
hill-sides

The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed
and meeting the sun.

Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth
much?

Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?

Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all
poems

You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of
suns left,)

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through
the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me

You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.

3

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and
the end

But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now

Nor any more youth or age than there is now

And will never be any more perfection than there is now

Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge
Always the procreant urge of the world.
Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always substance and in-
crease, always sex
Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.
To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.
Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied,
braced in the beams
Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical
I and this mystery here we stand.
Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.
Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen
Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.
Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they
discuss I am silent, and go bathe and admire myself.
Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and
clean
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be
less familiar than the rest.
I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing;
As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side through the
night, and withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread
Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels swelling the house with
their plenty
Shall I postpone my acceptation and realization and scream at my eyes
That they turn from gazing after and down the road
And forthwith cipher and show me to a cent
Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and which is ahead?

4

Trippers and askers surround me
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I
live in, or the nation
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old and new
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or lack of
money, or depressions or exaltations
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news, the fitful
events;
These come to me days and nights and go from me again
But they are not the Me myself.
Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am

Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable certain rest
Looking with side-curved head curious what will come next
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.

Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with
linguists and contenders
I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

5

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you
And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat
Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even
the best

Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon
me

And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to
my bare-stript heart

And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass
all the argument of the earth

And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own

And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own

And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my
sisters and lovers

And that a kelson of the creation is love

And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields

And brown ants in the little wells beneath them

And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein and
poke-weed.

6

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than
he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff
woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord

A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt

Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and
remark, and say Whose?

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones
Growing among black folks as among white
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive
them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out
of their mothers' laps
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers
Darker than the colorless beards of old men
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.
I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon
out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?
They are alive and well somewhere
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to
arrest it
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.
All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.
I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe, and am
not contain'd between my hat and boots
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and every one good
The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.
I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathom-
less as myself
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)
Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine male and female
For me those that have been boys and that love women
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be slighted

For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and the mothers
of mothers
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears
For me children and the begetters of children.
Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken
away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and silently brush away flies with
my hand.
The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up the bushy hill
I peeringly view them from the top.
The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bedroom
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair, I note where the pistol has
fallen.
The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the prome-
naders
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the clank
of the shod horses on the granite floor
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the hospital
The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall
The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working his pas-
sage to the centre of the crowd
The impassive stones that receive and return so many echoes
What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or in fits
What exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home and give
birth to babes
What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what howls re-
strain'd by decorum
Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, acceptances rejec-
tions with convex lips
I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I depart.

9

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-drawn wagon
The clear light plays on the brown gray and green intertinged
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.
I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the load

I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the clover and timothy
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by my side.
The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time;
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west the bride
was a red girl

Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly smoking
they had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from
their shoulders

On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins, his luxuriant
beard and curls protected his neck, he held his bride by the hand
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight locks de-
scended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet
And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some
coarse clean clothes

And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

11

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore
Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;
Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome.

She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank
She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the window.

Which of the young men does she like the best?

Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather
The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their long
hair

Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.

An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies
It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge to the sun,
they do not ask who seizes fast to them
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending
arch

They do not think whom they souse with spray.

12

The butcher-boy puts off his killing-clothes, or sharpens his knife at the
stall in the market

I loiter enjoying his repartee and his shuffle and break-down.

Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil
Each has his main-sledge, they are all out, there is a great heat in the fire.

From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements
The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms
Overhand the hammers swing, overhand so slow, overhand so sure
They do not hasten, each man hits in his place.

13

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block swags un-
derneath on its tied-over chain

The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady and tall he
stands pois'd on one leg on the string-piece

His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over
his hip-band

His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his hat away
from his forehead

The sun falls on his crispy hair and mustache, falls on the black of his
polish'd and perfect limbs.

I behold the picturesque giant and love him, and I do not stop there
I go with the team also.

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well as forward
sluing

To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object missing

Absorbing all to myself and for this song.

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is that
you express in your eyes?

It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck on my distant and day-
long ramble

They rise together, they slowly circle around.

I believe in those wing'd purposes

And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me

And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional

And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else

And the in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills pretty well to
me

And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

14

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night

Ya-honk he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation

The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listening close

Find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry sky.

The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the house-sill, the chick-
adee, the prairie-dog

The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats

The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings

I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections

They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors

Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods

Of the builders and steerers of ships and the wielders of axes and mauls,
and the drivers of horses

I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me

Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns

Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me

Not asking the sky to come down to my good will

Scattering it freely forever.

15

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft

The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane whistles its
wild ascending lisp

The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanksgiving
dinner

The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon are ready
The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches
The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the altar
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big wheel
The farmer stops by the bars as he walks on a First-day loafe and looks
at the oats and rye
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirm'd case
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-
room;)
The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case
He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blurr with the manuscript;
The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table
What is removed drops horribly in a pail;
The quadron girl is sold at the auction-stand, the drunkard nods by the
bar-room stove
The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his beat the gate-
keeper marks who pass
The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not
know him;)
The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race
The western turkey-shooting draws old and young, some lean on their
rifles, some sit on logs
Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his
piece;
The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee
As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from
his saddle
The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the
dancers bow to each other
The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret and harks to the musical
rain
The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron
The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth is offering moccasins and
bead-bags for sale
The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes
bent sideways
As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the plank is thrown for the
shore-going passengers
The young sister holds out the skein while the elder sister winds it off in
a ball, and stops now and then for the knots
The one-year wife is recovering and happy having a week ago borne her
first child
The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine or in the
factory or mill
The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer, the reporter's lead
flies swiftly over the note-book, the sign-painter is lettering with blue

and gold

The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-keeper counts at his desk,
the shoemaker waxes his thread

The conductor beats time for the band and all the performers follow him
The child is baptized, the convert is making his first professions

The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is begun, (how the white sails
sparkle!)

The drover watching his drove sings out to them that would stray

The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling
about the odd cent;)

The bride unrumples her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock
moves slowly

The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips

The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pim-
pled neck

The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each
other

(Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)

The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Sec-
retaries

On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms

The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold

The Missourian crosses the plains toting his wares and his cattle

As the fare-collector goes through the train he gives notice by the jingling
of loose change

The floor-men are laying the floor, the tanners are tanning the roof, the
masons are calling for mortar

In single file each shouldering his hod pass onward the laborers;

Seasons pursuing each other the indescribable crowd is gather'd, it is the
fourth of Seventh-month, (what salutes of cannon and small arms!)

Seasons pursuing each other the plougher ploughs, the mower mows,
and the winter-grain falls in the ground;

Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the
frozen surface

The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep with
his axe

Flatboatmen make fast towards dusk near the cotton-wood or pecan-
trees

Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river or through those
drain'd by the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansas

Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahooche or Altamahaw
Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-grandsons
around them

In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their
day's sport

The city sleeps and the country sleeps

The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time

The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife;
And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

16

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine
One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest
the same
A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable
down by the Oconee I live
A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the limberest
joints on earth and the sternest joints on earth
A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin leggings,
a Louisianian or Georgian
A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buck-
eye;
At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with fishermen
off Newfoundland
At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking
At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan
ranch
Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, (loving
their big proportions,)
Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and
welcome to drink and meat
A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest
A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons
Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker
Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.
I resist any thing better than my own diversity
Breathe the air but leave plenty after me
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.
(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place
The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place
The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

17

These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not
original with me
If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next to nothing

If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are nothing
If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is
This the common air that bathes the globe.

18

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquer'd
and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they
are won.

I beat and pound for the dead
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!

And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!

And to those themselves who sank in the sea!

And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!

And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!

19

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger
It is for the wicked just same as the righteous, I make appointments with
all

I will not have a single person slighted or left away
The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited
The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;
There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odor of hair
This the touch of my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning
This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face
This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?
Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side
of a rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?
Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering through
the woods?

Do I astonish more than they?
This hour I tell things in confidence
I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

20

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?
What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?
All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over
That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids, conformity
goes to the fourth-remov'd

I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious?
Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair, counsel'd with doc-
tors and calculated close

I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound

To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass

I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at
night.

I know I am august

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood

I see that the elementary laws never apologize

(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after
all.)

I exist as I am, that is enough

If no other in the world be aware I sit content

And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself

And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million
years

I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite

I laugh at what you call dissolution

And I know the amplitude of time.

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul

The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me

The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing night!

Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!

Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!

Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!

Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!

Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!

Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!

Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!

Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!

Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!

O unspeakable passionate love.

22

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean
I behold from the beach your crooked fingers
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight of the land
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells

Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths

Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd yet always-ready graves

Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea

I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation

Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each others' arms.

I am he attesting sympathy
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house that supports them?)
I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?
Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and rectified?
I find one side a balance and the antipedal side a balance
Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions
There is no better than it and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well to-day is not such wonder
The wonder is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

23

Endless unfolding of words of ages!
And mine a word of the modern, the word En-Masse.
A word of the faith that never balks
Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I accept Time absolutely.
It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all
That mystic baffling wonder alone completes all.
I accept Reality and dare not question it
Materialism first and last imbuing.
Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!
Fetch stonecrop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of
the old cartouches
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas.
This is the geologist, this works with the scalper, and this is a mathematician.
Gentlemen, to you the first honors always!
Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.
Less the reminders of properties told my words
And more the reminders they of life untold, and of freedom and extrication

And make short account of neuters and geldings, and favor men and women fully equipt
And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives and them that plot and conspire.

24

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!

Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves
Voices of the diseas'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion
And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-stuff

And of the rights of them the others are down upon
Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices

Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from

The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my own body, or any part of it

Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall be you!
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!
Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs! it shall be you!
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you!
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it shall be you!
Sun so generous it shall be you!
Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall be you!
You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you!
Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!
Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounge in my winding paths, it shall be you!
Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever touch'd, it shall be you.
I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious
Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy
I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my faintest wish
Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the friendship I take again.
That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be
A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.
To behold the day-break!
The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows
The air tastes good to my palate.
Hefts of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising freshly exuding
Scooting obliquely high and low.
Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.
The earth by the sky staid with, the daily close of their junction
The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

25

Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sun-rise would kill me
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as the sun
We found our own O my soul in the calm and cool of the daybreak.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to measure itself
It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically
Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?
Come now I will not be tantalized, you conceive too much of articulation
Do you not know O speech how the buds beneath you are folded?
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost
The dirt receding before my prophetic screams
I underlying causes to balance them at last
My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally with the meaning of all
things

Happiness, (which whoever hears me let him or her set out in search
of this day.)

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me what I really am
Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me
I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking toward you.

Writing and talk do not prove me
I carry the plenum of proof and every thing else in my face
With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.

26

Now I will do nothing but listen
To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames clack
of sticks cooking my meals

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice

I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following
Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night
Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of work-
people at their meals

The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the sick
The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pronouncing a
death-sentence

The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves, the refrain
of the anchor-lifters

The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streaking en-
gines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd lights
The steam-whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching cars

The slow march play'd at the head of the association marching two and two
(They go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.)

I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,)
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera
Ah this indeed is music--this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies
It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possess'd them
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles
And that we call Being.

27

To be in any form, what is that?
(Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back thither,)
If nothing lay more develop'd the quahaug in its callous shell were enough.

Mine is no callous shell
I have instant conductors all over me whether I pass or stop
They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through me.
I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy
To touch my person to some one else's is about as much as I can stand.

28

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins
Traacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them
My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly different from myself
On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs
Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip
Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial
Depriving me of my best as for a purpose
Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist
Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields
Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away

They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the edges of me
No consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my anger
Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while
Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.

The sentries desert every other part of me
They have left me helpless to a red marauder
They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.

I am given up by traitors
I talk wildly, I have lost my wits, I and nobody else am the greatest traitor
I went myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me there.

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight in its throat
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.

29

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-tooth'd touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?
Parting track'd by arriving, perpetual payment of perpetual loan
Rich showering rain, and recompense richer afterward.
Sprouts take and accumulate, stand by the curb prolific and vital
Landscapes projected masculine, full-sized and golden.

30

All truths wait in all things
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon
The insignificant is as big to me as any
(What is less or more than a touch?)
Logic and sermons never convince
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.
(Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so
Only what nobody denies is so.)
A minute and a drop of me settle my brain
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and lamps
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or woman
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have for each other
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it becomes
omnific
And until one and all shall delight us, and we them.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of the stars
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the
wren

And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits, grains, esculent roots

And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over
And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons
But call any thing back again when I desire it.

In vain the speeding or shyness
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my approach
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters lying low
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

32

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd

I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things

Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago

Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?
Myself moving forward then and now and forever
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on brotherly terms.
A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my caresses
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears

Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly moving.
His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we race around and return.
I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop them?
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.
My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents
I am afoot with my vision.
By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with lumbermen
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed
Weeding my onion-patch or hosing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas, trailing in forests
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the shallow river
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where the buck turns furiously at the hunter
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where the otter is feeding on fish
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the beaver pats the mud with his paddle-shaped tail;
Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its low moist field
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots from the gutters
Over the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-flower flax
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there with the rest
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged limbs
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-lot

Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve, where the great goldbug
drops through the dark
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows to the
meadow
Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering
of their hides
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons straddle the
hearth-slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters;
Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its cylinders
Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs
Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself and
looking comsedly down,)
Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat hatches
pale-green eggs in the dented sand
Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it
Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents
Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where the dead are corrupting be-
low;
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments
Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance
Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of
base-ball
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances,
drinking, laughter
At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice
through a straw
At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find
At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, house-raising;
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams,
weeps
Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scat-
ter'd, where the brood-cow waits in the hovel
Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the stud to the
mare, where the cock is treading the hen
Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short jerks
Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome
prairie
Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far
and near
Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived
swan is curving and winding
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-
human laugh

Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden half hid by the high weeds
Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out
Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery
Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and feeds upon small crabs
Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves
Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs
Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through the office or public hall;
Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd with the new and old
Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd seriously at the camp-meeting;
Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the whole forenoon, flattening the flesh of my nose on the thick plate glass
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a lane or along the beach
My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle;
Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-boy, (behind me he rides at the drape of the day,)
Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print
By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish patient
Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with a candle;
Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure
Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while
Walking the old hills of Judaea with the beautiful gentle God by my side
Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars
Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty thousand miles
Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest
Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly
Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning
Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing

I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product
And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at quintillions green.

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul
My course runs below the soundings of plummet.

I help myself to material and immaterial
No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-pointed
staff, clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck

I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful beauty
The enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery is plain
in all directions

The white-topt mountains show in the distance, I fling out my fancies
toward them

We are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon to be
engaged

We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with still feet
and caution

Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the
globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires
I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay with the bride myself
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs
They fetch my man's body up dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes
The courage of present times and all times

How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the
steamship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm

How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of
days and faithful of nights

And chalk'd in large letters on a board, Be of good cheer, we will not
desert you;

How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would
not give it up

How he saved the drifting company at last

How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of
their prepared graves

How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd
unshaved men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs
The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her
children gazing on
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing,
cover'd with sweat
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous
buckshot and the bullets
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my
skin
I fall on the weeds and stones
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-
stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the
wounded person
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their
fire-caps
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment
I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers
Again the attacking cannon, mortars
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots
The ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip

Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs
The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with
his hand
He gasps through the clot Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.

34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth
(I tell not the fall of Alamo
Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,)
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve
young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow square with their baggage for
breastworks

Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemies, nine times their
number, was the price they took in advance
Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal,
gave up their arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were brought out in squads and mas-
sacred, it was beautiful early summer
The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark and straight
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and dead lay
together

The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the new-comers saw them there
Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away
These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd with the blunts of mus-
kets

A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till two more came to
release him
The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;
That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve young men.

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.
Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he),
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and
never was, and never will be;
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.
We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.
We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water
On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire killing
all around and blowing up overhead.
Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five
feet of water reported
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to
give them a chance for themselves.
The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.
Our frigate takes fire
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?
Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain
We have not struck, he composedly cries, we have just begun our part of
the fighting.
Only three guns are in use
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's main-mast
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear
his decks.
The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.
Not a moment's cease
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-
magazine.
One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are
sinking.
Serene stands the little captain
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.
Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one
we have conquer'd
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a coun-
tenance white as a sheet
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd
whiskers
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon
the masts and spars
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves
Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore,
death-messages given in charge to survivors
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull,
tapering groan
These so, these irretrievable.

37

You laggards there on guard! look to your arms!
In at the conquer'd doors they crowd! I am possess'd!
Embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering
See myself in prison shaped like another man
And feel the dull unintermitted pain.
For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.
Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him and
walk by his side
(I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat on my
twitching lips.)
Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too, and am tried and
sentenced.
Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I also lie at the last gasp
My face is ash-color'd, my sinews gnarl, away from me people retreat.
Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them
I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

38

Enough! enough! enough!
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!

Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers, dreams, gaping
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

That I could forget the mockers and insults!

That I could forget the trickling tears and the blows of the bludgeons and
hammers!

That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody
crowning.

I remember now

I resume the overstaid fraction

The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to it, or to any graves
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of an average unend-
ing procession

Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines

Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth

The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thousands of years.

Eleves, I salute you! come forward!

Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

39

The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?

Is he waiting for civilization, or past it and mastering it?

Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-doors? is he Kanadian?

Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon, California?

The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life? or sailor from the sea?

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him

They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to them, stay with
them.

Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, uncomb'd head,
laughter, and naivete

Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes and emanations

They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers

They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath, they fly out of the
glance of his eyes.

40

Flaunt of the sunshine I need not your bask-lie over!

You light surfaces only, I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands

Say, old top-knot, what do you want?

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot

And might tell what it is in me and what it is in you, but cannot

And might tell that pining I have, that pulse of my nights and days.

Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity
When I give I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you
Spread your palms and lift the flaps of your pockets
I am not to be denied, I compel, I have stores plenty and to spare
And any thing I have I bestow.

I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me
You can do nothing and be nothing but what I will infold you.

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean
On his right cheek I put the family kiss
And in my soul I swear I never will deny him.

On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes.
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics.)
To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door.

Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will
O despairer, here is my neck
By God, you shall not go down! hang your whole weight upon me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

Sleep—I and they keep guard all night
Not doubt, not decease shall dare to lay finger upon you
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you is so.

41

I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on their backs
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed help.

I heard what was said of the universe
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?
Magnifying and applying come I
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix en-
graved
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image

Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days
(They bore mites as for unfledg'd birds who have now to rise and fly and
sing for themselves,)
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself, bestowing
them freely on each man and woman I see
Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves driving the
mallet and chisel
Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair
on the back of my hand just as curious as any revelation
Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to me than
the gods of the antique wars
Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction
Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white foreheads
whole and unhurt out of the flames;
By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every
person born
Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with
shirts bagg'd out at their waists
The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and to come
Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother
and sit by him while he is tried for forgery;
What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about me, and
not filling the square rod then
The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough
Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd
The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be one of the
supremes
The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as the best,
and be as prodigious;
By my life-lumps! becoming already a creator
Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows.

42

A call in the midst of the crowd
My own voice, orotund sweeping and final.
Come my children
Come my boys and girls, my women, household and intimates
Now the performer launches his nerve, he has pass'd his prelude on the
reeds within.
Easily written loose-finger'd chords—I feel the thrum of your climax and
close.
My head slues round on my neck
Music rolls, but not from the organ
Folks are around me, but they are no household of mine.

Ever the hard unsunk ground
Ever the eaters and drinkers, ever the upward and downward sun, ever
the air and the ceaseless tides
Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real
Ever the old inexplicable query, ever that thorn'd thumb, that breath of
itches and thirsts
Ever the vexer's hoot! hoot! till we find where the sly one hides and
bring him forth
Ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life
Ever the bandage under the chin, ever the trestles of death.

Here and there with dimes on the eyes walking
To feed the greed of the belly the brains liberally spooning
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never once going
Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for payment
receiving
A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually claiming.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspa-
pers, schools
The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks,
stores, real estate and personal estate.

The little plentiful manikins skipping around in collars and tail'd coats
I am aware who they are, (they are positively not worms or fleas,)
I acknowledge the duplicates of myself, the weakest and shallowest is
deathless with me
What I do and say the same waits for them
Every thought that flounders in me the same flounders in them.

I know perfectly well my own egotism
Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less
And would fetch you whoever you are flush with myself.

Not words of routine this song of mine
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond yet nearer bring;
This printed and bound book—but the printer and the printing-office boy?
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend close and solid in
your arms?
The black ship mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in her turrets—but the
pluck of the captain and engineers?
In the houses the dishes and fare and furniture—but the host and hostess,
and the look out of their eyes?
The sky up there—yet here or next door, or across the way?
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself?
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human brain
And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and
modern

Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun
Making a fetich of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the
circle of obis

Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere
in the woods a gymnosophist

Drinking mead from the skull-cap, to Shastas and Vedas admirant, mind-
ing the Koran

Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and knife, beating
the serpent-skin drum

Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing as-
suredly that he is divine

To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in
a pew

Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my
spirit arouses me

Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and land
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like man leav-
ing charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded

Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, atheistical

I know every one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair and
unbelief.

How the flukes splash!

How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers

I take my place among you as much as among any

The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same

And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all, precisely the
same.

I do not know what is untried and afterward

But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd, not single
one can it fall.

It cannot fall the young man who died and was buried

Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side

Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and
was never seen again

Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with bitterness worse than gall
Nor him in the poor house tubercled by rum and the bad disorder
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish koboo call'd the ordure of humanity
Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in
Nor any thing in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth
Nor any thing in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of myriads that inhabit them
Nor the present, nor the least wisp that is known.

44

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.
What is known I strip away
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.
The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate?
We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.
Births have brought us richness and variety
And other births will bring us richness and variety.
I do not call one greater and one smaller
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.
Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my brother, my sister?
I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous upon me
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with lamentation
(What have I to do with lamentation?)
I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be.
My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.
Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.
Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.
Immense have been the preparations for me
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.
Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.
Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.
For it the nebula cohered to an orb

The long slow strata piled to rest it on
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it
with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

45

O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity!

O manhood, balanced, florid and full.

My lovers suffocate me

Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin

Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to me at night

Crying by day, Ahoy! from the rocks of the river, swinging and chirping
over my head

Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush

Lighting on every moment of my life

Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses

Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them to be
mine.

Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!

Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what grows after
and out of itself

And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems

And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim of the
farther systems.

Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding

Outward and outward and forever outward.

My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels

He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit

And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage

If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this
moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail the long run

We should surely bring up again where we now stand

And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard
the span or make it impatient

They are but parts, any thing is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that

Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain

The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

46

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and
never will be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen all!)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods
No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, exchange
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll
My left hand hooking you round the waist
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road.
Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you
You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not know
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine, and let us hasten forth
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of your hand on my
hip
And in due time you shall repay the same service to me
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven
And I said to my spirit When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and
the pleasure and knowledge of every thing in them, shall we be fill'd
and satisfied then?

And my spirit said No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.

You are also asking me questions and I hear you
I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself.

Sit a while dear son
Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink
But as soon as you sleep and renew yourself in sweet clothes, I kiss you
with a good-by kiss and open the gate for your egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams
Now I wash the gum from your eyes
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment
of your life.

Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout, and
laughingly dash with your hair.

I am the teacher of athletes
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of
my own

He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power, but
in his own right Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel cuts
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song
or play on the banjo

Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox over all
latherers

And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?

I follow you whoever you are from the present hour

My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while

I wait for a boat

(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of you

Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house

And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to him or her who
privately stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore

The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or motion of waves key

The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me

But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well

The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me with him
all day

The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and
love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine

On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not fail them

On that solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket

The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon

The young mother and old mother comprehend me

The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are

They and all would resume what I have told them.

48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own fu-
neral drest in his shroud
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learn-
ing of all times
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it
may become a hero
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed
before a million universes.
And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about
death.)
I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the
least
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.
Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment
then
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by
God's name
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

49

And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to
alarm me.
To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes
I see the elder-hand pressing receiving supporting
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.
And as to you Corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not
offend me
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.
And as to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)
I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and promotions

If you do not say any thing how can I say any thing?
Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest
Of the moon that descends the steeps of the sougning twilight
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the black stems that decay
in the muck
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.
I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams reflected
And debouch to the steady and central from the offspring great or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.
Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes
I sleep—I sleep long.
I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.
Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me.
Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.
Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal
life—it is Happiness.

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them.
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.
Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)
Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)
I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.
Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with his
supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?
Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab
and my loitering.
I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable

I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me

It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds

It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun

I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love

If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean

But I shall be good health to you nevertheless

And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged

Missing me one place search another

I stop somewhere waiting for you.

BOOK IV. CHILDREN OF ADAM

TO THE GARDEN THE WORLD

To the garden the world anew ascending
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding
The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being
Curious here behold my resurrection after slumber
The revolving cycles in their wide sweep having brought me again
Amorous, mature, all beautiful to me, all wondrous
My limbs and the quivering fire that ever plays through them, for reasons, most wondrous
Existing I peer and penetrate still
Content with the present, content with the past
By my side or back of me Eve following
Or in front, and I following her just the same.

FROM PENT-UP ACHING RIVERS

From pent-up aching rivers
 From that of myself without which I were nothing
 From what I am determin'd to make illustrious, even if I stand sole
 among men
 From my own voice resonant, singing the phallus
 Singing the song of procreation
 Singing the need of superb children and therein superb grown people
 Singing the muscular urge and the blending
 Singing the bedfellow's song, (O resistless yearning!
 O for any and each the body correlative attracting!
 O for you whoever you are your correlative body! O it, more than all else,
 you delighting!)
 From the hungry gnaw that eats me night and day
 From native moments, from bashful pains, singing them
 Seeking something yet unfound though I have diligently sought it many
 a long year
 Singing the true song of the soul fitful at random
 Renascent with grossest Nature or among animals
 Of that, of them and what goes with them my poems informing
 Of the smell of apples and lemons, of the pairing of birds
 Of the wet of woods, of the lapping of waves
 Of the mad pushes of waves upon the land, I them chanting
 The overture lightly sounding, the strain anticipating
 The welcome nearness, the sight of the perfect body
 The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motionless on his back
 lying and floating
 The female form approaching, I pensive, love-flesh tremulous aching
 The divine list for myself or you or for any one making
 The face, the limbs, the index from head to foot, and what it arouses
 The mystic deliria, the madness amorous, the utter abandonment
 (Hark close and still what I now whisper to you
 I love you, O you entirely possess me
 O that you and I escape from the rest and go utterly off, free and lawless
 Two hawks in the air, two fishes swimming in the sea not more lawless
 than we;)
 The furious storm through me careering, I passionately trembling.
 The oath of the inseparableness of two together, of the woman that loves
 me and whom I love more than my life, that oath swearing
 (O I willingly stake all for you
 O let me be lost if it must be so!
 O you and I! what is it to us what the rest do or think?
 What is all else to us? only that we enjoy each other and exhaust each
 other if it must be so;)
 From the master, the pilot I yield the vessel to

The general commanding me, commanding all, from him permission taking
From time the programme hastening, (I have loiter'd too long as it is,)
From sex, from the warp and from the woof
From privacy, from frequent repinings alone
From plenty of persons near and yet the right person not near
From the soft sliding of hands over me and thrusting of fingers
through my hair and beard
From the long sustain'd kiss upon the mouth or bosom
From the close pressure that makes me or any man drunk, fainting with
excess
From what the divine husband knows, from the work of fatherhood
From exultation, victory and relief, from the bedfellow's embrace in the
night
From the act-poems of eyes, hands, hips and bosoms
From the cling of the trembling arm
From the bending curve and the clinch
From side by side the pliant coverlet off-throwing
From the one so unwilling to have me leave, and me just as unwilling to
leave
(Yet a moment O tender waiter, and I return,)
From the hour of shining stars and dropping dews
From the night a moment I emerging flitting out
Celebrate you act divine and you children prepared for
And you stalwart loins.

I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC

1

I sing the body electric
The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them
They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them
And discorrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of the soul.
Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own bodies conceal themselves?
And if those who defile the living are as bad as they who defile the dead?
And if the body does not do fully as much as the soul?
And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?

2

The love of the body of man or woman balks account, the body itself
balks account
That of the male is perfect, and that of the female is perfect.
The expression of the face balks account
But the expression of a well-made man appears not only in his face
It is in his limbs and joints also, it is curiously in the joints of his hips and
wrists
It is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his waist and knees,
dress does not hide him
The strong sweet quality he has strikes through the cotton and broadcloth
To see him pass conveys as much as the best poem, perhaps more
You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck and shoulder-side.
The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and heads of women, the
folds of their dress, their style as we pass in the street, the contour of their
shape downwards
The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he swims through
the transparent green-shine, or lies with his face up and rolls silently
to and from the heave of the water
The bending forward and backward of rowers in row-boats, the horse-
man in his saddle
Girls, mothers, house-keepers, in all their performances
The group of laborers seated at noon-time with their open dinner-kettles,
and their wives waiting
The female soothing a child, the farmer's daughter in the garden or cow-
yard
The young fellow hosing corn, the sleigh-driver driving his six horses
through the crowd
The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite grown, lusty, good-
natured, native-born, out on the vacant lot at sundown after work
The coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love and resistance
The upper-hold and under-hold, the hair rumbled over and blinding the
eyes;

The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play of masculine muscle through clean-setting trowsers and waist-straps
 The slow return from the fire, the pause when the bell strikes suddenly again, and the listening on the alert
 The natural, perfect, varied attitudes, the bent head, the curv'd neck and the counting;
 Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's breast with the little child
 Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, count.

3

I knew a man, a common farmer, the father of five sons
 And in them the fathers of sons, and in them the fathers of sons.
 This man was a wonderful vigor, calmness, beauty of person
 The shape of his head, the pale yellow and white of his hair and beard,
 the immeasurable meaning of his black eyes, the richness and breadth of his manners
 These I used to go and visit him to see, he was wise also
 He was six feet tall, he was over eighty years old, his sons were massive, clean, bearded, tan-faced, handsome
 They and his daughters loved him, all who saw him loved him
 They did not love him by allowance, they loved him with personal love
 He drank water only, the blood show'd like scarlet through the clear-brown skin of his face
 He was a frequent gunner and fisher, he sail'd his boat himself, he had a fine one presented to him by a ship-joiner, he had fowling-pieces presented to him by men that loved him
 When he went with his five sons and many grand-sons to hunt or fish you would pick him out as the most beautiful and vigorous of the gang
 You would wish long and long to be with him, you would wish to sit by him in the boat that you and he might touch each other.

4

I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough
 To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough
 To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing, laughing flesh is enough
 To pass among them or touch any one, or rest my arm ever so lightly round his or her neck for a moment, what is this then?
 I do not ask any more delight, I swim in it as in a sea.
 There is something in staying close to men and women and looking on them, and in the contact and odor of them, that pleases the soul well
 All things please the soul, but these please the soul well.

5

This is the female form
 A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot

It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction
 I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a helpless vapor, all
 falls aside but myself and it
 Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth, and what was ex-
 pected of heaven or fear'd of hell, are now consumed
 Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it, the response likewise
 ungovernable
 Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands all diffused, mine
 too diffused
 Ebb stung by the flow and flow stung by the ebb, love-flesh swelling and
 deliciously aching
 Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quivering jelly of love,
 white-blow and delirious nice
 Bridegroom night of love working surely and softly into the prostrate
 dawn
 Undulating into the willing and yielding day
 Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flesh'd day.

This the nucleus—after the child is born of woman, man is born of woman
 This the bath of birth, this the merge of small and large, and the outlet
 again.

Be not ashamed women, your privilege encloses the rest, and is the exit
 of the rest

You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul.

The female contains all qualities and tempers them
 She is in her place and moves with perfect balance
 She is all things duly veil'd, she is both passive and active
 She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons as well as daugh-
 ters.

As I see my soul reflected in Nature
 As I see through a mist, One with inexpressible completeness, sanity,
 beauty

See the bent head and arms folded over the breast, the Female I see.

6

The male is not less the soul nor more, he too is in his place
 He too is all qualities, he is action and power
 The flush of the known universe is in him
 Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance become him well
 The wildest largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sorrow that is utmost
 become him well, pride is for him
 The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul
 Knowledge becomes him, he likes it always, he brings every thing to the
 test of himself
 Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail he strikes soundings
 at last only here
 (Where else does he strike soundings except here?)

The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred
No matter who it is, it is sacred—is it the meanest one in the laborers'
gang?

Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants just landed on the wharf?
Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off, just as much
as you

Each has his or her place in the procession.

(All is a procession

The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

Do you know so much yourself that you call the meanest ignorant?

Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and he or she has no
right to a sight?

Do you think matter has cohered together from its diffuse float, and
the soil is on the surface, and water runs and vegetation sprouts
For you only, and not for him and her?

7

A man's body at auction

(For before the war I often go to the slave-mart and watch the sale,)

I help the auctioneer, the sloven does not half know his business.

Gentlemen look on this wonder

Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough for it

For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years without one animal or
plant

For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd.

In this head the all-baffling brain

In it and below it the makings of heroes.

Examine these limbs, red, black, or white, they are cunning in tendon and
nerve

They shall be stript that you may see them.

Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition

Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant backbone and neck, flesh not flabby, good-
sized arms and legs

And wonders within there yet.

Within there runs blood

The same old blood! the same red-running blood!

There swells and jets a heart, there all passions, desires, reachings, aspi-
rations

(Do you think they are not there because they are not express'd in parlors
and lecture-rooms?)

This is not only one man, this the father of those who shall be fathers in
their turns

In him the start of populous states and rich republics

Of him countless immortal lives with countless embodiments and enjoy-
ments.

How do you know who shall come from the offspring of his offspring
 through the centuries?
 (Who might you find you have come from yourself, if you could trace
 back through the centuries?)

8

A woman's body at auction
 She too is not only herself, she is the teeming mother of mothers
 She is the bearer of them that shall grow and be mates to the mothers.

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?
 Have you ever loved the body of a man?
 Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all nations and
 times all over the earth?
 If any thing is sacred the human body is sacred
 And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted
 And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body, is more beautiful
 than the most beautiful face.

Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live body? or the fool that
 corrupted her own live body?
 For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal themselves.

9

O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and women,
 nor the likes of the parts of you
 I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the likes of the soul, (and
 that they are the soul,)
 I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my poems, and that they
 are my poems
 Man's, woman's, child, youth's, wife's, husband's, mother's, father's,
 young man's, young woman's poems
 Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears
 Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eyebrows, and the waking or sleeping
 of the lids
 Mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, roof of the mouth, jaws, and the jaw-hinges
 Nose, nostrils of the nose, and the partition
 Cheeks, temples, forehead, chin, throat, back of the neck, neck-slue
 Strong shoulders, manly beard, scapula, hind-shoulders, and the ample
 side-round of the chest
 Upper-arm, armpit, elbow-socket, lower-arm, arm-sinews, arm-bones
 Wrist and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb, forefinger, finger-
 joints, finger-nails
 Broad breast-front, curling hair of the breast, breast-bone, breast-side
 Ribs, belly, backbone, joints of the backbone
 Hips, hip-sockets, hip-strength, inward and outward round, man-balls,
 man-root
 Strong set of thighs, well carrying the trunk above
 Leg-fibres, knee, knee-pan, upper-leg, under-leg

Ankles, instep, foot-ball, toes, toe-joints, the heel;
All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings of my or your body
or of any one's body, male or female
The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels sweet and clean
The brain in its folds inside the skull-frame
Sympathies, heart-valves, palate-valves, sexuality, maternity
Womanhood, and all that is a woman, and the man that comes from
woman
The womb, the teats, nipples, breast-milk, tears, laughter, weeping, love-
looks, love-perturbations and risings
The voice, articulation, language, whispering, shouting aloud
Food, drink, pulse, digestion, sweat, sleep, walking, swimming
Poise on the hips, leaping, reclining, embracing, arm-curving and tight-
ening
The continual changes of the flex of the mouth, and around the eyes
The skin, the sunburnt shade, freckles, hair
The curious sympathy one feels when feeling with the hand the naked
meat of the body
The circling rivers the breath, and breathing it in and out
The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and thence downward
toward the knees
The thin red jellies within you or within me, the bones and the marrow
in the bones
The exquisite realization of health;
O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul
O I say now these are the soul!

A WOMAN WAITS FOR ME

A woman waits for me, she contains all, nothing is lacking
Yet all were lacking if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of the
right man were lacking.

Sex contains all, bodies, souls
Meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations
Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the seminal milk
All hopes, benefactions, bestowals, all the passions, loves, beauties, de-
lights of the earth
All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth
These are contain'd in sex as parts of itself and justifications of itself.

Without shame the man I like knows and avows the deliciousness of his
sex

Without shame the woman I like knows and avows hers.

Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women
I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women that are
warm-blooded and sufficient for me
I see that they understand me and do not deny me
I see that they are worthy of me, I will be the robust husband of those
women.

They are not one jot less than I am
They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds
Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength
They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot, run, strike
retreat, advance, resist, defend themselves
They are ultimate in their own right—they are calm, clear, well-possess'd
of themselves.

I draw you close to me, you women
I cannot let you go, I would do you good
I am for you, and you are for me, not only for our own sake, but for
others' sakes
Envelop'd in you sleep greater heroes and bards
They refuse to awake at the touch of any man but me.

It is I, you women, I make my way
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for these States, I press with
slow rude muscle
I brace myself effectually, I listen to no entreaties
I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long accumulated within
me.

Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself
In you I wrap a thousand onward years

On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and America
The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and athletic girls, new
artists, musicians, and singers
The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their turn
I shall demand perfect men and women out of my love-spending
I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I and you inter-
penetrate now
I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of them, as I count on
the fruits of the gushing showers I give now
I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death, immortality, I plant
so lovingly now.

SPONTANEOUS ME

Spontaneous me, Nature

The loving day, the mounting sun, the friend I am happy with

The arm of my friend hanging idly over my shoulder

The hillside whiten'd with blossoms of the mountain ash

The same late in autumn, the hues of red, yellow, drab, purple, and light
and dark green

The rich coverlet of the grass, animals and birds, the privateuntrimm'd
bank, the primitive apples, the pebble-stones

Beautiful dripping fragments, the negligent list of one after another as I
happen to call them to me or think of them

The real poems, (what we call poems being merely pictures,)

The poems of the privacy of the night, and of men like me

This poem drooping shy and unseen that I always carry, and that all men
carry

(Know once for all, avow'd on purpose, wherever are men like me, are
our lusty lurking masculine poems,)

Love-thoughts, love-juice, love-odor, love-yielding, love-climbers, and
the climbing sap

Arms and hands of love, lips of love, phallic thumb of love, breasts of
love, bellies press'd and glued together with love

Earth of chaste love, life that is only life after love

The body of my love, the body of the woman I love, the body of the man,
the body of the earth

Soft forenoon airs that blow from the south-west

The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and down, that gripes
the full-grown lady-flower, curves upon her with amorous firm legs,
takes his will of her, and holds himself tremulous and tight till he is
satisfied;

The wet of woods through the early hours

Two sleepers at night lying close together as they sleep, one with an arm
slanting down across and below the waist of the other

The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant, mint, birch-bark

The boy's longings, the glow and pressure as he confides to me what he
was dreaming

The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl and falling still and content to the
ground

The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects, sting me with

The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as it ever can any one

The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only privileged feelers
may be intimate where they are

The curious roamer the hand roaming all over the body, the bashful with-
drawing of flesh where the fingers soothingly pause and edge them-
selves

The limpid liquid within the young man

The vex'd corrosion so pensive and so painful

The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest
The like of the same I feel, the like of the same in others
The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young woman that
flushes and flushes
The young man that wakes deep at night, the hot hand seeking to repress
what would master him
The mystic amorous night, the strange half-welcome pangs, visions,
sweats
The pulse pounding through palms and trembling encircling fingers
the young man all color'd, red, ashamed, angry;
The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing and naked
The merriment of the twin babes that crawl over the grass in the sun, the
mother never turning her vigilant eyes from them
The walnut-trunk, the walnut-husks, and the ripening or ripen'd long-
round walnuts
The continence of vegetables, birds, animals
The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find myself indecent,
while birds and animals never once skulk or find themselves indecent
The great chastity of paternity, to match the great chastity of maternity
The oath of procreation I have sworn, my Adamic and fresh daughters
The greed that eats me day and night with hungry gnaw, till I saturate
what shall produce boys to fill my place when I am through
The wholesome relief, repose, content
And this bunch pluck'd at random from myself
It has done its work—I toss it carelessly to fall where it may.

ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY

One hour to madness and joy! O furious! O confine me not!
(What is this that frees me so in storms?
What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds mean?)
O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other man!
O savage and tender achings! (I bequeath them to you my children
I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)
O to be yielded to you whoever you are, and you to be yielded to me in
defiance of the world!
O to return to Paradise! O bashful and feminine!
O to draw you to me, to plant on you for the first time the lips of a deter-
min'd man.
O the puzzle, the thrice-tied knot, the deep and dark pool, all untied and
illumin'd!
O to speed where there is space enough and air enough at last!
To be absolv'd from previous ties and conventions, I from mine and you
from yours!
To find a new unthought-of nonchalance with the best of Nature!
To have the gag remov'd from one's mouth!
To have the feeling to-day or any day I am sufficient as I am.
O something unprov'd! something in a trance!
To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!
To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!
To court destruction with taunts, with invitations!
To ascend, to leap to the heavens of the love indicated to me!
To rise thither with my inebriate soul!
To be lost if it must be so!
To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness and freedom!
With one brief hour of madness and joy.

OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN THE CROWD

Out of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me
Whispering I love you, before long I die
I have travel'd a long way merely to look on you to touch you
For I could not die till I once look'd on you
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.

Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe
Return in peace to the ocean my love
I too am part of that ocean my love, we are not so much separated
Behold the great rondure, the cohesion of all, how perfect!

But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate us
As for an hour carrying us diverse, yet cannot carry us diverse forever;
Be not impatient—a little space—know you I salute the air, the
ocean and the land
Every day at sundown for your dear sake my love.

AGES AND AGES RETURNING AT INTERVALS

Ages and ages returning at intervals
Undestroy'd, wandering immortal
Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins, perfectly sweet
I, chanter of Adamic songs
Through the new garden the West, the great cities calling
Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated, offering these, offering myself
Bathing myself, bathing my songs in Sex
Offspring of my loins.

WE TWO, HOW LONG WE WERE FOOL'D

We two, how long we were fool'd
Now transmuted, we swiftly escape as Nature escapes
We are Nature, long have we been absent, but now we return
We become plants, trunks, foliage, roots, bark
We are bedded in the ground, we are rocks
We are oaks, we grow in the openings side by side
We browse, we are two among the wild herds spontaneous as any
We are two fishes swimming in the sea together
We are what locust blossoms are, we drop scent around lanes mornings
and evenings
We are also the coarse smut of beasts, vegetables, minerals
We are two predatory hawks, we soar above and look down
We are two resplendent suns, we it is who balance ourselves orbic and
stellar, we are as two comets
We prowl fang'd and four-footed in the woods, we spring on prey
We are two clouds forenoons and afternoons driving overhead
We are seas mingling, we are two of those cheerful waves rolling over
each other and interwetting each other
We are what the atmosphere is, transparent, receptive, pervious, imper-
vious
We are snow, rain, cold, darkness, we are each product and influence of
the globe
We have circled and circled till we have arrived home again, we two
We have voided all but freedom and all but our own joy.

O HYMEN! O HYMENE!

O hymen! O hymene! why do you tantalize me thus?
O why sting me for a swift moment only?
Why can you not continue? O why do you now cease?
Is it because if you continued beyond the swift moment you would
soon certainly kill me?

I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH LOVE

I am he that aches with amorous love;
Does the earth gravitate? does not all matter, aching, attract all matter?
So the body of me to all I meet or know.

NATIVE MOMENTS

Native moments—when you come upon me—ah you are here now
Give me now libidinous joys only
Give me the drench of my passions, give me life coarse and rank
To-day I go consort with Nature's darlings, to-night too
I am for those who believe in loose delights, I share the midnight orgies
of young men
I dance with the dancers and drink with the drinkers
The echoes ring with our indecent calls, I pick out some low person for
my dearest friend
He shall be lawless, rude, illiterate, he shall be one condemn'd by others
for deeds done
I will play a part no longer, why should I exile myself from my compan-
ions?
O you shunn'd persons, I at least do not shun you
I come forthwith in your midst, I will be your poet
I will be more to you than to any of the rest.

ONCE I PASS'D THROUGH A POPULOUS CITY

Once I pass'd through a populous city imprinting my brain for future
use with its shows, architecture, customs, traditions
Yet now of all that city I remember only a woman I casually met
there who detain'd me for love of me
Day by day and night by night we were together—all else has long been
forgotten by me
I remember I say only that woman who passionately clung to me
Again we wander, we love, we separate again
Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go
I see her close beside me with silent lips sad and tremulous.

I HEARD YOU SOLEMN-SWEET PIPES OF THE ORGAN

I heard you solemn-sweet pipes of the organ as last Sunday morn I pass'd
the church
Winds of autumn, as I walk'd the woods at dusk I heard your long-
stretch'd sighs up above so mournful
I heard the perfect Italian tenor singing at the opera, I heard the soprano
in the midst of the quartet singing;
Heart of my love! you too I heard murmuring low through one of the
wrists around my head
Heard the pulse of you when all was still ringing little bells last night
under my ear.

FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES

Facing west from California's shores
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the land
of migrations, look afar
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

AS ADAM EARLY IN THE MORNING

As Adam early in the morning
Walking forth from the bower refresh'd with sleep
Behold me where I pass, hear my voice, approach
Touch me, touch the palm of your hand to my body as I pass
Be not afraid of my body.

BOOK V. CALAMUS

IN PATHS UNTRODDEN

In paths untrodden
In the growth by margins of pond-waters
Escaped from the life that exhibits itself
From all the standards hitherto publish'd, from the pleasures, profits,
conformities
Which too long I was offering to feed my soul
Clear to me now standards not yet publish'd, clear to me that my soul
That the soul of the man I speak for rejoices in comrades
Here by myself away from the clank of the world
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic
No longer abash'd, (for in this secluded spot I can respond as I would not
dare elsewhere.)
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet contains all the
rest
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly attachment
Projecting them along that substantial life
Bequeathing hence types of athletic love
Afternoon this delicious Ninth-month in my forty-first year
I proceed for all who are or have been young men
To tell the secret my nights and days
To celebrate the need of comrades.

SCENTED HERBAGE OF MY BREAST

Scented herbage of my breast
Leaves from you I glean, I write, to be perused best afterwards
Tomb-leaves, body-leaves growing up above me above death
Perennial roots, tall leaves, O the winter shall not freeze you delicate
leaves
Every year shall you bloom again, out from where you retired you shall
emerge again;
O I do not know whether many passing by will discover you or inhale
your faint odor, but I believe a few will;
O slender leaves! O blossoms of my blood! I permit you to tell in your
own way of the heart that is under you
O I do not know what you mean there underneath yourselves, you are
not happiness
You are often more bitter than I can bear, you burn and sting me
Yet you are beautiful to me you faint tinged roots, you make me think of
death
Death is beautiful from you, (what indeed is finally beautiful except
death and love?)
O I think it is not for life I am chanting here my chant of lovers
I think it must be for death
For how calm, how solemn it grows to ascend to the atmosphere of lovers
Death or life I am then indifferent, my soul declines to prefer
(I am not sure but the high soul of lovers welcomes death most,)
Indeed O death, I think now these leaves mean precisely the same as you
mean
Grow up taller sweet leaves that I may see! grow up out of my breast!
Spring away from the conceal'd heart there!
Do not fold yourself so in your pink-tinged roots timid leaves!
Do not remain down there so ashamed, herbage of my breast!
Come I am determin'd to unbare this broad breast of mine, I have
long enough stifled and choked;
Emblematic and capricious blades I leave you, now you serve me not
I will say what I have to say by itself
I will sound myself and comrades only, I will never again utter a call only
their call
I will raise with it immortal reverberations through the States
I will give an example to lovers to take permanent shape and will through
the States
Through me shall the words be said to make death exhilarating
Give me your tone therefore O death, that I may accord with it
Give me yourself, for I see that you belong to me now above all, and are
folded inseparably together, you love and death are
Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I was calling life
For now it is convey'd to me that you are the purports essential

That you hide in these shifting forms of life, for reasons, and that they are
mainly for you
That you beyond them come forth to remain, the real reality
That behind the mask of materials you patiently wait, no matter how
long
That you will one day perhaps take control of all
That you will perhaps dissipate this entire show of appearance
That may-be you are what it is all for, but it does not last so very long
But you will last very long.

WHOEVER YOU ARE HOLDING ME NOW IN HAND

Whoever you are holding me now in hand
Without one thing all will be useless
I give you fair warning before you attempt me further
I am not what you supposed, but far different.

Who is he that would become my follower?
Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?
The way is suspicious, the result uncertain, perhaps destructive
You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be your sole
and exclusive standard

Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting
The whole past theory of your life and all conformity to the lives around
you would have to be abandon'd
Therefore release me now before troubling yourself any further, let go
your hand from my shoulders
Put me down and depart on your way.

Or else by stealth in some wood for trial
Or back of a rock in the open air
(For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not, nor in company
And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn, or dead,)
But just possibly with you on a high hill, first watching lest any
person for miles around approach unawares
Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of the sea or some
quiet island

Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you
With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss or the new husband's kiss
For I am the new husband and I am the comrade.

Or if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing
Where I may feel the throbs of your heart or rest upon your hip
Carry me when you go forth over land or sea;
For thus merely touching you is enough, is best
And thus touching you would I silently sleep and be carried eternally.

But these leaves conning you con at peril
For these leaves and me you will not understand
They will elude you at first and still more afterward, I will certainly elude
you.

Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!
Already you see I have escaped from you.

For it is not for what I have put into it that I have written this book
Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it
Nor do those know me best who admire me and vauntingly praise me
Nor will the candidates for my love (unless at most a very few) prove
victorious

Nor will my poems do good only, they will do just as much evil
perhaps more
For all is useless without that which you may guess at many times and
not hit, that which I hinted at;
Therefore release me and depart on your way.

FOR YOU, O DEMOCRACY

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon
I will make divine magnetic lands
With the love of comrades
With the life-long love of comrades.
I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America,
and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks
By the love of comrades
By the manly love of comrades.
For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

THESE I SINGING IN SPRING

These I singing in spring collect for lovers
(For who but I should understand lovers and all their sorrow and joy?
And who but I should be the poet of comrades?)
Collecting I traverse the garden the world, but soon I pass the gates
Now along the pond-side, now wading in a little, fearing not the wet
Now by the post-and-rail fences where the old stones thrown there,
pick'd from the fields, have accumulated
(Wild-flowers and vines and weeds come up through the stones and
partly cover them, beyond these I pass,)
Far, far in the forest, or sauntering later in summer, before I think where
I go
Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and then in the silence
Alone I had thought, yet soon a troop gathers around me
Some walk by my side and some behind, and some embrace my arms or
neck
They the spirits of dear friends dead or alive, thicker they come, a great
crowd, and I in the middle
Collecting, dispensing, singing, there I wander with them
Plucking something for tokens, tossing toward whoever is near me
Here, lilac, with a branch of pine
Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a live-oak in
Florida as it hung trailing down
Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of sage
And here what I now draw from the water, wading in the pondside
(O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me, and returns again never to
separate from me
And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of comrades, this calamus-
root shall
Interchange it youths with each other! let none render it back!)
And twigs of maple and a bunch of wild orange and chestnut
And stems of currants and plum-blows, and the aromatic cedar
These I compass'd around by a thick cloud of spirits
Wandering, point to or touch as I pass, or throw them loosely from me
Indicating to each one what he shall have, giving something to each;
But what I drew from the water by the pond-side, that I reserve
I will give of it, but only to them that love as I myself am capable of
loving.

NOT HEAVING FROM MY RIBB'D BREAST ONLY

Not heaving from my ribb'd breast only
Not in sighs at night in rage dissatisfied with myself
Not in those long-drawn, ill-supprest sighs
Not in many an oath and promise broken
Not in my wilful and savage soul's volition
Not in the subtle nourishment of the air
Not in this beating and pounding at my temples and wrists
Not in the curious systole and diastole within which will one day cease
Not in many a hungry wish told to the skies only
Not in cries, laughter, defiancies, thrown from me when alone far in the
wolds
Not in husky pantings through clinch'd teeth
Not in sounded and resounded words, chattering words, echoes, dead
words
Not in the murmurs of my dreams while I sleep
Nor the other murmurs of these incredible dreams of every day
Nor in the limbs and senses of my body that take you and dismiss you
continually—not there
Not in any or all of them O adhesiveness! O pulse of my life!
Need I that you exist and show yourself any more than in these songs.

OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES

Of the terrible doubt of appearances
Of the uncertainty after all, that we may be deluded
That may-be reliance and hope are but speculations after all
That may-be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful fable only
May-be the things I perceive, the animals, plants, men, hills, shining and
 flowing waters
The skies of day and night, colors, densities, forms, may-be these are (as
 doubtless they are) only apparitions, and the real something has yet
 to be known
(How often they dart out of themselves as if to confound me and mock
 me!
How often I think neither I know, nor any man knows, aught of them,)
May-be seeming to me what they are (as doubtless they indeed but seem)
 as from my present point of view, and might prove (as of course they
 would) nought of what they appear, or nought anyhow, from entirely
 changed points of view;
To me these and the like of these are curiously answer'd by my lovers,
 my dear friends
When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long while holding me by
 the hand
When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that words and reason hold
 not, surround us and pervade us
Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom, I am silent, I
 require nothing further
I cannot answer the question of appearances or that of identity beyond
 the grave
But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied
He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

THE BASE OF ALL METAPHYSICS

And now gentlemen
 A word I give to remain in your memories and minds
 As base and finale too for all metaphysics.
 (So to the students the old professor
 At the close of his crowded course.)
 Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems
 Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling and Hegel
 Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato
 And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ divine having stud-
 ied long
 I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems
 See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see
 Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath Christ the divine I
 see
 The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to friend
 Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and parents
 Of city for city and land for land.

RECORDERS AGES HENCE

Recorders ages hence
 Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive exterior, I will tell
 you what to say of me
 Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of the tenderest lover
 The friend the lover's portrait, of whom his friend his lover was fondest
 Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measureless ocean of love
 within him, and freely pour'd it forth
 Who often walk'd lonesome walks thinking of his dear friends, his lovers
 Who pensive away from one he lov'd often lay sleepless and dissatisfied
 at night
 Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he lov'd might se-
 cretly be indifferent to him
 Whose happiest days were far away through fields, in woods, on hills,
 he and another wandering hand in hand, they twain apart from other
 men
 Who oft as he saunter'd the streets curv'd with his arm the shoulder of
 his friend, while the arm of his friend rested upon him also.

WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY

When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd
with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for me that
follow'd
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I
was not happy
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health, refresh'd,
singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in the
morning light
When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed, laughing
with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise
And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way com-
ing, O then I was happy
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food nourish'd me
more, and the beautiful day pass'd well
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening came my
friend
And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly continu-
ally up the shores
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to me whis-
pering to congratulate me
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the
cool night
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward
me
And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that night I was happy.

ARE YOU THE NEW PERSON DRAWN TOWARD ME?

Are you the new person drawn toward me?
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from what you sup-
pose;
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?
Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover?
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd satisfaction?
Do you think I am trusty and faithful?
Do you see no further than this facade, this smooth and tolerant manner
of me?
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic
man?
Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya, illusion?

ROOTS AND LEAVES THEMSELVES ALONE

Roots and leaves themselves alone are these
Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods and pond-side
Breast-sorrel and pinks of love, fingers that wind around tighter than
vines
Gushes from the throats of birds hid in the foliage of trees as the sun is
risen
Breezes of land and love set from living shores to you on the living sea,
to you O sailors!
Frost-mellow'd berries and Third-month twigs offer'd fresh to young
persons wandering out in the fields when the winter breaks up
Love-buds put before you and within you whoever you are
Buds to be unfolded on the old terms
If you bring the warmth of the sun to them they will open and bring form,
color, perfume, to you
If you become the aliment and the wet they will become flowers, fruits,
tall branches and trees.

NOT HEAT FLAMES UP AND CONSUMES

Not heat flames up and consumes
Not sea-waves hurry in and out
Not the air delicious and dry, the air of ripe summer, bears lightly along
white down-balls of myriads of seeds
Waived, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may;
Not these, O none of these more than the flames of me, consuming
burning for his love whom I love
O none more than I hurrying in and out;
Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up? O I the same
O nor down-balls nor perfumes, nor the high rain-emitting clouds
are borne through the open air
Any more than my soul is borne through the open air
Wafted in all directions O love, for friendship, for you.

TRICKLE DROPS

Trickle drops! my blue veins leaving!
O drops of me! trickle, slow drops
Candid from me falling, drip, bleeding drops
From wounds made to free you whence you were prison'd
From my face, from my forehead and lips
From my breast, from within where I was conceal'd, press forth red
drops, confession drops
Stain every page, stain every song I sing, every word I say, bloody drops
Let them know your scarlet heat, let them glisten
Saturate them with yourself all ashamed and wet
Glow upon all I have written or shall write, bleeding drops
Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops.

CITY OF ORGIES

City of orgies, walks and joys
City whom that I have lived and sung in your midst will one day make
Not the pageants of you, not your shifting tableaux, your spectacles, re-
pay me
Not the interminable rows of your houses, nor the ships at the wharves
Nor the processions in the streets, nor the bright windows with goods in
them
Nor to converse with learn'd persons, or bear my share in the soiree or
feast;
Not those, but as I pass O Manhattan, your frequent and swift flash of
eyes offering me love
Offering response to my own—these repay me
Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.

BEHOLD THIS SWARTHY FACE

Behold this swarthy face, these gray eyes
This beard, the white wool unclipt upon my neck
My brown hands and the silent manner of me without charm;
Yet comes one a Manhattanese and ever at parting kisses me lightly on
the lips with robust love
And I on the crossing of the street or on the ship's deck give a kiss in
return
We observe that salute of American comrades land and sea
We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous of dark green
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there
without its friend near, for I knew I could not
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it and twined
around it a little moss
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary
in a wide in a wide flat space
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover near
I know very well I could not.

TO A STRANGER

Passing stranger! you do not know how longingly I look upon you
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it comes to me as of
a dream,)

I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you
All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate
chaste, matured

You grew up with me, were a boy with me or a girl with me
I ate with you and slept with you, your body has become not yours only
nor left my body mine only

You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as we pass, you take of
my beard, breast, hands, in return

I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you when I sit alone or wake at
night alone

I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

THIS MOMENT YEARNING AND THOUGHTFUL

This moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone
It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy, France,
Spain

Or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or talking other dialects
And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become attached
to them as I do to men in my own lands

O I know we should be brethren and lovers
I know I should be happy with them.

I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME

I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions
But really I am neither for nor against institutions
(What indeed have I in common with them? or what with the destruction
of them?)
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of these States
inland and seaboard
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large that
dents the water
Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument
The institution of the dear love of comrades.

THE PRAIRIE-GRASS DIVIDING

The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing
I demand of it the spiritual corresponding
Demand the most copious and close companionship of men
Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings
Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh, nutritious
Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command,
leading not following
Those with a never-quell'd audacity, those with sweet and lusty flesh
clear of taint
Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and governors, as to
say Who are you?
Those of earth-born passion, simple, never constrain'd, never obedient
Those of inland America.

WHEN I PERUSE THE CONQUER'D FAME

When I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes and the victories of mighty
generals, I do not envy the generals
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his great house
But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with them
How together through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging, long
and long
Through youth and through middle and old age, how unfaltering, how
affectionate and faithful they were
Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away fill'd with the bitterest envy.

WE TWO BOYS TOGETHER CLINGING

We two boys together clinging
One the other never leaving
Up and down the roads going, North and South excursions making
Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers clutching
Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping, loving.
No law less than ourselves owning, sailing, soldiering, thieving, threaten-
ing
Misers, menials, priests alarming, air breathing, water drinking, on the
turf or the sea-beach dancing
Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes mocking, feebleness chasing
Fulfilling our foray.

A PROMISE TO CALIFORNIA

A promise to California
Or inland to the great pastoral Plains, and on to Puget sound and Oregon;
Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel toward you, to remain, to
teach robust American love
For I know very well that I and robust love belong among you inland,
and along the Western sea;
For these States tend inland and toward the Western sea, and I will also.

HERE THE FRAILEST LEAVES OF ME

Here the frailest leaves of me and yet my strongest lasting
Here I shade and hide my thoughts, I myself do not expose them
And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.

NO LABOR-SAVING MACHINE

No labor-saving machine
Nor discovery have I made
Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy bequest to found hos-
pital or library
Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage for America
Nor literary success nor intellect; nor book for the book-shelf
But a few carols vibrating through the air I leave
For comrades and lovers.

A GLIMPSE

A glimpse through an interstice caught
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around the stove late
of a winter night, and I unremark'd seated in a corner
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently approaching and
seating himself near, that he may hold me by the hand
A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of drinking and oath
and smutty jest
There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps
not a word.

A LEAF FOR HAND IN HAND

A leaf for hand in hand;
You natural persons old and young!
You on the Mississippi and on all the branches and bayous of the Missis-
sippi!
You friendly boatmen and mechanics! you roughs!
You twain! and all processions moving along the streets!
I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it common for you to walk
hand in hand.

EARTH, MY LIKENESS

Earth, my likeness
Though you look so impassive, ample and spheric there
I now suspect that is not all;
I now suspect there is something fierce in you eligible to burst forth
For an athlete is enamour'd of me, and I of him
But toward him there is something fierce and terrible in me eligible to
burst forth
I dare not tell it in words, not even in these songs.

I DREAM'D IN A DREAM

I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of
the rest of the earth
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city
And in all their looks and words.

WHAT THINK YOU I TAKE MY PEN IN HAND?

What think you I take my pen in hand to record?
The battle-ship, perfect-model'd, majestic, that I saw pass the offing to-
day under full sail?
The splendors of the past day? or the splendor of the night that envelops
me?
Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city spread around me?
-no;
But merely of two simple men I saw to-day on the pier in the midst of the
crowd, parting the parting of dear friends
The one to remain hung on the other's neck and passionately kiss'd him
While the one to depart tightly prest the one to remain in his arms.

TO THE EAST AND TO THE WEST

To the East and to the West
To the man of the Seaside State and of Pennsylvania
To the Kanadian of the north, to the Southerner I love
These with perfect trust to depict you as myself, the germs are in all men
I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship,
exalte, previously unknown
Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all
men.

SOMETIMES WITH ONE I LOVE

Sometimes with one I love I fill myself with rage for fear I effuse unre-
turn'd love
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is certain one way or
another
(I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not return'd
Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

TO A WESTERN BOY

Many things to absorb I teach to help you become elevel of mine;
Yet if blood like mine circle not in your veins
If you be not silently selected by lovers and do not silently select lovers
Of what use is it that you seek to become elevel of mine?

FAST ANCHOR'D ETERNAL O LOVE!

Fast-anchor'd eternal O love! O woman I love!
O bride! O wife! more resistless than I can tell, the thought of you!
Then separate, as disembodied or another born
Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation
I ascend, I float in the regions of your love O man
O sharer of my roving life.

AMONG THE MULTITUDE

Among the men and women the multitude
I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine signs
Acknowledging none else, not parent, wife, husband, brother, child, any
nearer than I am
Some are baffled, but that one is not—that one knows me.
Ah lover and perfect equal
I meant that you should discover me so by faint indirections
And I when I meet you mean to discover you by the like in you.

O YOU WHOM I OFTEN AND SILENTLY COME

O you whom I often and silently come where you are that I may be with
you
As I walk by your side or sit near, or remain in the same room with you
Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your sake is playing within
me.

THAT SHADOW MY LIKENESS

That shadow my likeness that goes to and fro seeking a livelihood, chat-
tering, chaffering
How often I find myself standing and looking at it where it flits
How often I question and doubt whether that is really me;
But among my lovers and caroling these songs
O I never doubt whether that is really me.

FULL OF LIFE NOW

Full of life now, compact, visible
I, forty years old the eighty-third year of the States
To one a century hence or any number of centuries hence
To you yet unborn these, seeking you.
When you read these I that was visible am become invisible
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and become your
comrade;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I am now with you.)

BOOK VI

SALUT AU MONDE!

1

O take my hand Walt Whitman!
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next
Each answering all, each sharing the earth with all.
What widens within you Walt Whitman?
What waves and soils exuding?
What climes? what persons and cities are here?
Who are the infants, some playing, some slumbering?
Who are the girls? who are the married women?
Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their arms about each
other's necks?
What rivers are these? what forests and fruits are these?
What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the mists?
What myriads of dwellings are they fill'd with dwellers?

2

Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens
Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east—America is provided for in the west
Banding the bulge of the earth winds the hot equator
Curiously north and south turn the axis-ends
Within me is the longest day, the sun wheels in slanting rings, it
does not set for months
Stretch'd in due time within me the midnight sun just rises above the
horizon and sinks again
Within me zones, seas, cataracts, forests, volcanoes, groups
Malaysia, Polynesia, and the great West Indian islands.

3

What do you hear Walt Whitman?
I hear the workman singing and the farmer's wife singing

I hear in the distance the sounds of children and of animals early in the
 day
 I hear emulous shouts of Australians pursuing the wild horse
 I hear the Spanish dance with castanets in the chestnut shade, to the re-
 beck and guitar
 I hear continual echoes from the Thames
 I hear fierce French liberty songs
 I hear of the Italian boat-sculler the musical recitative of old poems
 I hear the locusts in Syria as they strike the grain and grass with the show-
 ers of their terrible clouds
 I hear the Coptic refrain toward sundown, pensively falling on the breast
 of the black venerable vast mother the Nile
 I hear the chirp of the Mexican muleteer, and the bells of the mule
 I hear the Arab muezzin calling from the top of the mosque
 I hear the Christian priests at the altars of their churches, I hear the re-
 sponsive base and soprano
 I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice putting to sea at
 Okotsk
 I hear the wheeze of the slave-coffle as the slaves march on, as the husky
 gangs pass on by twos and threes, fasten'd together with wrist-chains
 and ankle-chains
 I hear the Hebrew reading his records and psalms
 I hear the rhythmic myths of the Greeks, and the strong legends of the
 Romans
 I hear the tale of the divine life and bloody death of the beautiful God the
 Christ
 I hear the Hindoo teaching his favorite pupil the loves, wars, adages,
 transmitted safely to this day from poets who wrote three thousand
 years ago.

4

What do you see Walt Whitman?
 Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?
 I see a great round wonder rolling through space
 I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, graveyards, jails, factories, palaces,
 hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads upon the surface
 I see the shaded part on one side where the sleepers are sleeping, and the
 sunlit part on the other side
 I see the curious rapid change of the light and shade
 I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants of them as my land
 is to me.
 I see plenteous waters
 I see mountain peaks, I see the sierras of Andes where they range
 I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays, Ghauts
 I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi
 I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps
 I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians, and to the north the Dofrafields,

and off at sea mount Hecla
 I see Vesuvius and Etna, the mountains of the Moon, and the Red mountains of Madagascar
 I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts
 I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs
 I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones, the Atlantic and Pacific, the sea of Mexico, the Brazilian sea, and the sea of Peru
 The waters of Hindustan, the China sea, and the gulf of Guinea
 The Japan waters, the beautiful bay of Nagasaki land-lock'd in its mountains
 The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British shores, and the bay of Biscay
 The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to another of its islands
 The White sea, and the sea around Greenland.
 I behold the mariners of the world
 Some are in storms, some in the night with the watch on the lookout
 Some drifting helplessly, some with contagious diseases.
 I behold the sail and steamships of the world, some in clusters in port, some on their voyages
 Some double the cape of Storms, some cape Verde, others capes Guardafui, Bon, or Bajadore
 Others Dondra head, others pass the straits of Sunda, others cape Lopatka, others Behring's straits
 Others cape Horn, others sail the gulf of Mexico or along Cuba or Hayti, others Hudson's bay or Baffin's bay
 Others pass the straits of Dover, others enter the Wash, others the firth of Solway, others round cape Clear, others the Land's End
 Others traverse the Zuyder Zee or the Scheld
 Others as comers and goers at Gibraltar or the Dardanelles
 Others sternly push their way through the northern winter-packs
 Others descend or ascend the Obi or the Lena
 Others the Niger or the Congo, others the Indus, the Burampooter and Cambodia
 Others wait steam'd up ready to start in the ports of Australia
 Wait at Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marseilles, Lisbon, Naples, Hamburg, Bremen, Bordeaux, the Hague, Copenhagen, Wait at Valparaiso, Rio Janeiro, Panama.

5

I see the tracks of the railroads of the earth
 I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe
 I see them in Asia and in Africa.
 I see the electric telegraphs of the earth
 I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths, losses, gains, passions, of my race.
 I see the long river-stripes of the earth

I see the Amazon and the Paraguay
 I see the four great rivers of China, the Amour, the Yellow River, the
 Yiang-tse, and the Pearl
 I see where the Seine flows, and where the Danube, the Loire, the Rhone,
 and the Guadalquivir flow
 I see the windings of the Volga, the Dnieper, the Oder
 I see the Tuscan going down the Arno, and the Venetian along the Po
 I see the Greek seaman sailing out of Egina bay.

6

I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that of Persia, and
 that of India
 I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of Saukara.
 I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by avatars in human
 forms
 I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth, oracles, sacrifi-
 cers, brahmins, sabians, llamas, monks, muftis, exhorters
 I see where druids walk'd the groves of Mona, I see the mistletoe and
 vervain
 I see the temples of the deaths of the bodies of Gods
 I see the old signifiers.
 I see Christ eating the bread of his last supper in the midst of youths and
 old persons
 I see where the strong divine young man the Hercules toil'd faithfully
 and long and then died
 I see the place of the innocent rich life and hapless fate of the beautiful
 nocturnal son, the full-limb'd Bacchus
 I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown of feathers on his
 head
 I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-belov'd, saying to the people
 Do not weep for me
 This is not my true country, I have lived banish'd from my true country,
 I now go back there
 I return to the celestial sphere where every one goes in his turn.

7

I see the battle-fields of the earth, grass grows upon them and blossoms
 and corn
 I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.
 I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of the unknown
 events, heroes, records of the earth.
 I see the places of the sagas
 I see pine-trees and fir-trees torn by northern blasts
 I see granite boulders and cliffs, I see green meadows and lakes
 I see the burial-cairns of Scandinavian warriors
 I see them raised high with stones by the marge of restless oceans, that
 the dead men's spirits when they wearied of their quiet graves might

rise up through the mounds and gaze on the tossing billows, and be
refresh'd by storms, immensity, liberty, action.

I see the steppes of Asia
I see the tumuli of Mongolia, I see the tents of Kalmucks and Baskirs
I see the nomadic tribes with herds of oxen and cows
I see the table-lands notch'd with ravines, I see the jungles and deserts
I see the camel, the wild steed, the bustard, the fat-tail'd sheep, the ante-
lope, and the burrowing wolf
I see the highlands of Abyssinia
I see flocks of goats feeding, and see the fig-tree, tamarind, date
And see fields of teff-wheat and places of verdure and gold.
I see the Brazilian vaquero
I see the Bolivian ascending mount Sorata
I see the Wacho crossing the plains, I see the incomparable rider of horses
with his lasso on his arm
I see over the pampas the pursuit of wild cattle for their hides.

8

I see the regions of snow and ice
I see the sharp-eyed Samoiede and the Finn
I see the seal-seeker in his boat poisoning his lance
I see the Siberian on his slight-built sledge drawn by dogs
I see the porpoise-hunters, I see the whale-crews of the south Pacific and
the north Atlantic
I see the cliffs, glaciers, torrents, valleys, of Switzerland—I mark the long
winters and the isolation.
I see the cities of the earth and make myself at random a part of them
I am a real Parisian
I am a habitant of Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Constantinople
I am of Adelaide, Sidney (sic!), Melbourne
I am of London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Limerick
I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brussels, Berne, Frank-
fort, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence
I belong in Moscow, Cracow, Warsaw, or northward in Christiania or
Stockholm, or in Siberian Irkutsk, or in some street in Iceland
I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them again.

10

I see vapors exhaling from unexplored countries
I see the savage types, the bow and arrow, the poison'd splint, the fetich,
and the obi.
I see African and Asiatic towns
I see Algiers, Tripoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuctoo, Monrovia
I see the swarms of Pekin, Canton, Benares, Delhi, Calcutta, Tokio
I see the Kruman in his hut, and the Dahoman and Ashantee-man in their
huts
I see the Turk smoking opium in Aleppo

I see the picturesque crowds at the fairs of Khiva and those of Herat
 I see Teheran, I see Muscat and Medina and the intervening sands, see
 the caravans toiling onward
 I see Egypt and the Egyptians, I see the pyramids and obelisks.
 I look on chisell'd histories, records of conquering kings, dynasties, cut
 in slabs of sand-stone, or on granite-blocks
 I see at Memphis mummy-pits containing mummies embalm'd, swathed
 in linen cloth, lying there many centuries
 I look on the fall'n Theban, the large-ball'd eyes, the side-drooping neck,
 the hands folded across the breast.

I see all the menials of the earth, laboring
 I see all the prisoners in the prisons
 I see the defective human bodies of the earth
 The blind, the deaf and dumb, idiots, hunchbacks, lunatics
 The pirates, thieves, betrayers, murderers, slave-makers of the earth
 The helpless infants, and the helpless old men and women.

I see male and female everywhere
 I see the serene brotherhood of philosophers
 I see the constructiveness of my race
 I see the results of the perseverance and industry of my race
 I see ranks, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, I go among them, I mix in-
 discriminately
 And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.

11

You whoever you are!
 You daughter or son of England!
 You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires! you Russ in Russia!
 You dim-descended, black, divine-soul'd African, large, fine-headed,
 nobly-form'd, superbly destin'd, on equal terms with me!
 You Norwegian! Swede! Dane! Icelander! you Prussian!
 You Spaniard of Spain! you Portuguese!
 You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France!
 You Belge! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands! (you stock whence I
 myself have descended;)
 You sturdy Austrian! you Lombard! Hun! Bohemian! farmer of Styria!
 You neighbor of the Danube!
 You working-man of the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Weser! you working-
 woman too!
 You Sardinian! you Bavarian! Swabian! Saxon! Wallachian! Bulgarian!
 You Roman! Neapolitan! you Greek!
 You lithe matador in the arena at Seville!

You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or Caucasus!
 You Bokh horse-herd watching your mares and stallions feeding!
 You beautiful-bodied Persian at full speed in the saddle shooting arrows
 to the mark!
 You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China! you Tartar of Tartary!
 You women of the earth subordinated at your tasks!
 You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk to stand once on
 Syrian ground!
 You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!
 You thoughtful Armenian pondering by some stream of the Euphrates!
 You peering amid the ruins of Nineveh! you ascending mount Ararat
 You foot-worn pilgrim welcoming the far-away sparkle of the minarets
 of Mecca!
 You sheiks along the stretch from Suez to Bab-el-mandeb ruling your
 families and tribes!
 You olive-grower tending your fruit on fields of Nazareth, Damascus, or
 lake Tiberias!
 You Thibet trader on the wide inland or bargaining in the shops of Lassa!
 You Japanese man or woman! you liver in Madagascar, Ceylon, Sumatra,
 Borneo!
 All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of
 place!
 All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes of the sea!
 And you of centuries hence when you listen to me!
 And you each and everywhere whom I specify not, but include just the
 same!
 Health to you! good will to you all, from me and America sent!
 Each of us inevitable
 Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth
 Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth
 Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

12

You Hottentot with clicking palate! you woolly-hair'd hordes!
 You own'd persons dropping sweat-drops or blood-drops!
 You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive countenances of
 brutes!
 You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look down upon for all
 your glimmering language and spirituality!
 You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!

You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive lip, groveling, seeking your food!

You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!

You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd Bedowee!

You plague-swarms in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!

You benighted roamer of Amazonia! you Patagonian! you Feejeeman!

I do not prefer others so very much before you either

I do not say one word against you, away back there where you stand

(You will come forward in due time to my side.)

13

My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination around the whole earth

I have look'd for equals and lovers and found them ready for me in all lands

I think some divine rapport has equalized me with them.

You vapors, I think I have risen with you, moved away to distant continents, and fallen down there, for reasons

I think I have blown with you you winds;

You waters I have finger'd every shore with you

I have run through what any river or strait of the globe has run through

I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas and on the high embedded rocks, to cry thence:

What cities the light or warmth penetrates I penetrate those cities myself

All islands to which birds wing their way I wing my way myself.

Toward you all, in America's name

I raise high the perpendicular hand, I make the signal

To remain after me in sight forever

For all the haunts and homes of men.

BOOK VII

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

1

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road
Healthy, free, the world before me
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms
Strong and content I travel the open road.
The earth, that is sufficient
I do not want the constellations any nearer
I know they are very well where they are
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.
(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

2

You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you are not all that is
here
I believe that much unseen is also here.
Here the profound lesson of reception, nor preference nor denial
The black with his woolly head, the felon, the diseas'd, the
illiterate person, are not denied;
The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's tramp, the drunk-
ard's stagger, the laughing party of mechanics
The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop, the eloping couple
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of furniture into the town,
the return back from the town
They pass, I also pass, any thing passes, none can be interdicted
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

3

You air that serves me with breath to speak!
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings and give them shape!
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable showers!
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides!
I believe you are latent with unseen existences, you are so dear to me.
You flagg'd walks of the cities! you strong curbs at the edges!
You ferries! you planks and posts of wharves! you timber-lined side! you
distant ships!
You rows of houses! you window-pierc'd facades! you roofs!
You porches and entrances! you copings and iron guards!
You windows whose transparent shells might expose so much!
You doors and ascending steps! you arches!
You gray stones of interminable pavements! you trodden crossings!
From all that has touch'd you I believe you have imparted to yourselves,
and now would impart the same secretly to me
From the living and the dead you have peopled your impassive surfaces,
and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

4

The earth expanding right hand and left hand
The picture alive, every part in its best light
The music falling in where it is wanted, and stopping where it is not
wanted
The cheerful voice of the public road, the gay fresh sentiment of the road.
O highway I travel, do you say to me Do not leave me?
Do you say Venture not—if you leave me you are lost?
Do you say I am already prepared, I am well-beaten and undenied, ad-
here to me?
O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love you
You express me better than I can express myself
You shall be more to me than my poem.
I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air, and all free poems
also
I think I could stop here myself and do miracles
I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever be-
holds me shall like me
I think whoever I see must be happy.

5

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute
Listening to others, considering well what they say

Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that
would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me
can repeat over to men and women You have done such good to me
I would do the same to you
I will recruit for myself and you as I go
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall bless me.

6

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear it would not amaze me
Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd it would not as-
tonish me.

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons
It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth.

Here a great personal deed has room
(Such a deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race of men
Its effusion of strength and will overwhelms law and mocks all authority
and all argument against it.)

Here is the test of wisdom
Wisdom is not finally tested in schools
Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to another not having it
Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof
Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and is content
Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and the excellence
of things;
Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out
of the soul.

Now I re-examine philosophies and religions
They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all under the
spacious clouds and along the landscape and flowing currents.

Here is realization
Here is a man tallied—he realizes here what he has in him
The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant of you, you are va-
cant of them.

Only the kernel of every object nourishes;
Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me?
Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for you and me?

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is apropos;
Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers?
Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls?

7

Here is the efflux of the soul
The efflux of the soul comes from within through embower'd gates, ever
provoking questions
These yearnings why are they? these thoughts in the darkness why are
they?
Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me the sunlight
expands my blood?
Why when they leave me do my pennants of joy sink flat and lank?
Why are there trees I never walk under but large and melodious thoughts
descend upon me?
(I think they hang there winter and summer on those trees and always
drop fruit as I pass;)
What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers?
What with some driver as I ride on the seat by his side?
What with some fisherman drawing his seine by the shore as I walk by
and pause?
What gives me to be free to a woman's and man's good-will? what gives
them to be free to mine?

8

The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness
I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times
Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged.
Here rises the fluid and attaching character
The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and sweetness of man
and woman
(The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter every day out
of the roots of themselves, than it sprouts fresh and sweet continually
out of itself.)
Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the sweat of the love of
young and old
From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and attainments
Toward it heaves the shuddering longing ache of contact.

9

Allons! whoever you are come travel with me!
Traveling with me you find what never tires.
The earth never tires
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, Nature is rude and
incomprehensible at first
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling
we cannot remain here
However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters we must not
anchor here
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are permitted to
receive it but a little while.

10

Allons! the inducements shall be greater
We will sail pathless and wild seas
We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the Yankee clipper speeds
by under full sail.

Allons! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements
Health, defiance, gayety, self-esteem, curiosity;
Allons! from all formules!

From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests.

The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial waits no longer.

Allons! yet take warning!

He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance
None may come to the trial till he or she bring courage and health
Come not here if you have already spent the best of yourself
Only those may come who come in sweet and determin'd bodies
No diseas'd person, no rum-drinker or venereal taint is permitted here.

(I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes
We convince by our presence.)

11

Listen! I will be honest with you

I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes

These are the days that must happen to you:

You shall not heap up what is call'd riches

You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve

You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd, you hardly settle
yourself to satisfaction before you are call'd by an irresistible call to
depart

You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who
remain behind you

What beckonings of love you receive you shall only answer with passion-
ate kisses of parting

You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands
toward you.

12

Allons! after the great Companions, and to belong to them!

They too are on the road—they are the swift and majestic men—they are
the greatest women
Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land
Habitués of many distant countries, habitués of far-distant dwellings
Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary toilers
Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of the shore
Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of brides, tender helpers of children,
bearers of children
Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers-down of coffins
Journeyers over consecutive seasons, over the years, the curious years
each emerging from that which preceded it
Journeyers as with companions, namely their own diverse phases
Forth-steppers from the latent unrealized baby-days
Journeyers gayly with their own youth, journeyers with their bearded
and well-grain'd manhood
Journeyers with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd, content
Journeyers with their own sublime old age of manhood or womanhood
Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty breadth of the universe
Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom of death.

13

Allons! to that which is endless as it was beginningless
To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights
To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days and nights they tend
to
Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys
To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and pass it
To conceive no time, however distant, but what you may reach it and
pass it
To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits for you, however
long but it stretches and waits for you
To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go thither
To see no possession but you may possess it, enjoying all without
labor or purchase, abstracting the feast yet not abstracting one particle of
it
To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's elegant villa,
and the chaste blessings of the well-married couple, and the fruits of
orchards and flowers of gardens
To take to your use out of the compact cities as you pass through
To carry buildings and streets with you afterward wherever you go
To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you encounter them, to
gather the love out of their hearts
To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that you leave them
behind you
To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for travel-
ing souls.

All parts away for the progress of souls
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all that was or is apparent
upon this globe or any globe, falls into niches and corners before the
procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of
the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance.

Forever alive, forever forward

Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent, feeble, dissatis-
fied

Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected by men
They go! they go! I know that they go, but I know not where they go
But I know that they go toward the best—toward something great.

Whoever you are, come forth! or man or woman come forth!

You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house, though you
built it, or though it has been built for you.

Out of the dark confinement! out from behind the screen!

It is useless to protest, I know all and expose it.

Behold through you as bad as the rest

Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of people
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd and trimm'd
faces

Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to hear the confession

Another self, a duplicate of every one, skulking and hiding it goes
Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities, polite and bland
in the parlors

In the cars of railroads, in steamboats, in the public assembly
Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in the bedroom,
everywhere

Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form upright, death under the
breast-bones, hell under the skull-bones

Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the ribbons and artificial flowers
Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable of itself
Speaking of any thing else but never of itself.

14

Allons! through struggles and wars!

The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded?

What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? Nature?

Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from
any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to
make a greater struggle necessary.

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion

He going with me must go well arm'd
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty, angry enemies,
desertions.

15

Allons! the road is before us!

It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well—be not detain'd!

Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the book on the shelf
unopen'd!

Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money remain unearn'd!

Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the teacher!

Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer plead in the court,
and the judge expound the law.

Camerado, I give you my hand!

I give you my love more precious than money

I give you myself before preaching or law;

Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?

Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

BOOK VIII

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

1

Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.
Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious
you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning
home, are more curious to me than you suppose
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me,
and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one
disintegrated yet part of the scheme
The similitudes of the past and those of the future
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on
the walk in the street and the passage over the river
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.
Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the
heights of Brooklyn to the south and east
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour
high
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others
will see them

Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to
the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many
generations hence
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow,
I was refresh'd
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I
stood yet was hurried
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd
pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating
with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest
in strong shadow
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head
in the sunlit water
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine
pennants
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilothouses
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the
wheels
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolic-some
crests and glistening
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the gran-
ite storehouses by the docks
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on
each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning
high and glaringly into the night
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light
over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you
 I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river
 The men and women I saw were all near to me
 Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward
 to them
 (The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

5

What is it then between us?
 What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?
 Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not
 I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine
 I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters
 around it
 I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me
 In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me
 In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me
 I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution
 I too had receiv'd identity by my body
 That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should
 be of my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall
 The dark threw its patches down upon me also
 The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious
 My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?
 Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil
 I am he who knew what it was to be evil
 I too knitted the old knot of contrariety
 Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd
 Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak
 Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant
 The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me.
 The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting
 Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these want-
 ing
 Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest
 Was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as they
 saw me approaching or passing
 Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of their
 flesh against me as I sat
 Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never
 told them a word
 Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleep-
 ing

Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my
stores in advance
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.
Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now,
for all you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-
hemm'd Manhattan?
River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and
the belated lighter?
What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I
love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as approach?
What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that
looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?
We understand then do we not?
What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accom-
plish is accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the
men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my
nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be
looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with
the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast
eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's
head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd
schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall!
cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest
aromas
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient
rivers
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.
You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within
us
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also
You furnish your parts toward eternity
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

BOOK IX

SONG OF THE ANSWERER

1

Now list to my morning's romanza, I tell the signs of the Answerer
To the cities and farms I sing as they spread in the sunshine before me.

A young man comes to me bearing a message from his brother
How shall the young man know the whether and when of his brother?
Tell him to send me the signs. And I stand before the young man face to
face, and take his right hand in my left hand and his left hand in my
right hand

And I answer for his brother and for men, and I answer for him that
answers for all, and send these signs.

Him all wait for, him all yield up to, his word is decisive and final
Him they accept, in him lave, in him perceive themselves as amid light
Him they immerse and he immerses them.

Beautiful women, the haughtiest nations, laws, the landscape, people,
animals

The profound earth and its attributes and the unquiet ocean, (so tell I my
morning's romanza,)

All enjoyments and properties and money, and whatever money will buy
The best farms, others toiling and planting and he unavoidably reaps
The noblest and costliest cities, others grading and building and he domi-
ciles there

Nothing for any one but what is for him, near and far are for him, the
ships in the offing

The perpetual shows and marches on land are for him if they are for
anybody.

He puts things in their attitudes

He puts to-day out of himself with plasticity and love

He places his own times, reminiscences, parents, brothers and sisters,
associations, employment, politics, so that the rest never shame them
afterward, nor assume to command them.

He is the Answerer

What can be answer'd he answers, and what cannot be answer'd he shows how it cannot be answer'd.

A man is a summons and challenge

(It is vain to skulk—do you hear that mocking and laughter? do you hear the ironical echoes?)

Books, friendships, philosophers, priests, action, pleasure, pride, beat up and down seeking to give satisfaction

He indicates the satisfaction, and indicates them that beat up and down also.

Whichever the sex, whatever the season or place, he may go freshly and gently and safely by day or by night

He has the pass-key of hearts, to him the response of the prying of hands on the knobs.

His welcome is universal, the flow of beauty is not more welcome or universal than he is

The person he favors by day or sleeps with at night is blessed.

Every existence has its idiom, every thing has an idiom and tongue

He resolves all tongues into his own and bestows it upon men, and any man translates, and any man translates himself also

One part does not counteract another part, he is the joiner, he sees how they join.

He says indifferently and alike How are you friend? to the President at his levee

And he says Good-day my brother, to Cudge that hoes in the sugar-field
And both understand him and know that his speech is right.

He walks with perfect ease in the capitol

He walks among the Congress, and one Representative says to another
Here is our equal appearing and new.

Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic

And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the sailors that he has follow'd the sea

And the authors take him for an author, and the artists for an artist

And the laborers perceive he could labor with them and love them

No matter what the work is, that he is the one to follow it or has follow'd it

No matter what the nation, that he might find his brothers and sisters there.

The English believe he comes of their English stock

A Jew to the Jew he seems, a Russ to the Russ, usual and near removed from none.

Whoever he looks at in the traveler's coffee-house claims him

The Italian or Frenchman is sure, the German is sure, the Spaniard is sure, and the island Cuban is sure

The engineer, the deck-hand on the great lakes, or on the Mississippi or St. Lawrence or Sacramento, or Hudson or Paumanok sound, claims him.

The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his perfect blood
The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the beggar, see themselves in the ways of him, he strangely transmutes them
They are not vile any more, they hardly know themselves they are so grown.

2

The indications and tally of time
Perfect sanity shows the master among philosophs
Time, always without break, indicates itself in parts
What always indicates the poet is the crowd of the pleasant company of singers, and their words

The words of the singers are the hours or minutes of the light or dark but the words of the maker of poems are the general light and dark
The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immortality
His insight and power encircle things and the human race
He is the glory and extract thus far of things and of the human race.

The singers do not beget, only the Poet begets
The singers are welcom'd, understood, appear often enough, but rare has the day been, likewise the spot, of the birth of the maker of poems, the Answerer
(Not every century nor every five centuries has contain'd such a day, for all its names.)

The singers of successive hours of centuries may have ostensible names, but the name of each of them is one of the singers
The name of each is, eye-singer, ear-singer, head-singer sweet-singer, night-singer, parlor-singer, love-singer weird-singer, or something else.

All this time and at all times wait the words of true poems
The words of true poems do not merely please
The true poets are not followers of beauty but the august masters of beauty;
The greatness of sons is the exuding of the greatness of mothers and fathers
The words of true poems are the tuft and final applause of science.

Divine instinct, breadth of vision, the law of reason, health
rudeness of body, withdrawnness
Gayety, sun-tan, air-sweetness, such are some of the words of poems.

The sailor and traveler underlie the maker of poems, the Answerer
The builder, geometer, chemist, anatomist, phrenologist, artist, all these underlie the maker of poems, the Answerer.

The words of the true poems give you more than poems

They give you to form for yourself poems, religions, politics, war peace,
behavior, histories, essays, daily life, and every thing else
They balance ranks, colors, races, creeds, and the sexes
They do not seek beauty, they are sought
Forever touching them or close upon them follows beauty, longing fain,
love-sick.

They prepare for death, yet are they not the finish, but rather the outset
They bring none to his or her terminus or to be content and full
Whom they take they take into space to behold the birth of stars, to learn
one of the meanings
To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the ceaseless rings
and never be quiet again.

BOOK X

OUR OLD FEUILLAGE

Always our old feuillage!

Always Florida's green peninsula—always the priceless delta of Louisiana—always the cotton-fields of Alabama and Texas

Always California's golden hills and hollows, and the silver mountains of New Mexico—always soft-breath'd Cuba

Always the vast slope drain'd by the Southern sea, inseparable with the slopes drain'd by the Eastern and Western seas

The area the eighty-third year of these States, the three and a half millions of square miles

The eighteen thousand miles of sea-coast and bay-coast on the main the thirty thousand miles of river navigation

The seven millions of distinct families and the same number of dwellings—always these, and more, branching forth into numberless branches

Always the free range and diversity—always the continent of Democracy; Always the prairies, pastures, forests, vast cities, travelers

Kanada, the snows;

Always these compact lands tied at the hips with the belt stringing the huge oval lakes;

Always the West with strong native persons, the increasing density there the habitans, friendly, threatening, ironical, scorning invaders;

All sights, South, North, East—all deeds, promiscuously done at all times All characters, movements, growths, a few noticed, myriads unnoticed

Through Mannahatta's streets I walking, these things gathering

On interior rivers by night in the glare of pine knots, steamboats wooding up

Sunlight by day on the valley of the Susquehanna, and on the valleys of the Potomac and Rappahannock, and the valleys of the Roanoke and Delaware

In their northerly wilds beasts of prey haunting the Adirondacks the hills, or lapping the Saginaw waters to drink

In a lonesome inlet a sheldrake lost from the flock, sitting on the water
rocking silently
In farmers' barns oxen in the stable, their harvest labor done, they rest
standing, they are too tired
Afar on arctic ice the she-walrus lying drowsily while her cubs play
around
The hawk sailing where men have not yet sail'd, the farthest polar sea,
ripply, crystalline, open, beyond the floes
White drift spooning ahead where the ship in the tempest dashes
On solid land what is done in cities as the bells strike midnight together
In primitive woods the sounds there also sounding, the howl of the wolf,
the scream of the panther, and the hoarse bellow of the elk
In winter beneath the hard blue ice of Moosehead lake, in summer visible
through the clear waters, the great trout swimming
In lower latitudes in warmer air in the Carolinas the large black buzzard
floating slowly high beyond the tree tops
Below, the red cedar festoon'd with tylandria, the pines and cypresses
growing out of the white sand that spreads far and flat
Rude boats descending the big Pedee, climbing plants, parasites with
color'd flowers and berries enveloping huge trees
The waving drapery on the live-oak trailing long and low noiselessly
waved by the wind
The camp of Georgia wagoners just after dark, the supper-fires and the
cooking and eating by whites and negroes
Thirty or forty great wagons, the mules, cattle, horses, feeding from
troughs
The shadows, gleams, up under the leaves of the old sycamore-trees the
flames with the black smoke from the pitch-pine curling and rising;
Southern fishermen fishing, the sounds and inlets of North Carolina's
coast, the shad-fishery and the herring-fishery, the large sweep-seines,
the windlasses on shore work'd by horses, the
clearing, curing, and packing-houses;
Deep in the forest in piney woods turpentine dropping from the incisions
in the trees, there are the turpentine works
There are the negroes at work in good health, the ground in all directions
is cover'd with pine straw;
In Tennessee and Kentucky slaves busy in the coalings, at the forge by
the furnace-blaze, or at the corn-shucking
In Virginia, the planter's son returning after a long absence joyfully wel-
com'd and kiss'd by the aged mulatto nurse
On rivers boatmen safely moor'd at nightfall in their boats under shelter
of high banks
Some of the younger men dance to the sound of the banjo or fiddle others
sit on the gunwale smoking and talking;
Late in the afternoon the mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing in
the Great Dismal Swamp
There are the greenish waters, the resinous odor, the plenteous moss, the

cypress-tree, and the juniper-tree;
Northward, young men of Mannahatta, the target company from an
excursion returning home at evening, the musket-muzzles all bear
bunches of flowers presented by women;
Children at play, or on his father's lap a young boy fallen asleep
(how his lips move! how he smiles in his sleep!)
The scout riding on horseback over the plains west of the
Mississippi, he ascends a knoll and sweeps his eyes around;
California life, the miner, bearded, dress'd in his rude costume the stanch
California friendship, the sweet air, the graves one in passing meets
solitary just aside the horse-path;
Down in Texas the cotton-field, the negro-cabins, drivers driving mules
or oxen before rude carts, cotton bales piled on banks and wharves;
Encircling all, vast-darting up and wide, the American Soul, with equal
hemispheres, one Love, one Dilation or Pride;
In arriere the peace-talk with the Iroquois the aborigines, the calumet, the
pipe of good-will, arbitration, and indorsement
The sachem blowing the smoke first toward the sun and then toward the
earth
The drama of the scalp-dance enacted with painted faces and guttural
exclamations
The setting out of the war-party, the long and stealthy march
The single file, the swinging hatchets, the surprise and slaughter of ene-
mies;
All the acts, scenes, ways, persons, attitudes of these States reminis-
cences, institutions
All these States compact, every square mile of these States without ex-
cepting a particle;
Me pleas'd, rambling in lanes and country fields, Paumanok's fields
Observing the spiral flight of two little yellow butterflies
shuffling between each other, ascending high in the air
The darting swallow, the destroyer of insects, the fall traveler southward
but returning northward early in the spring
The country boy at the close of the day driving the herd of cows and
shouting to them as they loiter to browse by the roadside
The city wharf, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Or-
leans, San Francisco
The departing ships when the sailors heave at the capstan;
Evening—me in my room—the setting sun
The setting summer sun shining in my open window, showing the swarm
of flies, suspended, balancing in the air in the centre of the room, dart-
ing athwart, up and down, casting swift shadows in specks on the
opposite wall where the shine is;
The athletic American matron speaking in public to crowds of listeners
Males, females, immigrants, combinations, the copiousness, the indi-
viduality of the States, ea ch for itself—the moneymakers
Factories, machinery, the mechanical forces, the windlass, lever pulley,

all certainties

The certainty of space, increase, freedom, futurity

In space the sporades, the scatter'd islands, the stars—on the firm earth,
the lands, my lands

O lands! all so dear to me—what you are, (whatever it is,) I putting it at
random in these songs, become a part of that, whatever it is

Southward there, I screaming, with wings slow flapping, with the myri-
ads of gulls wintering along the coasts of Florida

Otherways there atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the Rio Grande the
Nueces, the Brazos, the Tombigbee, the Red River, the Saskatchewan
or the Osage, I with the spring waters laughing and skipping and
running

Northward, on the sands, on some shallow bay of Paumanok, I with par-
ties of snowy herons wading in the wet to seek worms and aquatic
plants

Retreating, triumphantly twittering, the king-bird, from piercing the
crow with its bill, for amusement—and I triumphantly twittering

The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn to refresh
themselves, the body of the flock feed, the sentinels outside move around
with erect heads watching, and are from time to time reliev'd by other
sentinels—and I feeding and taking turns with the rest

In Kanadian forests the moose, large as an ox, corner'd by hunters ris-
ing desperately on his hind-feet, and plunging with his fore-feet, the
hoofs as sharp as knives—and I, plunging at the

hunters, corner'd and desperate

In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses, and the count-
less workmen working in the shops

And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof—and no less in myself than
the whole of the Mannahatta in itself

Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands—my body no more in-
evitably united, part to part, and made out of a thousand diverse con-
tributions one identity, any more than my lands are inevitably united
and made *one identity*;

Nativities, climates, the grass of the great pastoral Plains

Cities, labors, death, animals, products, war, good and evil—these me

These affording, in all their particulars, the old feuillage to me and to
America, how can I do less than pass the clew of the union of them,
to afford the like to you?

Whoever you are! how can I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be
eligible as I am?

How can I but as here chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets
of the incomparable feuillage of these States?

BOOK XI

A SONG OF JOYS

O to make the most jubilant song!
Full of music—full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!
Full of common employments—full of grain and trees.
O for the voices of animals—O for the swiftness and balance of fishes!
O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!
O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!
O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like lightning!
It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time
I will have thousands of globes and all time.
O the engineer's joys! to go with a locomotive!
To hear the hiss of steam, the merry shriek, the steam-whistle, the
laughing locomotive!
To push with resistless way and speed off in the distance.
O the gleesome saunter over fields and hillsides!
The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds, the moist fresh stillness
of the woods
The exquisite smell of the earth at daybreak, and all through the
forenoon.
O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys!
The saddle, the gallop, the pressure upon the seat, the cool gurgling by
the ears and hair.
O the fireman's joys!
I hear the alarm at dead of night
I hear bells, shouts! I pass the crowd, I run!
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

O the joy of the strong-brawn'd fighter, towering in the arena in perfect condition, conscious of power, thirsting to meet his opponent.

O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only the human soul is capable of generating and emitting in steady and limitless floods.

O the mother's joys!

The watching, the endurance, the precious love, the anguish, the patiently yielded life.

O the of increase, growth, recuperation
The joy of soothing and pacifying, the joy of concord and harmony.

O to go back to the place where I was born
To hear the birds sing once more
To ramble about the house and barn and over the fields once more
And through the orchard and along the old lanes once more.

O to have been brought up on bays, lagoons, creeks, or along the coast
To continue and be employ'd there all my life
The briny and damp smell, the shore, the salt weeds exposed at low water
The work of fishermen, the work of the eel-fisher and clam-fisher;
I come with my clam-rake and spade, I come with my eel-spear
Is the tide out? I Join the group of clam-diggers on the flats
I laugh and work with them, I joke at my work like a mettlesome young man;

In winter I take my eel-basket and eel-spear and travel out on foot
on the ice—I have a small axe to cut holes in the ice
Behold me well-clothed going gayly or returning in the afternoon my
brood of tough boys accompanying me
My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be with no one
else so well as they love to be with me
By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.

Another time in warm weather out in a boat, to lift the lobster-pots where
they are sunk with heavy stones, (I know the buoys,)

O the sweetness of the Fifth-month morning upon the water as I row just
before sunrise toward the buoys

I pull the wicker pots up slantingly, the dark green lobsters are desperate
with their claws as I take them out, I insert wooden pegs in the 'oints
of their pincers

I go to all the places one after another, and then row back to the shore
There in a huge kettle of boiling water the lobsters shall be boil'd
till their color becomes scarlet.

Another time mackerel-taking
Voracious, mad for the hook, near the surface, they seem to fill the water
for miles;

Another time fishing for rock-fish in Chesapeake bay, I one of the brown-
faced crew;

Another time trailing for blue-fish off Paumanok, I stand with braced
body

My left foot is on the gunwale, my right arm throws far out the coils of slender rope
 In sight around me the quick veering and darting of fifty skiffs, my companions.

O boating on the rivers
 The voyage down the St. Lawrence, the superb scenery, the steamers
 The ships sailing, the Thousand Islands, the occasional timber-raft and the raftsmen with long-reaching sweep-oars
 The little huts on the rafts, and the stream of smoke when they cook supper at evening.

(O something pernicious and dread!

Something far away from a puny and pious life!

Something unproved! something in a trance!

Something escaped from the anchorage and driving free.)

O to work in mines, or forging iron

Foundry casting, the foundry itself, the rude high roof, the ample and shadow'd space

The furnace, the hot liquid pour'd out and running.

O to resume the joys of the soldier!

To feel the presence of a brave commanding officer—to feel his sympathy!

To behold his calmness—to be warm'd in the rays of his smile!

To go to battle—to hear the bugles play and the drums beat!

To hear the crash of artillery—to see the glittering of the bayonets and musket-barrels in the sun!

To see men fall and die and not complain!

To taste the savage taste of blood—to be so devilish!

To gloat so over the wounds and deaths of the enemy.

O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise again!

I feel the ship's motion under me, I feel the Atlantic breezes fanning me

I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head, There—she blows!

Again I spring up the rigging to look with the rest—we descend wild with excitement

I leap in the lower'd boat, we row toward our prey where he lies

We approach stealthy and silent, I see the mountainous mass lethargic, basking

I see the harpooneer standing up, I see the weapon dart from his vigorous arm;

O swift again far out in the ocean the wounded whale, settling running to windward, tows me

Again I see him rise to breathe, we row close again

I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep, turn'd in the wound

Again we back off, I see him settle again, the life is leaving him fast

As he rises he spouts blood, I see him swim in circles narrower and narrower, swiftly cutting the water—I see him die
 He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle, and then falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

O the old manhood of me, my noblest joy of all!

My children and grand-children, my white hair and beard
 My largeness, calmness, majesty, out of the long stretch of my life.

O ripen'd joy of womanhood! O happiness at last!

I am more than eighty years of age, I am the most venerable mother
 How clear is my mind—how all people draw nigh to me!

What attractions are these beyond any before? what bloom more than the bloom of youth?

What beauty is this that descends upon me and rises out of me?

O the orator's joys!

To inflate the chest, to roll the thunder of the voice out from the ribs and throat

To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with yourself
 To lead America—to quell America with a great tongue.

O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself, receiving identity through materials and loving them, observing characters and absorbing them
 My soul vibrated back to me from them, from sight, hearing, touch reason, articulation, comparison, memory, and the like

The real life of my senses and flesh transcending my senses and flesh

My body done with materials, my sight done with my material eyes

Proved to me this day beyond cavil that it is not my material eyes which finally see

Nor my material body which finally loves, walks, laughs, shouts, embraces, procreates.

O the farmer's joys!

Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's, Iowan's
 Kansian's, Missourian's, Oregonese' joys!

To rise at peep of day and pass forth nimbly to work

To plough land in the fall for winter-sown crops

To plough land in the spring for maize

To train orchards, to graft the trees, to gather apples in the fall.

O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place along shore

To splash the water! to walk ankle-deep, or race naked along the shore.

O to realize space!

The plenteousness of all, that there are no bounds

To emerge and be of the sky, of the sun and moon and flying clouds, as one with them.

O the joy a manly self-hood!

To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any tyrant known or unknown
 To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic
 To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye
 To speak with a full and sonorous voice out of a broad chest
 To confront with your personality all the other personalities of the earth.

Knowist thou the excellent joys of youth?
 Joys of the dear companions and of the merry word and laughing face?
 Joy of the glad light-beaming day, joy of the wide-breath'd games?
 Joy of sweet music, joy of the lighted ball-room and the dancers?
 Joy of the plenteous dinner, strong carouse and drinking?
 Yet O my soul supreme!

Knowist thou the joys of pensive thought?
 Joys of the free and lonesome heart, the tender, gloomy heart?
 Joys of the solitary walk, the spirit bow'd yet proud, the suffering and the struggle?
 The agonistic throes, the ecstasies, joys of the solemn musings day or night?
 Joys of the thought of Death, the great spheres Time and Space?
 Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals, the divine wife the sweet, eternal, perfect comrade?
 Joys all thine own undying one, joys worthy thee O soul.

O while I live to be the ruler of life, not a slave
 To meet life as a powerful conqueror
 No fumes, no ennui, no more complaints or scornful criticisms
 To these proud laws of the air, the water and the ground, proving my interior soul impregnable
 And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.

For not life's joys alone I sing, repeating—the joy of death!
 The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing a few moments for reasons
 Myself discharging my excrementitious body to be burn'd, or render'd to powder, or buried
 My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres
 My voided body nothing more to me, returning to the purifications further offices, eternal uses of the earth.

O to attract by more than attraction!
 How it is I know not—yet behold! the something which obeys none of the rest
 It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it draws.
 O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
 To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one can stand!
 To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!

To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect
nonchalance!

To be indeed a God!

O to sail to sea in a ship!

To leave this steady unendurable land

To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the sidewalks and the
houses

To leave you O you solid motionless land, and entering a ship

To sail and sail and sail!

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!

To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on!

To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports

A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun and air,)

A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joys.

BOOK XII

SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE

1

Weapon shapely, naked, wan
Head from the mother's bowels drawn
Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only one
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from a little seed sown
Resting the grass amid and upon
To be lean'd and to lean on.

Strong shapes and attributes of strong shapes, masculine trades
sights and sounds.

Long varied train of an emblem, dabs of music
Fingers of the organist skipping staccato over the keys of the great organ.

2

Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind
Welcome are lands of pine and oak
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig
Welcome are lands of gold
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize, welcome those of the grape
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice
Welcome the cotton-lands, welcome those of the white potato and sweet
potato

Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies
Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings
Welcome the measureless grazing-lands, welcome the teeming soil of or-
chards, flax, honey, hemp;

Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands
Lands rich as lands of gold or wheat and fruit lands
Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores
Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc
Lands of iron-lands of the make of the axe.

3

The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space clear'd for garden
The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves after the storm is lull'd
The walling and moaning at intervals, the thought of the sea
The thought of ships struck in the storm and put on their beam ends and
the cutting away of masts
The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd houses and barns
The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a venture of men fami-
lies, goods
The disembarkation, the founding of a new city
The voyage of those who sought a New England and found it, the outset
anywhere
The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette
The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-bags;
The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons
The beauty of wood-boys and wood-men with their clear untrimm'd
faces
The beauty of independence, departure, actions that rely on themselves
The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies, the boundless im-
patience of restraint
The loose drift of character, the inkling through random types, the solid-
ification;
The butcher in the slaughter-house, the hands aboard schooners and
sloops, the raftsmen, the pioneer
Lumbermen in their winter camp, daybreak in the woods, stripes of snow
on the limbs of trees, the occasional snapping
The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry song, the natural
life of the woods, the strong day's work
The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the talk, the bed of
hemlock-boughs and the bear-skin;
The house-builder at work in cities or anywhere
The preparatory jointing, squaring, sawing, mortising
The hoist-up of beams, the push of them in their places, laying them reg-
ular
Setting the studs by their tenons in the mortises according as they were
prepared
The blows of mallets and hammers, the attitudes of the men, their curv'd
limbs
Bending, standing, astride the beams, driving in pins, holding on by
posts and braces
The hook'd arm over the plate, the other arm wielding the axe
The floor-men forcing the planks close to be nail'd
Their postures bringing their weapons downward on the bearers
The echoes resounding through the vacant building:
The huge storehouse carried up in the city well under way
The six framing-men, two in the middle and two at each end, carefully
bearing on their shoulders a heavy stick for a cross-beam

The crowded line of masons with trowels in their right hands rapidly
laying the long side-wall, two hundred feet from front to rear
The flexible rise and fall of backs, the continual click of the trowels strik-
ing the bricks
The bricks one after another each laid so workmanlike in its place and set
with a knock of the trowel-handle
The piles of materials, the mortar on the mortar-boards, and the steady
replenishing by the hod-men;
Spar-makers in the spar-yard, the swarming row of well-grown appren-
tices
The swing of their axes on the square-hew'd log shaping it toward the
shape of a mast
The brisk short crackle of the steel driven slantingly into the pine
The butter-color'd chips flying off in great flakes and slivers
The limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in easy costumes
The constructor of wharves, bridges, piers, bulk-heads, floats stays
against the sea;
The city fireman, the fire that suddenly bursts forth in the close-pack'd
square
The arriving engines, the hoarse shouts, the nimble stepping and daring
The strong command through the fire-trumpets, the falling in line the rise
and fall of the arms forcing the water
The slender, spasmic, blue-white jets, the bringing to bear of the hooks
and ladders and their execution
The crash and cut away of connecting wood-work, or through floors if
the fire smoulders under them
The crowd with their lit faces watching, the glare and dense shadows;
The forger at his forge-furnace and the user of iron after him
The maker of the axe large and small, and the welder and temperer
The chooser breathing his breath on the cold steel and trying the edge
with his thumb
The one who clean-shapes the handle and sets it firmly in the socket;
The shadowy processions of the portraits of the past users also
The primal patient mechanics, the architects and engineers
The far-off Assyrian edifice and Mizra edifice
The Roman lictors preceding the consuls
The antique European warrior with his axe in combat
The uplifted arm, the clatter of blows on the helmeted head
The death-howl, the limpsy tumbling body, the rush of friend and foe
thither
The siege of revolted lieges determin'd for liberty
The summons to surrender, the battering at castle gates, the truce and
parley
The sack of an old city in its time
The bursting in of mercenaries and bigots tumultuously and disorderly
Roar, flames, blood, drunkenness, madness
Goods freely rifled from houses and temples, screams of women in the

gripe of brigands
Craft and thievery of camp-followers, men running, old persons despair-
ing
The hell of war, the cruelties of creeds
The list of all executive deeds and words just or unjust
The power of personality just or unjust.

4

Muscle and pluck forever!
What invigorates life invigorates death
And the dead advance as much as the living advance
And the future is no more uncertain than the present
For the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as much as the
delicatesse of the earth and of man
And nothing endures but personal qualities.
What do you think endures?
Do you think a great city endures?
Or a teeming manufacturing state? or a prepared constitution? or the
best built steamships?
Or hotels of granite and iron? or any chef-d'oeuvres of engineering
forts, armaments?
Away! these are not to be cherish'd for themselves
They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians play for them
The show passes, all does well enough of course
All does very well till one flash of defiance.
A great city is that which has the greatest men and women
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.

5

The place where a great city stands is not the place of stretch'd wharves,
docks, manufactures, deposits of produce merely
Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new-comers or the anchor-lifters of
the departing
Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings or shops selling goods
from the rest of the earth
Nor the place of the best libraries and schools, nor the place where money
is plentiest
Nor the place of the most numerous population.
Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of orators and bards
Where the city stands that is belov'd by these, and loves them in return
and understands them
Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and
deeds
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases

Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of
elected persons
Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to the whistle of death
pours its sweeping and unripped waves
Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside
authority
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President
Mayor, Governor and what not, are agents for pay
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves, and to depend on
themselves
Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs
Where speculations on the soul are encouraged
Where women walk in public processions in the streets the same as the
men
Where they enter the public assembly and take places the same as the
men;
Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands
Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands
Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands
Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands
There the great city stands.

6

How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!
How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels before a man's or
woman's look!
All waits or goes by default till a strong being appears;
A strong being is the proof of the race and of the ability of the universe
When he or she appears materials are overaw'd
The dispute on the soul stops
The old customs and phrases are confronted, turn'd back, or laid away.
What is your money-making now? what can it do now?
What is your respectability now?
What are your theology, tuition, society, traditions, statute-books, now?
Where are your jibes of being now?
Where are your cavils about the soul now?

7

A sterile landscape covers the ore, there is as good as the best for all the
forbidding appearance
There is the mine, there are the miners
The forge-furnace is there, the melt is accomplish'd, the hammersmen are
at hand with their tongs and hammers
What always served and always serves is at hand.
Than this nothing has better served, it has served all
Served the fluent-tongued and subtle-sensed Greek, and long ere the
Greek

Served in building the buildings that last longer than any
Served the Hebrew, the Persian, the most ancient Hindustanee
Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi, served those whose relics
remain in Central America
Served Albic temples in woods or on plains, with unhewn pillars and the
druids
Served the artificial clefts, vast, high, silent, on the snow-cover'd hills of
Scandinavia
Served those who time out of mind made on the granite walls rough
sketches of the sun, moon, stars, ships, ocean waves
Served the paths of the irruptions of the Goths, served the pastoral tribes
and nomads
Served the long distant Kelt, served the hardy pirates of the Baltic
Served before any of those the venerable and harmless men of Ethiopia
Served the making of helms for the galleys of pleasure and the making of
those for war
Served all great works on land and all great works on the sea
For the mediaeval ages and before the mediaeval ages
Served not the living only then as now, but served the dead.

8

I see the European headsman
He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs and strong naked arms
And leans on a ponderous axe.
(Whom have you slaughter'd lately European headsman?
Whose is that blood upon you so wet and sticky?)
I see the clear sunsets of the martyrs
I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts
Ghosts of dead lords, uncrown'd ladies, impeach'd ministers, rejected
kings
Rivals, traitors, poisoners, disgraced chieftains and the rest.
I see those who in any land have died for the good cause
The seed is spare, nevertheless the crop shall never run out
(Mind you O foreign kings, O priests, the crop shall never run out.)
I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe
Both blade and helve are clean
They spirt no more the blood of European nobles, they clasp no more
the necks of queens.
I see the headsman withdraw and become useless
I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy, I see no longer any axe upon it
I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of my own race
the newest, largest race.

9

(America! I do not vaunt my love for you
I have what I have.)
The axe leaps!

The solid forest gives fluid utterances
They tumble forth, they rise and form
Hut, tent, landing, survey
Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade
Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, lamb, lath, panel, gable
Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-house, library
Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, turret, porch
Hoe, rake, pitchfork, pencil, wagon, staff, saw, jack-plane, mallet wedge,
rounce
Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor
Work-box, chest, string'd instrument, boat, frame, and what not
Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States
Long stately rows in avenues, hospitals for orphans or for the poor or
sick
Manhattan steamboats and clippers taking the measure of all seas.

The shapes arise!

Shapes of the using of axes anyhow, and the users and all that neighbors
them

Cutters down of wood and haulers of it to the Penobscot or Kennebec
Dwellers in cabins among the Californian mountains or by the little lakes,
or on the Columbia

Dwellers south on the banks of the Gila or Rio Grande, friendly gather-
ings, the characters and fun

Dwellers along the St. Lawrence, or north in Kanada, or down by the
Yellowstone, dwellers on coasts and off coasts

Seal-fishers, whalers, arctic seamen breaking passages through the ice.

The shapes arise!

Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets

Shapes of the two-threaded tracks of railroads

Shapes of the sleepers of bridges, vast frameworks, girders, arches

Shapes of the fleets of barges, tows, lake and canal craft, river craft

Ship-yards and dry-docks along the Eastern and Western seas, and in
many a bay and by-place

The live-oak kelsons, the pine planks, the spars, the hackmatack-roots for
knees

The ships themselves on their ways, the tiers of scaffolds, the workmen
busy outside and inside

The tools lying around, the great auger and little auger, the adze bolt,
line, square, gouge, and bead-plane.

10

The shapes arise!

The shape measur'd, saw'd, jack'd, join'd, stain'd

The coffin-shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud

The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in the posts of the
bride's bed

The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers beneath
the shape of the babe's cradle
The shape of the floor-planks, the floor-planks for dancers' feet
The shape of the planks of the family home, the home of the friendly
parents and children
The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young man and woman,
the roof over the well-married young man and woman
The roof over the supper joyously cook'd by the chaste wife, and joyously
eaten by the chaste husband, content after his day's work.

The shapes arise!

The shape of the prisoner's place in the court-room, and of him or
her seated in the place
The shape of the liquor-bar lean'd against by the young rum-drinker and
the old rum-drinker
The shape of the shamed and angry stairs trod by sneaking foot-steps
The shape of the sly settee, and the adulterous unwholesome couple
The shape of the gambling-board with its devilish winnings and losings
The shape of the step-ladder for the convicted and sentenced murderer,
the murderer with haggard face and pinion'd arms
The sheriff at hand with his deputies, the silent and white-lipp'd crowd,
the dangling of the rope.

The shapes arise!

Shapes of doors giving many exits and entrances
The door passing the dissever'd friend flush'd and in haste
The door that admits good news and bad news
The door whence the son left home confident and puff'd up
The door he enter'd again from a long and scandalous absence diseas'd,
broken down, without innocence, without means.

11

Her shape arises
She less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than ever
The gross and soil'd she moves among do not make her gross and soil'd
She knows the thoughts as she passes, nothing is conceal'd from her
She is none the less considerate or friendly therefor
She is the best belov'd, it is without exception, she has no reason
to fear and she does not fear
Oaths, quarrels, hiccupp'd songs, smutty expressions, are idle to her as
she passes
She is silent, she is possess'd of herself, they do not offend her
She receives them as the laws of Nature receive them, she is strong
She too is a law of Nature—there is no law stronger than she is.

12

The main shapes arise!

Shapes of Democracy total, result of centuries

Shapes ever projecting other shapes
Shapes of turbulent manly cities
Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole earth
Shapes bracing the earth and braced with the whole earth.

BOOK XIII

SONG OF THE EXPOSITION

1

(Ah little reck's the laborer
How near his work is holding him to God
The loving Laborer through space and time.)
After all not to create only, or found only
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free
To fill the gross the torpid bulk with vital religious fire
Not to repel or destroy so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate
To obey as well as command, to follow more than to lead
These also are the lessons of our New World;
While how little the New after all, how much the Old, Old World!
Long and long has the grass been growing
Long and long has the rain been falling
Long has the globe been rolling round.

2

Come Muse migrate from Greece and Ionia
Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus
Repeat at Jerusalem, place the notice high on jaffa's gate and on
Mount Moriah
The same on the walls of your German, French and Spanish castles and
Italian collections
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried domain awaits,
demands you.

3

Responsive to our summons
Or rather to her long-nurs'd inclination

Join'd with an irresistible, natural gravitation
She comes! I hear the rustling of her gown
I scent the odor of her breath's delicious fragrance
I mark her step divine, her curious eyes a-turning, rolling
Upon this very scene.

The dame of dames! can I believe then
Those ancient temples, sculptures classic, could none of them retain her?
Nor shades of Virgil and Dante, nor myriad memories, poems, old asso-
ciations, magnetize and hold on to her?

But that she's left them all—and here?

Yes, if you will allow me to say so

I, my friends, if you do not, can plainly see her

The same undying soul of earth's, activity's, beauty's, heroism's expres-
sion

Out from her evolutions hither come, ended the strata of her former
themes

Hidden and cover'd by to-day's, foundation of to-day's

Ended, deceas'd through time, her voice by Castaly's fountain

Silent the broken-lipp'd Sphynx in Egypt, silent all those century-baffling
tombs

Ended for aye the epics of Asia's, Europe's helmeted warriors, ended
the primitive call of the muses

Calliope's call forever closed, Clio, Melpomene, Thalia dead

Ended the stately rhythmus of Una and Oriana, ended the quest of the
holy Graal

Jerusalem a handful of ashes blown by the wind, extinct

The Crusaders' streams of shadowy midnight troops sped with the sun-
rise

Amadis, Tancred, utterly gone, Charlemagne, Roland, Oliver gone

Palmerin, ogre, departed, vanish'd the turrets that Usk from its waters
reflected

Arthur vanish'd with all his knights, Merlin and Lancelot and

Galahad, all gone, dissolv'd utterly like an exhalation;

Pass'd! pass'd! for us, forever pass'd, that once so mighty world now
void, inanimate, phantom world

Embroider'd, dazzling, foreign world, with all its gorgeous legends,
myths Its kings and castles proud, its priests and warlike lords and
courtly dames

Pass'd to its charnel vault, coffin'd with crown and armor on

Blazon'd with Shakspeare's purple page

And dirged by Tennyson's sweet sad rhyme.

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the illustrious emigre, (having it is
true in her day, although the same, changed, journey'd considerable,)

Making directly for this rendezvous, vigorously clearing a path for
herself, striding through the confusion

By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay'd

Bluff'd not a bit by drain-pipe, gasometers, artificial fertilizers

Smiling and pleas'd with palpable intent to stay
She's here, install'd amid the kitchen ware!

4

But hold—don't I forget my manners?
To introduce the stranger, (what else indeed do I live to chant for?) to
thee Columbia;
In liberty's name welcome immortal! clasp hands
And ever henceforth sisters dear be both.
Fear not O Muse! truly new ways and days receive, surround you
I candidly confess a queer, queer race, of novel fashion
And yet the same old human race, the same within, without
Faces and hearts the same, feelings the same, yearnings the same
The same old love, beauty and use the same.

5

We do not blame thee elder World, nor really separate ourselves from
thee
(Would the son separate himself from the father?)
Looking back on thee, seeing thee to thy duties, grandeurs, through past
ages bending, building
We build to ours to-day.
Mightier than Egypt's tombs
Fairer than Grecia's, Roma's temples
Prouder than Milan's statued, spired cathedral
More picturesque than Rhenish castle-keeps
We plan even now to raise, beyond them all
Thy great cathedral sacred industry, no tomb
A keep for life for practical invention.
As in a waking vision
E'en while I chant I see it rise, I scan and prophesy outside and in
Its manifold ensemble.
Around a palace, loftier, fairer, ampler than any yet
Earth's modern wonder, history's seven outstripping
High rising tier on tier with glass and iron facades
Gladdening the sun and sky, enhued in cheerfulest hues
Bronze, lilac, robin's-egg, marine and crimson
Over whose golden roof shall flaunt, beneath thy banner Freedom
The banners of the States and flags of every land
A brood of lofty, fair, but lesser palaces shall cluster.
Somewhere within their walls shall all that forwards perfect human
life be started
Tried, taught, advanced, visibly exhibited.
Not only all the world of works, trade, products
But all the workmen of the world here to be represented.
Here shall you trace in flowing operation

In every state of practical, busy movement, the rills of civilization
Materials here under your eye shall change their shape as if by magic
The cotton shall be pick'd almost in the very field
Shall be dried, clean'd, ginn'd, baled, spun into thread and cloth before
you
You shall see hands at work at all the old processes and all the new ones
You shall see the various grains and how flour is made and then bread
baked by the bakers
You shall see the crude ores of California and Nevada passing on and on
till they become bullion
You shall watch how the printer sets type, and learn what a composing-
stick is
You shall mark in amazement the Hoe press whirling its cylinders shed-
ding the printed leaves steady and fast
The photograph, model, watch, pin, nail, shall be created before you.
In large calm halls, a stately museum shall teach you the infinite lessons
of minerals
In another, woods, plants, vegetation shall be illustrated—in another ani-
mals, animal life and development.
One stately house shall be the music house
Others for other arts—learning, the sciences, shall all be here
None shall be slighted, none but shall here be honor'd, help'd, exempld.

6

(This, this and these, America, shall be your pyramids and obelisks
Your Alexandrian Pharos, gardens of Babylon
Your temple at Olympia.)
The male and female many laboring not
Shall ever here confront the laboring many
With precious benefits to both, glory to all
To thee America, and thee eternal Muse.
And here shall ye inhabit powerful Matrons!
In your vast state vaster than all the old
Echoed through long, long centuries to come
To sound of different, prouder songs, with stronger themes
Practical, peaceful life, the people's life, the People themselves
Lifted, illumin'd, bathed in peace—elate, secure in peace.

7

Away with themes of war! away with war itself!
Hence from my shuddering sight to never more return that show of
blacken'd, mutilated corpses!
That hell unpent and raid of blood, fit for wild tigers or for lop-tongued
wolves, not reasoning men
And in its stead speed industry's campaigns
With thy undaunted armies, engineering

Thy pennants labor, loosen'd to the breeze
Thy bugles sounding loud and clear.

Away with old romance!

Away with novels, plots and plays of foreign courts
Away with love-verses sugar'd in rhyme, the intrigues, amours of idlers
Fitted for only banquets of the night where dancers to late music slide
The unhealthy pleasures, extravagant dissipations of the few
With perfumes, heat and wine, beneath the dazzling chandeliers.

To you ye reverent sane sisters
I raise a voice for far superber themes for poets and for art
To exalt the present and the real
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade
To sing in songs how exercise and chemical life are never to be baffled
To manual work for each and all, to plough, hoe, dig
To plant and tend the tree, the berry, vegetables, flowers
For every man to see to it that he really do something, for every woman
too;

To use the hammer and the saw, (rip, or cross-cut,)
To cultivate a turn for carpentering, plastering, painting
To work as tailor, tailoress, nurse, hostler, porter
To invent a little, something ingenious, to aid the washing, cooking clean-
ing
And hold it no disgrace to take a hand at them themselves.

I say I bring thee Muse to-day and here
All occupations, duties broad and close
Toil, healthy toil and sweat, endless, without cessation
The old, old practical burdens, interests, joys
The family, parentage, childhood, husband and wife
The house-comforts, the house itself and all its belongings
Food and its preservation, chemistry applied to it
Whatever forms the average, strong, complete, sweet-blooded man or
woman, the perfect longeve personality
And helps its present life to health and happiness, and shapes its soul
For the eternal real life to come.

With latest connections, works, the inter-transportation of the world
Steam-power, the great express lines, gas, petroleum
These triumphs of our time, the Atlantic's delicate cable
The Pacific railroad, the Suez canal, the Mont Cenis and Gothard and
Hoosac tunnels, the Brooklyn bridge
This earth all spann'd with iron rails, with lines of steamships
threading in every sea
Our own rondure, the current globe I bring.

8

And thou America
Thy offspring towering e'er so high, yet higher Thee above all towering

With Victory on thy left, and at thy right hand Law;
Thou Union holding all, fusing, absorbing, tolerating all
Thee, ever thee, I sing.

Thou, also thou, a World
With all thy wide geographies, manifold, different, distant
Rounded by thee in one—one common orbic language
One common indivisible destiny for All.

And by the spells which ye vouchsafe to those your ministers in earnest
I here personify and call my themes, to make them pass before ye.

Behold, America! (and thou, ineffable guest and sister!)
For thee come trooping up thy waters and thy lands;
Behold! thy fields and farms, thy far-off woods and mountains
As in procession coming.

Behold, the sea itself
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and
blue

See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.

Behold, in Oregon, far in the north and west
Or in Maine, far in the north and east, thy cheerful axemen
Wielding all day their axes.

Behold, on the lakes, thy pilots at their wheels, thy oarsmen
How the ash writhes under those muscular arms!

There by the furnace, and there by the anvil
Behold thy sturdy blacksmiths swinging their sledges
Overhand so steady, overhand they turn and fall with joyous clank
Like a tumult of laughter.

Mark the spirit of invention everywhere, thy rapid patents
Thy continual workshops, foundries, risen or rising
See, from their chimneys how the tall flame-fires stream.

Mark, thy interminable farms, North, South
Thy wealthy daughter-states, Eastern and Western
The varied products of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Georgia, Texas
and the rest
Thy limitless crops, grass, wheat, sugar, oil, corn, rice, hemp, hops
Thy barns all fill'd, the endless freight-train and the bulging store-house
The grapes that ripen on thy vines, the apples in thy orchards
Thy incalculable lumber, beef, pork, potatoes, thy coal, thy gold and sil-
ver

The inexhaustible iron in thy mines.

All thine O sacred Union!

Ships, farms, shops, barns, factories, mines

City and State, North, South, item and aggregate
We dedicate, dread Mother, all to thee!

Protectress absolute, thou! bulwark of all!

For well we know that while thou givest each and all, (generous as God,)
Without thee neither all nor each, nor land, home
Nor ship, nor mine, nor any here this day secure
Nor aught, nor any day secure.

9

And thou, the Emblem waving over all!

Delicate beauty, a word to thee, (it may be salutary,)
Remember thou hast not always been as here to-day so comfortably
ensovereign'd

In other scenes than these have I observ'd thee flag
Not quite so trim and whole and freshly blooming in folds of
stainless silk

But I have seen thee bunting, to tatters torn upon thy splinter'd staff
Or clutch'd to some young color-bearer's breast with desperate hands
Savagely struggled for, for life or death, fought over long
'Mid cannons' thunder-crash and many a curse and groan and yell, and
rifle-volleys cracking sharp

And moving masses as wild demons surging, and lives as nothing risk'd
For thy mere remnant grimed with dirt and smoke and sopp'd in blood
For sake of that, my beauty, and that thou might'st dally as now secure
up there

Many a good man have I seen go under.

Now here and these and hence in peace, all thine O Flag!

And here and hence for thee, O universal Muse! and thou for them!

And here and hence O Union, all the work and workmen thine!

None separate from thee—henceforth One only, we and thou
(For the blood of the children, what is it, only the blood maternal?
And lives and works, what are they all at last, except the roads to faith
and death?)

While we rehearse our measureless wealth, it is for thee, dear Mother
We own it all and several to-day indissoluble in thee;

Think not our chant, our show, merely for products gross or lucre—
it is for thee, the soul in thee, electric, spiritual!

Our farms, inventions, crops, we own in thee! cities and States in thee!

Our freedom all in thee! our very lives in thee!

BOOK XIV

SONG OF THE REDWOOD-TREE

1

A California song

A prophecy and indirection, a thought impalpable to breathe as air
A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hamadryads departing
A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and sky
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest dense.

Farewell my brethren

Farewell O earth and sky, farewell ye neighboring waters
My time has ended, my term has come.

Along the northern coast

Just back from the rock-bound shore and the caves
In the saline air from the sea in the Mendocino country
With the surge for base and accompaniment low and hoarse
With crackling blows of axes sounding musically driven by strong arms
Riven deep by the sharp tongues of the axes, there in the redwood forest
dense

I heard the might tree its death-chant chanting.

The choppers heard not, the camp shanties echoed not
The quick-ear'd teamsters and chain and jack-screw men heard not
As the wood-spirits came from their haunts of a thousand years to join
the refrain

But in my soul I plainly heard.

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves

Down from its lofty top rising two hundred feet high
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs, out of its foot-thick bark
That chant of the seasons and time, chant not of the past only but the
future.

You untold life of me

And all you venerable and innocent joys
Perennial hardy life of me with joys 'mid rain and many a summer sun

And the white snows and night and the wild winds;
O the great patient rugged joys, my soul's strong joys unreck'd by man
(For know I bear the soul befitting me, I too have consciousness, identity
And all the rocks and mountains have, and all the earth.)
Joys of the life befitting me and brothers mine
Our time, our term has come.

Nor yield we mournfully majestic brothers
We who have grandly fill'd our time
With Nature's calm content, with tacit huge delight
We welcome what we wrought for through the past
And leave the field for them.

For them predicted long
For a superber race, they too to grandly fill their time
For them we abdicate, in them ourselves ye forest kings.'
In them these skies and airs, these mountain peaks, Shasta, Nevadas
These huge precipitous cliffs, this amplitude, these valleys, far Yosemite
To be in them absorb'd, assimilated.

Then to a loftier strain
Still prouder, more ecstatic rose the chant
As if the heirs, the deities of the West
Joining with master-tongue bore part.

Not wan from Asia's fetiches
Nor red from Europe's old dynastic slaughter-house
(Area of murder-plots of thrones, with scent left yet of wars and scaffolds
everywhere
But come from Nature's long and harmless throes, peacefully builded
thence
These virgin lands, lands of the Western shore
To the new culminating man, to you, the empire new
You promis'd long, we pledge, we dedicate.

You occult deep volitions
You average spiritual manhood, purpose of all, pois'd on yourself giving
not taking law
You womanhood divine, mistress and source of all, whence life and love
and aught that comes from life and love
You unseen moral essence of all the vast materials of America, age upon
age working in death the same as life,)
You that, sometimes known, oftener unknown, really shape and mould
the New World, adjusting it to Time and Space
You hidden national will lying in your abysms, conceal'd but ever alert
You past and present purposes tenaciously pursued, may-be unconscious
of yourselves
Unswerv'd by all the passing errors, perturbations of the surface;
You vital, universal, deathless germs, beneath all creeds, arts statutes,
literatures

Here build your homes for good, establish here, these areas entire lands
of the Western shore
We pledge, we dedicate to you.

For man of you, your characteristic race
Here may he hardy, sweet, gigantic grow, here tower proportionate to
Nature
Here climb the vast pure spaces unconfined, uncheck'd by wall or roof
Here laugh with storm or sun, here joy, here patiently inure
Here heed himself, unfold himself, (not others' formulas heed,)
here fill his time
To duly fall, to aid, unreck'd at last
To disappear, to serve.

Thus on the northern coast
In the echo of teamsters' calls and the clinking chains, and the music of
choppers' axes
The falling trunk and limbs, the crash, the muffled shriek, the groan
Such words combined from the redwood-tree, as of voices ecstatic an-
cient and rustling
The century-lasting, unseen dryads, singing, withdrawing
All their recesses of forests and mountains leaving
From the Cascade range to the Wahsatch, or Idaho far, or Utah
To the deities of the modern henceforth yielding
The chorus and indications, the vistas of coming humanity, the settle-
ments, features all
In the Mendocino woods I caught.

2

The flashing and golden pageant of California
The sudden and gorgeous drama, the sunny and ample lands
The long and varied stretch from Puget sound to Colorado south
Lands bathed in sweeter, rarer, healthier air, valleys and mountain cliffs
The fields of Nature long prepared and fallow, the silent, cyclic chemistry
The slow and steady ages plodding, the unoccupied surface ripening
the rich ores forming beneath;
At last the New arriving, assuming, taking possession
A swarming and busy race settling and organizing everywhere
Ships coming in from the whole round world, and going out to the whole
world
To India and China and Australia and the thousand island paradises of
the Pacific
Populous cities, the latest inventions, the steamers on the rivers
the railroads, with many a thrifty farm, with machinery
And wool and wheat and the grape, and diggings of yellow gold.

3

But more in you than these, lands of the Western shore
(These but the means, the implements, the standing-ground.)

I see in you, certain to come, the promise of thousands of years, till now
 deferr'd
Promis'd to be fulfill'd, our common kind, the race.
The new society at last, proportionate to Nature
In man of you, more than your mountain peaks or stalwart trees imperial
In woman more, far more, than all your gold or vines, or even vital air.
Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long prepared
I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal
Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir of the
 past so grand
To build a grander future.

BOOK XV

A SONG FOR OCCUPATIONS

1

A song for occupations!

In the labor of engines and trades and the labor of fields I find the developments

And find the eternal meanings.

Workmen and Workwomen!

Were all educations practical and ornamental well display'd out of me, what would it amount to?

Were I as the head teacher, charitable proprietor, wise statesman what would it amount to?

Were I to you as the boss employing and paying you, would that satisfy you?

The learn'd, virtuous, benevolent, and the usual terms

A man like me and never the usual terms.

Neither a servant nor a master I

I take no sooner a large price than a small price, I will have my own whoever enjoys me

I will be even with you and you shall be even with me.

If you stand at work in a shop I stand as nigh as the nighest in the same shop

If you bestow gifts on your brother or dearest friend I demand as good as your brother or dearest friend

If your lover, husband, wife, is welcome by day or night, I must be personally as welcome

If you become degraded, criminal, ill, then I become so for your sake

If you remember your foolish and outlaw'd deeds, do you think I cannot remember my own foolish and outlaw'd deeds?

If you carouse at the table I carouse at the opposite side of the table

If you meet some stranger in the streets and love him or her, why I often meet strangers in the street and love them.

Why what have you thought of yourself?
 Is it you then that thought yourself less?
 Is it you that thought the President greater than you?
 Or the rich better off than you? or the educated wiser than you?
 (Because you are greasy or pimped, or were once drunk, or a thief
 Or that you are diseas'd, or rheumatic, or a prostitute
 Or from frivolity or impotence, or that you are no scholar and never saw
 your name in print
 Do you give in that you are any less immortal?)

2

Souls of men and women! it is not you I call unseen, unheard untouch-
 able and untouching
 It is not you I go argue pro and con about, and to settle whether you are
 alive or no
 I own publicly who you are, if nobody else owns.
 Grown, half-grown and babe, of this country and every country
 in-doors and out-doors, one just as much as the other, I see
 And all else behind or through them.
 The wife, and she is not one jot less than the husband
 The daughter, and she is just as good as the son
 The mother, and she is every bit as much as the father.
 Offspring of ignorant and poor, boys apprenticed to trades
 Young fellows working on farms and old fellows working on farms
 Sailor-men, merchant-men, coasters, immigrants
 All these I see, but nigher and farther the same I see
 None shall escape me and none shall wish to escape me.
 I bring what you much need yet always have
 Not money, amours, dress, eating, erudition, but as good
 I send no agent or medium, offer no representative of value, but
 offer the value itself.
 There is something that comes to one now and perpetually
 It is not what is printed, preach'd, discussed, it eludes discussion and
 print
 It is not to be put in a book, it is not in this book
 It is for you whoever you are, it is no farther from you than your hearing
 and sight are from you
 It is hinted by nearest, commonest, readiest, it is ever provoked by them.
 You may read in many languages, yet read nothing about it
 You may read the President's message and read nothing about it there
 Nothing in the reports from the State department or Treasury depart-
 ment, or in the daily papers or weekly papers
 Or in the census or revenue returns, prices current, or any accounts of
 stock.

3

The sun and stars that float in the open air
 The apple-shaped earth and we upon it, surely the drift of them is something grand
 I do not know what it is except that it is grand, and that it is happiness
 And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a speculation or bon-mot or reconnoissance
 And that it is not something which by luck may turn out well for us and without luck must be a failure for us
 And not something which may yet be retracted in a certain contingency.
 The light and shade, the curious sense of body and identity, the greed that with perfect complaisance devours all things
 The endless pride and outstretching of man, unspeakable joys and sorrows
 The wonder every one sees in every one else he sees, and the wonders that fill each minute of time forever
 What have you reckon'd them for, camarado?
 Have you reckon'd them for your trade or farm-work? or for the profits of your store?
 Or to achieve yourself a position? or to fill a gentleman's leisure or a lady's leisure?
 Have you reckon'd that the landscape took substance and form that it might be painted in a picture?
 Or men and women that they might be written of, and songs sung?
 Or the attraction of gravity, and the great laws and harmonious combinations and the fluids of the air, as subjects for the savans?
 Or the brown land and the blue sea for maps and charts?
 Or the stars to be put in constellations and named fancy names?
 Or that the growth of seeds is for agricultural tables, or agriculture itself?
 Old institutions, these arts, libraries, legends, collections, and the practice handed along in manufactures, will we rate them so high?
 Will we rate our cash and business high? I have no objection
 I rate them as high as the highest—then a child born of a woman and man
 I rate beyond all rate.

We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution grand
 I do not say they are not grand and good, for they are
 I am this day just as much in love with them as you
 Then I am in love with You, and with all my fellows upon the earth.

We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine
 I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still
 It is not they who give the life, it is you who give the life
 Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth than they are shed out of you.

4

The sum of all known reverence I add up in you whoever you are
 The President is there in the White House for you, it is not you who are here for him

The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them
 The Congress convenes every Twelfth-month for you
 Laws, courts, the forming of States, the charters of cities, the going and
 coming of commerce and malls, are all for you.

List close my scholars dear
 Doctrines, politics and civilization exurge from you
 Sculpture and monuments and any thing inscribed anywhere are tallied
 in you

The gist of histories and statistics as far back as the records reach is in you
 this hour, and myths and tales the same

If you were not breathing and walking here, where would they all be?
 The most renown'd poems would be ashes, orations and plays would be
 vacuums.

All architecture is what you do to it when you look upon it
 (Did you think it was in the white or gray stone? or the lines of the arches
 and cornices?)

All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the in-
 struments

It is not the violins and the cornets, it is not the oboe nor the beating
 drums, nor the score of the baritone singer singing his sweet romanza,
 nor that of the men's chorus, nor that of the women's chorus

It is nearer and farther than they.

5

Will the whole come back then?
 Can each see signs of the best by a look in the looking-glass? is there
 nothing greater or more?

Does all sit there with you, with the mystic unseen soul?
 Strange and hard that paradox true I give
 Objects gross and the unseen soul are one.

House-building, measuring, sawing the boards
 Blacksmithing, glass-blowing, nail-making, coopering, tin-roofing
 shingle-dressing

Ship-joining, dock-building, fish-curing, flagging of sidewalks by flag-
 gers

The pump, the pile-driver, the great derrick, the coal-kiln and brickkiln
 Coal-mines and all that is down there, the lamps in the darkness echoes,
 songs, what meditations, what vast native thoughts looking through
 smutch'd faces

Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains or by river-banks, men around
 feeling the melt with huge crowbars, lumps of ore, the due combining
 of ore, limestone, coal

The blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the bottom
 of the melt at last, the rolling-mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron, the
 strong clean-shaped Trail for railroads

Oil-works, silk-works, white-lead-works, the sugar-house steam-saws,
 the great mills and factories

Stone-cutting, shapely trimmings for facades or window or door-lintels
 the mallet, the tooth-chisel, the jib to protect the thumb The calking-
 iron, the kettle of boiling vault-cement, and the fire under the kettle
 The cotton-bale, the stevedore's hook, the saw and buck of the sawyer,
 the mould of the moulder, the working-knife of the butcher, the ice-
 saw, and all the work with ice
 The work and tools of the rigger, grappler, sail-maker, block-maker
 Goods of gutta-percha, papier-mache, colors, brushes, brush-making
 glazier's implements
 The veneer and glue-pot, the confectioner's ornaments, the decanter and
 glasses, the shears and flat-iron
 The awl and knee-strap, the pint measure and quart measure, the counter
 and stool, the writing-pen of quill or metal, the making of all sorts of
 edged tools
 The brewery, brewing, the malt, the vats, every thing that is done by
 brewers, wine-makers, vinegar-makers
 Leather-dressing, coach-making, boiler-making, rope-twisting distill-
 ing, sign-painting, lime-burning, cotton-picking electroplating, elec-
 trotyping, stereotyping
 Stave-machines, planing-machines, reaping-machines ploughing-
 machines, thrashing-machines, steam wagons
 The cart of the carman, the omnibus, the ponderous dray
 Pyrotechny, letting off color'd fireworks at night, fancy figures and jets;
 Beef on the butcher's stall, the slaughter-house of the butcher, the butcher
 in his killing-clothes
 The pens of live pork, the killing-hammer, the hog-hook, the scalding's
 tub, gutting, the cutter's cleaver, the packer's maul and the plenteous
 winterwork of pork-packing
 Flour-works, grinding of wheat, rye, maize, rice, the barrels and the half
 and quarter barrels, the loaded barges, the high piles on wharves and
 levees
 The men and the work of the men on ferries, railroads, coasters fish-boats,
 canals;
 The hourly routine of your own or any man's life, the shop, yard store,
 or factory
 These shows all near you by day and night—workman! whoever you are,
 your daily life!
 In that and them the heft of the heaviest—in that and them far more than
 you estimated, (and far less also,)
 In them realities for you and me, in them poems for you and me
 In them, not yourself-you and your soul enclose all things regardless of
 estimation
 In them the development good—in them all themes, hints, possibilities.
 I do not affirm that what you see beyond is futile
 I do not advise you to stop
 I do not say leadings you thought great are not great
 But I say that none lead to greater than these lead to.

6

Will you seek afar off? you surely come back at last
In things best known to you finding the best, or as good as the best
In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest, strongest, lovingest
Happiness, knowledge, not in another place but this place, not for another hour but this hour
Man in the first you see or touch, always in friend, brother nighest neighbor—woman in mother, sister, wife
The popular tastes and employments taking precedence in poems or anywhere
You workwomen and workmen of these States having your own divine and strong life
And all else giving place to men and women like you.
When the psalm sings instead of the singer
When the script preaches instead of the preacher
When the pulpit descends and goes instead of the carver that carved the supporting desk
When I can touch the body of books by night or by day, and when they touch my body back again
When a university course convinces like a slumbering woman and child convince
When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watchman's daughter
When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite and are my friendly companions
I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of them as I do of men and women like you.

BOOK XVI

A SONG OF THE ROLLING EARTH

1

A song of the rolling earth, and of words according
Were you thinking that those were the words, those upright lines? those
curves, angles, dots?

No, those are not the words, the substantial words are in the ground and
sea

They are in the air, they are in you.

Were you thinking that those were the words, those delicious sounds out
of your friends' mouths?

No, the real words are more delicious than they.

Human bodies are words, myriads of words
(In the best poems re-appears the body, man's or woman's well-shaped,
natural, gay

Every part able, active, receptive, without shame or the need of shame.)

Air, soil, water, fire—those are words

I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with theirs—
my name is nothing to them

Though it were told in the three thousand languages, what would air,
soil, water, fire, know of my name?

A healthy presence, a friendly or commanding gesture, are words say-
ings, meanings

The charms that go with the mere looks of some men and women are
sayings and meanings also.

The workmanship of souls is by those inaudible words of the earth
The masters know the earth's words and use them more than audible
words.

Amelioration is one of the earth's words

The earth neither lags nor hastens

It has all attributes, growths, effects, latent in itself from the jump

It is not half beautiful only, defects and excrescences show just as much
as perfections show.

The earth does not withhold, it is generous enough
The truths of the earth continually wait, they are not so conceal'd either
They are calm, subtle, untransmissible by print
They are imbued through all things conveying themselves willingly
Conveying a sentiment and invitation, I utter and utter
I speak not, yet if you hear me not of what avail am I to you?
To bear, to better, lacking these of what avail am I?
(Accouche! accouchez!

Will you rot your own fruit in yourself there?
Will you squat and stifle there?)
The earth does not argue
Is not pathetic, has no arrangements
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise
Makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out
Of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none out.

The earth does not exhibit itself nor refuse to exhibit itself possesses still
underneath
Underneath the ostensible sounds, the august chorus of heroes, the wail
of slaves
Persuasions of lovers, curses, gasps of the dying, laughter of young peo-
ple, accents of bargainers
Underneath these possessing words that never fall.

To her children the words of the eloquent dumb great mother never fail
The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail and reflection does
not fall
Also the day and night do not fall, and the voyage we pursue does not
fall.

Of the interminable sisters
Of the ceaseless cotillons of sisters
Of the centripetal and centrifugal sisters, the elder and younger sisters
The beautiful sister we know dances on with the rest.

With her ample back towards every beholder
With the fascinations of youth and the equal fascinations of age
Sits she whom I too love like the rest, sits undisturb'd
Holding up in her hand what has the character of a mirror, while her eyes
glance back from it
Glance as she sits, inviting none, denying none
Holding a mirror day and night tirelessly before her own face.

Seen at hand or seen at a distance
Duly the twenty-four appear in public every day
Duly approach and pass with their companions or a companion

Looking from no countenances of their own, but from the countenances
of those who are with them
From the countenances of children or women or the manly countenance
From the open countenances of animals or from inanimate things
From the landscape or waters or from the exquisite apparition of the sky
From our countenances, mine and yours, faithfully returning them
Every day in public appearing without fall, but never twice with the same
companions.

Embracing man, embracing all, proceed the three hundred and sixty-five
resistlessly round the sun;
Embracing all, soothing, supporting, follow close three hundred and
sixty-five offsets of the first, sure and necessary as they.

Tumbling on steadily, nothing dreading
Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, forever withstanding, passing, carrying
The soul's realization and determination still inheriting
The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and dividing
No balk retarding, no anchor anchoring, on no rock striking
Swift, glad, content, unbereav'd, nothing losing
Of all able and ready at any time to give strict account
The divine ship sails the divine sea.

2

Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you
The divine ship sails the divine sea for you.

Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid and liquid
You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in the sky
For none more than you are the present and the past
For none more than you is immortality.

Each man to himself and each woman to herself, is the word of the past
and present, and the true word of immortality;
No one can acquire for another—not one
Not one can grow for another—not one.

The song is to the singer, and comes back most to him
The teaching is to the teacher, and comes back most to him
The murder is to the murderer, and comes back most to him
The theft is to the thief, and comes back most to him
The love is to the lover, and comes back most to him
The gift is to the giver, and comes back most to him—it cannot fail
The oration is to the orator, the acting is to the actor and actress not to the
audience
And no man understands any greatness or goodness but his own, or the
indication of his own.

3

I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who shall be
complete

The earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who remains jagged and broken.

I swear there is no greatness or power that does not emulate those of the earth

There can be no theory of any account unless it corroborate the theory of the earth

No politics, song, religion, behavior, or what not, is of account unless it compare with the amplitude of the earth

Unless it face the exactness, vitality, impartiality, rectitude of the earth.

I swear I begin to see love with sweeter spasms than that which responds love

It is that which contains itself, which never invites and never refuses.

I swear I begin to see little or nothing in audible words

All merges toward the presentation of the unspoken meanings of the earth

Toward him who sings the songs of the body and of the truths of the earth

Toward him who makes the dictionaries of words that print cannot touch.

I swear I see what is better than to tell the best

It is always to leave the best untold.

When I undertake to tell the best I find I cannot

My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots

My breath will not be obedient to its organs

I become a dumb man.

The best of the earth cannot be told anyhow, all or any is best

It is not what you anticipated, it is cheaper, easier, nearer

Things are not dismiss'd from the places they held before

The earth is just as positive and direct as it was before

Facts, religions, improvements, politics, trades, are as real as before

But the soul is also real, it too is positive and direct

No reasoning, no proof has establish'd it

Undeniable growth has establish'd it.

4

These to echo the tones of souls and the phrases of souls

(If they did not echo the phrases of souls what were they then?

If they had not reference to you in especial what were they then?)

I swear I will never henceforth have to do with the faith that tells the best

I will have to do only with that faith that leaves the best untold.

Say on, sayers! sing on, singers!

Delve! mould! pile the words of the earth!

Work on, age after age, nothing is to be lost

It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in use

When the materials are all prepared and ready, the architects shall appear.

I swear to you the architects shall appear without fall

I swear to you they will understand you and justify you
The greatest among them shall be he who best knows you, and encloses
all and is faithful to all
He and the rest shall not forget you, they shall perceive that you are not
an iota less than they
You shall be fully glorified in them.

YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE AND NIGHT

Youth, large, lusty, loving—youth full of grace, force, fascination
Do you know that Old Age may come after you with equal grace, force,
fascination?
Day full-blown and splendid-day of the immense sun, action, ambition,
laughter
The Night follows close with millions of suns, and sleep and restoring
darkness.

BOOK XVII. BIRDS OF PASSAGE

SONG OF THE UNIVERSAL

1

Come said the Muse
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted
Sing me the universal.

In this broad earth of ours
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag
Enclosed and safe within its central heart
Nestles the seed perfection.

By every life a share or more or less
None born but it is born, conceal'd or unconceal'd the seed is waiting.

2

Lo! keen-eyed towering science
As from tall peaks the modern overlooking
Successive absolute fiats issuing.

Yet again, lo! the soul, above all science
For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe
For it the entire star-myriads roll through the sky.

In spiral routes by long detours
(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea,)
For it the partial to the permanent flowing
For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution
Not the right only justified, what we call evil also justified.

Forth from their masks, no matter what
From the huge festering trunk, from craft and guile and tears
Health to emerge and joy, joy universal.

Out of the bulk, the morbid and the shallow
Out of the bad majority, the varied countless frauds of men and states

Electric, antiseptic yet, cleaving, suffusing all
Only the good is universal.

3

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering
High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light
One flash of heaven's glory.

To fashion's, custom's discord
To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies
Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard
From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine
Along the mighty labyrinth.

4

And thou America
For the scheme's culmination, its thought and its reality
For these (not for thyself) thou hast arrived.

Thou too surroundest all
Embracing carrying welcoming all, thou too by pathways broad and new
To the ideal tendest.

The measure'd faiths of other lands, the grandeurs of the past
Are not for thee, but grandeurs of thine own
Deific faiths and amplitudes, absorbing, comprehending all
All eligible to all.

All, all for immortality
Love like the light silently wrapping all
Nature's amelioration blessing all
The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images ripening.

Give me O God to sing that thought
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith
In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space
Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?
Nay but the lack of it the dream
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream
And all the world a dream.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

Come my tan-faced children
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the foremost
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high plateaus
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental
blood intervein'd
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the Northern
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!

O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!

O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress
 Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress
 (bend your heads all,)
 Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd mis-
 tress

Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children
 By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter
 Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks
 With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd
 Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!

Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
 Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd.

Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world
 Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat
 Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants
 All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work
 All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers
 All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked
 All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body
 We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way
 Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!

Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets
 All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us
 All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait
 behind

We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!

O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!

Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,)

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet

Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?

Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?

Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding
on our way?

Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet

Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind

Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places

Pioneers! O pioneers!

TO YOU

Whoever you are, I fear you are walking the walks of dreams
 I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under your feet and hands
 Even now your features, joys, speech, house, trade, manners
 troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissipate away from you
 Your true soul and body appear before me.

They stand forth out of affairs, out of commerce, shops, work
 farms, clothes, the house, buying, selling, eating, drinking
 suffering, dying.

Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be my poem
 I whisper with my lips close to your ear.

I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than you.

O I have been dilatory and dumb

I should have made my way straight to you long ago

I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have chanted nothing
 but you.

I will leave all and come and make the hymns of you

None has understood you, but I understand you

None has done justice to you, you have not done justice to yourself

None but has found you imperfect, I only find no imperfection in you

None but would subordinate you, I only am he who will never consent
 to subordinate you

I only am he who places over you no master, owner, better, God beyond
 what waits intrinsically in yourself.

Painters have painted their swarming groups and the centre-figure of all
 From the head of the centre-figure spreading a nimbus of gold-color'd
 light

But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without its nimbus of
 gold-color'd light

From my hand from the brain of every man and woman it streams efful-
 gently flowing forever.

O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!

You have not known what you are, you have slumber'd upon yourself
 all your life

Your eyelids have been the same as closed most of the time

What you have done returns already in mockeries

(Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return in mockeries, what
 is their return?)

The mockeries are not you

Underneath them and within them I see you lurk

I pursue you where none else has pursued you

Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the accustom'd rou-
 tine, if these conceal you from others or from yourself, they do not
 conceal you from me

The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure complexion, if these balk
others they do not balk me
The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness, greed premature
death, all these I part aside.

There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in you
There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as good is in you
No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you
No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for you.

As for me, I give nothing to any one except I give the like carefully to you
I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner than I sing the songs
of the glory of you.

Whoever you are! claim your own at any hazard!

These shows of the East and West are tame compared to you
These immense meadows, these interminable rivers, you are immense
and interminable as they
These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature, throes of apparent dis-
solution, you are he or she who is master or mistress over them
Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, elements, pain, pas-
sion, dissolution.

The hobbles fall from your ankles, you find an unfailing sufficiency
Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by the rest whatever
you are promulges itself
Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided, nothing is
scanted
Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you are picks
its way.

FRANCE (THE 18TH YEAR OF THESE STATES)

A great year and place
A harsh discordant natal scream out-sounding, to touch the mother's
heart closer than any yet.

I walk'd the shores of my Eastern sea
Heard over the waves the little voice
Saw the divine infant where she woke mournfully wailing, amid the roar
of cannon, curses, shouts, crash of falling buildings
Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running, nor from the single
corpses, nor those in heaps, nor those borne away in the tumbrils
Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not so shock'd at the
repeated fusillades of the guns.

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-accrued retribution?
Could I wish humanity different?
Could I wish the people made of wood and stone?
Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?
O Liberty! O mate for me!

Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in reserve, to fetch them
out in case of need

Here too, though long repress, can never be destroy'd
Here too could rise at last murdering and ecstatic
Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

Hence I sign this salute over the sea
And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism
But remember the little voice that I heard wailing, and wait with perfect
trust, no matter how long
And from to-day sad and cogent I maintain the bequeath'd cause, as for
all lands

And I send these words to Paris with my love
And I guess some chansonniers there will understand them
For I guess there is latent music yet in France, floods of it
O I hear already the bustle of instruments, they will soon be drowning all
that would interrupt them

O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free march
It reaches hither, it swells me to Joyful madness
I will run transpose it in words, to justify
I will yet sing a song for you ma femme.

MYSELF AND MINE

Myself and mine gymnastic ever
 To stand the cold or heat, to take good aim with a gun, to sail a
 boat, to manage horses, to beget superb children
 To speak readily and clearly, to feel at home among common people
 And to hold our own in terrible positions on land and sea.

Not for an embroiderer
 (There will always be plenty of embroiderers, I welcome them also,)
 But for the fibre of things and for inherent men and women.

Not to chisel ornaments
 But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of plenteous
 supreme Gods, that the States may realize them walking and talking.

Let me have my own way
 Let others promulge the laws, I will make no account of the laws
 Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace, I hold up agitation and
 conflict
 I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one that was thought
 most worthy.

(Who are you? and what are you secretly guilty of all your life?
 Will you turn aside all your life? will you grub and chatter all your life?
 And who are you, blabbing by rote, years, pages, languages, reminis-
 cences
 Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak properly a single
 word?)

Let others finish specimens, I never finish specimens
 I start them by exhaustless laws as Nature does, fresh and modern con-
 tinually.

I give nothing as duties
 What others give as duties I give as living impulses
 (Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)
 Let others dispose of questions, I dispose of nothing, I arouse unanswer-
 able questions
 Who are they I see and touch, and what about them?
 What about these likes of myself that draw me so close by tender direc-
 tions and indirections?
 I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my friends, but listen to my
 enemies, as I myself do
 I charge you forever reject those who would expound me, for I cannot
 expound myself
 I charge that there be no theory or school founded out of me
 I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

After me, vista!

O I see life is not short, but immeasurably long

I henceforth tread the world chaste, temperate, an early riser, a steady
grower
Every hour the semen of centuries, and still of centuries.
I must follow up these continual lessons of the air, water, earth
I perceive I have no time to lose.

YEAR OF METEORS (1859-60)

Year of meteors! brooding year!

I would bind in words retrospective some of your deeds and signs

I would sing your contest for the 19th Presidential

I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair, mounted the scaffold
in Virginia

(I was at hand, silent I stood with teeth shut close, I watch'd

I stood very near you old man when cool and indifferent, but trembling
with age and your unheal'd wounds you mounted the scaffold;)

I would sing in my copious song your census returns of the States

The tables of population and products, I would sing of your ships and
their cargoes

The proud black ships of Manhattan arriving, some fill'd with immi-
grants, some from the isthmus with cargoes of gold

Songs thereof would I sing, to all that hitherward comes would welcome
give

And you would I sing, fair stripling! welcome to you from me, young
prince of England!

(Remember you surging Manhattan's crowds as you pass'd with your
cortege of nobles?

There in the crowds stood I, and singled you out with attachment;)

Nor forget I to sing of the wonder, the ship as she swam up my bay

Well-shaped and stately the Great Eastern swam up my bay, she was 600
feet long

Her moving swiftly surrounded by myriads of small craft I forget not to
sing;

Nor the comet that came unannounced out of the north flaring in heaven

Nor the strange huge meteor-procession dazzling and clear shooting over
our heads

(A moment, a moment long it sail'd its balls of unearthly light over our
heads

Then departed, dropt in the night, and was gone;)

Of such, and fitful as they, I sing—with gleams from them would gleam
and patch these chants

Your chants, O year all mottled with evil and good—year of forebodings!

Year of comets and meteors transient and strange—lo! even here one
equally transient and strange!

As I flit through you hastily, soon to fall and be gone, what is this chant

What am I myself but one of your meteors?

WITH ANTECEDENTS

1

With antecedents
 With my fathers and mothers and the accumulations of past ages
 With all which, had it not been, I would not now be here, as I am
 With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece and Rome
 With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb and the Saxon
 With antique maritime ventures, laws, artisanship, wars and journeys
 With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the oracle
 With the sale of slaves, with enthusiasts, with the troubadour, the crusader, and the monk
 With those old continents whence we have come to this new continent
 With the fading kingdoms and kings over there
 With the fading religions and priests
 With the small shores we look back to from our own large and present shores
 With countless years drawing themselves onward and arrived at these years
 You and me arrived—America arrived and making this year
 This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

2

O but it is not the years—it is I, it is You
 We touch all laws and tally all antecedents
 We are the skald, the oracle, the monk and the knight, we easily include them and more
 We stand amid time beginningless and endless, we stand amid evil and good
 All swings around us, there is as much darkness as light
 The very sun swings itself and its system of planets around us
 Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.
 As for me, (torn, stormy, amid these vehement days)
 I have the idea of all, and am all and believe in all
 I believe materialism is true and spiritualism is true, I reject no part.
 (Have I forgotten any part? any thing in the past?
 Come to me whoever and whatever, till I give you recognition.)
 I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews
 I adopt each theory, myth, god, and demigod
 I see that the old accounts, bibles, genealogies, are true, without exception
 I assert that all past days were what they must have been
 And that they could no-how have been better than they were
 And that to-day is what it must be, and that America is
 And that to-day and America could no-how be better than they are.

3

In the name of these States and in your and my name, the Past
And in the name of these States and in your and my name, the Present
time.

I know that the past was great and the future will be great
And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present time
(For the sake of him I typify, for the common average man's sake your
sake if you are he,)
And that where I am or you are this present day, there is the centre of all
days, all races
And there is the meaning to us of all that has ever come of races and days,
or ever will come.

BOOK XVIII

A BROADWAY PAGEANT

1

Over the Western sea hither from Nippon come
Courteous, the swart-cheek'd two-sworded envoys
Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed, impassive
Ride to-day through Manhattan.

Libertad! I do not know whether others behold what I behold
In the procession along with the nobles of Nippon, the errand-bearers
Bringing up the rear, hovering above, around, or in the ranks marching
But I will sing you a song of what I behold Libertad.

When million-footed Manhattan unpent descends to her pavements
When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the proud roar love
When the round-mouth'd guns out of the smoke and smell I love spit
their salutes

When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me, and heaven-clouds
canopy my city with a delicate thin haze

When gorgeous the countless straight stems, the forests at the wharves,
thicken with colors

When every ship richly drest carries her flag at the peak

When pennants trail and street-festoons hang from the windows

When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers and foot-
standers, when the mass is densest

When the facades of the houses are alive with people, when eyes gaze
riveted tens of thousands at a time

When the guests from the islands advance, when the pageant moves for-
ward visible

When the summons is made, when the answer that waited thousands of
years answers

I too arising, answering, descend to the pavements, merge with the
crowd, and gaze with them.

2

Superb-faced Manhattan!

Comrade Americanos! to us, then at last the Orient comes.

To us, my city

Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on opposite sides, to
walk in the space between

To-day our Antipodes comes.

The Originatress comes

The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of eld

Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with passion

Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments

With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering eyes

The race of Brahma comes.

See my cantabile! these and more are flashing to us from the procession

As it moves changing, a kaleidoscope divine it moves changing before
us.

For not the envoys nor the tann'd Japanee from his island only
Lithe and silent the Hindoo appears, the Asiatic continent itself
appears, the past, the dead

The murky night-morning of wonder and fable inscrutable

The envelop'd mysteries, the old and unknown hive-bees

The north, the sweltering south, eastern Assyria, the Hebrews, the an-
cient of ancients

Vast desolated cities, the gliding present, all of these and more are in the
pageant-procession.

Geography, the world, is in it

The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the coast beyond

The coast you henceforth are facing-you Libertad! from your Western
golden shores

The countries there with their populations, the millions en-masse are cu-
riously here

The swarming market-places, the temples with idols ranged along the
sides or at the end, bonze, brahmin, and llama

Mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and fisherman

The singing-girl and the dancing-girl, the ecstatic persons, the secluded
emperors

Confucius himself, the great poets and heroes, the warriors, the castes all

Trooping up, crowding from all directions, from the Altay mountains

From Thibet, from the four winding and far-flowing rivers of China

From the southern peninsulas and the demi-continental islands, from
Malaysia

These and whatever belongs to them palpable show forth to me, and are
seiz'd by me

And I am seiz'd by them, and friendly held by them

Till as here them all I chant, Libertad! for themselves and for you.

For I too raising my voice join the ranks of this pageant

I am the chanter, I chant aloud over the pageant
 I chant the world on my Western sea
 I chant copious the islands beyond, thick as stars in the sky
 I chant the new empire grander than any before, as in a vision it comes
 to me
 I chant America the mistress, I chant a greater supremacy
 I chant projected a thousand blooming cities yet in time on those groups
 of sea-islands
 My sail-ships and steam-ships threading the archipelagoes
 My stars and stripes fluttering in the wind
 Commerce opening, the sleep of ages having done its work, races reborn,
 refresh'd
 Lives, works resumed—the object I know not—but the old, the Asiatic re-
 new'd as it must be
 Commencing from this day surrounded by the world.

3

And you Libertad of the world!

You shall sit in the middle well-pois'd thousands and thousands of years
 As to-day from one side the nobles of Asia come to you
 As to-morrow from the other side the queen of England sends her eldest
 son to you.

The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed
 The ring is circled, the journey is done
 The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd, nevertheless the perfume pours
 copiously out of the whole box.

Young Libertad! with the venerable Asia, the all-mother
 Be considerate with her now and ever hot Libertad, for you are all
 Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother now sending messages
 over the archipelagoes to you
 Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad.

Here the children straying westward so long? so wide the tramping?
 Were the precedent dim ages debouching westward from Paradise so
 long?

Were the centuries steadily footing it that way, all the while unknown,
 for you, for reasons?

They are justified, they are accomplish'd, they shall now be turn'd
 the other way also, to travel toward you thence
 They shall now also march obediently eastward for your sake Libertad.

BOOK XIX. SEA-DRIFT

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle
Out of the Ninth-month midnight
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child
leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot
Down from the shower'd halo
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were
alive
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I
heard
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease
From the myriad thence-arous'd words
From the word stronger and more delicious than any
From such as now they start the scene revisiting
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing
Up this seashore in some briars
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand

And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!

Pour down your warmth, great sun.
 While we bask, we two together.

Two together!

Winds blow south, or winds blow north
 Day come white, or night come black
 Home, or rivers and mountains from home
 Singing all time, minding no time
 While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden
 May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate
 One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest
 Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next
 Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea
 And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather
 Over the hoarse surging of the sea
 Or flitting from brier to brier by day
 I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird
 The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!

Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
 I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd
 All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake
 Down almost amid the slapping waves
 Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate
 He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know
 The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note
 For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding
 Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows
 Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights
 after their sorts

The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing
 I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair
 Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes
 Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!

Close on its wave soothes the wave behind
 And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close
 But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late
 It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land
 With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
 What is that little black thing I see there in the white?
 Loud! loud! loud!

Loud I call to you, my love!

High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves
 Surely you must know who is here, is here
 You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!

What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
 O it is the shape, the shape of my mate.
 O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!

Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again
 if you only would
 For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!

Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!

Sound clearer through the atmosphere!

Pierce the woods, the earth
 Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!

Solitary here, the night's carols!

Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!

Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!

O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!

O reckless despairing carols.

But soft! sink low!

Soft! let me just murmur

And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea
 For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me

So faint, I must be still, be still to listen
 But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

Hither my love!

Here I am! here!

With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you
 This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere
 That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice
 That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray
 Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!

O I am very sick and sorrowful
 O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!

O troubled reflection in the sea!

O throat! O throbbing heart!

And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!

In the air, in the woods, over fields
 Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!

But my mate no more, no more with me!

We two together no more.

The aria sinking
 All else continuing, the stars shining
 The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing
 With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning
 On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling
 The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of
 the sea almost touching
 The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmo-
 sphere dallying
 The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously
 bursting
 The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing
 The strange tears down the cheeks coursing
 The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering
 The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying
 To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hiss-
 ing
 To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)

Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?

For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you

Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake
 And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder
 and more sorrowful than yours
 A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me
 O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you
 Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations
 Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me
 Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what
 there in the night
 By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon
 The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within
 The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clue! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)
 O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)
 The word final, superior to all
 Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
 Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
 Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?
 Whereto answering, the sea
 Delaying not, hurrying not
 Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak
 Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death
 And again death, death, death, death
 Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart
 But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet
 Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over
 Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget.

But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother
 That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach
 With the thousand responsive songs at random
 My own songs awaked from that hour
 And with them the key, the word up from the waves
 The word of the sweetest song and all songs
 That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet
 (Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments,
 bending aside,)
 The sea whisper'd me.

AS I EBB'D WITH THE OCEAN OF LIFE

1

As I ebb'd with the ocean of life
As I wended the shores I know
As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok
Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways
I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward
Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I utter poems
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot
The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the
globe.

Fascinated, my eyes reverting from the south, dropt, to follow those slender
windrows

Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-gluten
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce, left by the tide
Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other side of me
Paumanok there and then as I thought the old thought of likenesses
These you presented to me you fish-shaped island
As I wended the shores I know
As I walk'd with that electric self seeking types.

2

As I wend to the shores I know not
As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women wreck'd
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon me
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and closer
I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift
A few sands and dead leaves to gather
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift.
O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth
Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my mouth
Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon me I have
not once had the least idea who or what I am
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet untouch'd,
untold, altogether unreach'd
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs and bows
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand beneath.
I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single
object, and that no man ever can
Nature here in sight of the sea taking advantage of me to dart upon
me and sting me
Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

3

You oceans both, I close with you
We murmur alike reproachfully rolling sands and drift, knowing not why
These little shreds indeed standing for you and me and all.

You friable shore with trails of debris
You fish-shaped island, I take what is underfoot
What is yours is mine my father.

I too Paumanok
I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float, and been wash'd on
your shores

I too am but a trail of drift and debris
I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped island.

I throw myself upon your breast my father
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me
I hold you so firm till you answer me something.

Kiss me my father
Touch me with your lips as I touch those I love
Breathe to me while I hold you close the secret of the murmuring I envy.

4

Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)
Cease not your moaning you fierce old mother
Endlessly cry for your castaways, but fear not, deny not me
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet as I touch you or gather
from you.

I mean tenderly by you and all
I gather for myself and for this phantom looking down where we lead
and following me and mine.

Me and mine, loose windrows, little corpses
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles
(See, from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last
See, the prismatic colors glistening and rolling,)
Tufts of straw, sands, fragments
Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting another
From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell
Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of liquid or soil
Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented and thrown
A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves floating
drifted at random
Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature
Just as much whence we come that blare of the cloud-trumpets
We, capricious, brought hither we know not whence, spread out before
you

You up there walking or sitting
Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet.

TEARS

Tears! tears! tears!

In the night, in solitude, tears

On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand

Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate

Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;

O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?

What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?

Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;

O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the beach!

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind—O belching and desperate!

O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance and regulated pace

But away at night as you fly, none looking—O then the unloosen'd ocean
Of tears! tears! tears!

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm

Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions

(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)

Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating

As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee

(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea

After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks

With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene

The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun

The limpid spread of air cerulean

Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings,)

To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane

Thou ship of air that never fur!st thy sails

Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating

At dusk that lookist on Senegal, at morn America

That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud

In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul

What joys! what joys were thine!

ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM

Aboard at a ship's helm

A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing

An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing

Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind the loud admonition

The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under her gray
sails

The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth speeds away
gayly and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!

Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

On the beach at night
Stands a child with her father
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter
And nigh at hand, only a very little above
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child
Weep not, my darling
With these kisses let me remove your tears
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in apparition

Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the
Pleiades shall emerge
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall
shine out again
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they endure
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons shall again
shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?
Something there is
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,
Something there is more immortal even than the stars
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

THE WORLD BELOW THE BRINE

The world below the brine
Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the thick tangle openings, and pink turf
Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white, and gold, the play of light through the water
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten, grass, rushes and the aliment of the swimmers
Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly crawling close to the bottom
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or disporting with his flukes
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-leopard, and the sting-ray
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths breathing that thick-breathing air, as so many do
The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air breathed by beings like us who walk this sphere
The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other spheres.

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE

On the beach at night alone
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.
A vast similitude interlocks all
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons, planets
All distances of place however wide
All distances of time, all inanimate forms
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different, or in different worlds
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes, the fishes, the brutes
All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages
All identities that have existed or may exist on this globe, or any globe
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

1

To-day a rude brief recitative
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves spreading and spreading
far as the eye can reach
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations
Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor
death dismay.

Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing
Ever the stock preserv'd and never lost, though rare, enough for seed
preserv'd.)

2

Flaunt out O sea your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man
one flag above all the rest
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates
And all that went down doing their duty
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors
All seas, all ships.

PATROLING BARNEGAT

Wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering
On beachy slush and sand spirits of snow fierce slanting
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing
(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)
Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting
That savage trinity warily watching.

AFTER THE SEA-SHIP

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes
Below, a myriad myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under
the sun
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

BOOK XX. BY THE ROADSIDE

A BOSTON BALLAD (1854)

To get betimes in Boston town I rose this morning early
Here's a good place at the corner, I must stand and see the show.
Clear the way there Jonathan!
Way for the President's marshal—way for the government cannon!
Way for the Federal foot and dragoons, (and the apparitions copiously
tumbling.)
I love to look on the Stars and Stripes, I hope the fifes will play
Yankee Doodle.
How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost troops!
Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff through Boston town.
A fog follows, antiques of the same come limping
Some appear wooden-legged, and some appear bandaged and bloodless.
Why this is indeed a show—it has called the dead out of the earth!
The old graveyards of the hills have hurried to see!
Phantoms! phantoms countless by flank and rear!
Cock'd hats of mothy mould—crutches made of mist!
Arms in slings—old men leaning on young men's shoulders.
What troubles you Yankee phantoms? what is all this chattering of bare
gums?
Does the ague convulse your limbs? do you mistake your crutches for
firelocks and level them?
If you blind your eyes with tears you will not see the President's marshal
If you groan such groans you might balk the government cannon.
For shame old maniacs—bring down those toss'd arms, and let your white
hair be
Here gape your great grandsons, their wives gaze at them from the win-
dows

See how well dress'd, see how orderly they conduct themselves.

Worse and worse—can't you stand it? are you retreating?

Is this hour with the living too dead for you?

Retreat then—pell-mell!

To your graves—back—back to the hills old limpers!

I do not think you belong here anyhow.

But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell you what it
is, gentlemen of Boston?

I will whisper it to the Mayor, he shall send a committee to England

They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a cart to the royal
vault

Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from the graveclothes,
box up his bones for a journey

Find a swift Yankee clipper—here is freight for you, black-bellied clipper

Up with your anchor—shake out your sails—steer straight toward
Boston bay.

Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out the government
cannon

Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another procession
guard it with foot and dragoons.

This centre-piece for them;

Look, all orderly citizens—look from the windows, women!

The committee open the box, set up the regal ribs, glue those that
will not stay

Clap the skull on top of the ribs, and clap a crown on top of the skull.

You have got your revenge, old buster—the crown is come to its own, and
more than its own.

Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan—you are a made man from
this day

You are mighty cute—and here is one of your bargains.

EUROPE (THE 72D AND 73D YEARS OF THESE STATES)

Suddenly out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of slaves
Like lightning it le'pt forth half startled at itself
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags, its hands tight to the throats of kings.

O hope and faith!

O aching close of exiled patriots' lives!

O many a sicken'd heart!

Turn back unto this day and make yourselves afresh.

And you, paid to defile the People—you liars, mark!

Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming from his sim-
plicity the poor man's wages

For many a promise sworn by royal lips and broken and laugh'd at in the
breaking

Then in their power not for all these did the blows strike revenge
or the heads of the nobles fall;

The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction, and the frighten'd
monarchs come back

Each comes in state with his train, hangman, priest, tax-gatherer
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

Yet behind all lowering stealing, lo, a shape

Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front and form, in scarlet
folds

Whose face and eyes none may see

Out of its robes only this, the red robes lifted by the arm

One finger crook'd pointed high over the top, like the head of a snake
appears.

Meanwhile corpses lie in new-made graves, bloody corpses of young
men

The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of princes are
flying, the creatures of power laugh aloud

And all these things bear fruits, and they are good.

Those corpses of young men

Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets, those hearts pierc'd by
the gray lead

Cold and motionless as they seem live elsewhere with unslaughter'd vi-
tality.

They live in other young men O kings!

They live in brothers again ready to defy you

They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.

Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed for freedom in
its turn to bear seed
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and the snows nour-
ish.

Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants let loose
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, counseling, cautioning.
Liberty, let others despair of you—I never despair of you.
Is the house shut? is the master away?
Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching
He will soon return, his messengers come anon.

A HAND-MIRROR

Hold it up sternly—see this it sends back, (who is it? is it you?)
Outside fair costume, within ashes and filth
No more a flashing eye, no more a sonorous voice or springy step
Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step
A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, venerealee's flesh
Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and cankerous
Joints rheumatic, bowels clogged with abomination
Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams
Words babble, hearing and touch callous
No brain, no heart left, no magnetism of sex;
Such from one look in this looking-glass ere you go hence
Such a result so soon—and from such a beginning!

GODS

Lover divine and perfect Comrade
 Waiting content, invisible yet, but certain
 Be thou my God.

Thou, thou, the Ideal Man
 Fair, able, beautiful, content, and loving
 Complete in body and dilate in spirit
 Be thou my God.

O Death, (for Life has served its turn,
 Opener and usher to the heavenly mansion
 Be thou my God.

Aught, aught of mightiest, best I see, conceive, or know
 (To break the stagnant tie—thee, thee to free, O soul,
 Be thou my God.

All great ideas, the races' aspirations
 All heroisms, deeds of rapt enthusiasts
 Be ye my Gods.

Or Time and Space
 Or shape of Earth divine and wondrous
 Or some fair shape I viewing, worship
 Or lustrous orb of sun or star by night
 Be ye my Gods.

GERMS

Forms, qualities, lives, humanity, language, thoughts
 The ones known, and the ones unknown, the ones on the stars
 The stars themselves, some shaped, others unshaped
 Wonders as of those countries, the soil, trees, cities, inhabitants whatever
 they may be
 Splendid suns, the moons and rings, the countless combinations and ef-
 fects
 Such-like, and as good as such-like, visible here or anywhere, stand
 provided for a handful of space, which I extend my arm and half enclose
 with my hand
 That containing the start of each and all, the virtue, the germs of all.

THOUGHTS

Of ownership—as if one fit to own things could not at pleasure enter upon
all, and incorporate them into himself or herself;
Of vista—suppose some sight in arriere through the formative chaos pre-
suming the growth, fulness, life, now attain'd on the journey
(But I see the road continued, and the journey ever continued;)
Of what was once lacking on earth, and in due time has become
supplied—and of what will yet be supplied
Because all I see and know I believe to have its main purport in what will
yet be supplied.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure
them
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture-room
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

PERFECTIONS

Only themselves understand themselves and the like of themselves
As souls only understand souls.

O ME! O LIFE!

O me! O life! of the questions of these recurring
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I and
who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle
ever renew'd
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around
me
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O
life?
Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

TO A PRESIDENT

All you are doing and saying is to America dangled mirages
You have not learn'd of Nature—of the politics of Nature you have not
learn'd the great amplitude, rectitude, impartiality
You have not seen that only such as they are for these States
And that what is less than they must sooner or later lift off from these
States.

I SIT AND LOOK OUT

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done
I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying neglected, gaunt, desperate
I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the treacherous seducer of young women
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted to be hid,
I see these sights on the earth
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs and prisoners
I observe a famine at sea, I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be kill'd to preserve the lives of the rest
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these—all the meanness and agony without end I sitting look out upon
See, hear, and am silent.

TO RICH GIVERS

What you give me I cheerfully accept
A little sustenance, a hut and garden, a little money, as I rendezvous with my poems
A traveler's lodging and breakfast as journey through the States,—
why should I be ashamed to own such gifts? why to advertise for them?
For I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon man and woman
For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance to all the gifts of the universe.

THE DALLIANCE OF THE EAGLES

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,
Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles
The rushing amorous contact high in space together
The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel
Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling
In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling
Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull
A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing
Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight
She hers, he his, pursuing.

ROAMING IN THOUGHT (AFTER READING HEGEL)

Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good
steadily hastening towards immortality
And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and
become lost and dead.

A FARM PICTURE

Through the ample open door of the peaceful country barn
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.

A CHILD'S AMAZE

Silent and amazed even when a little boy
I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put God in his statements
As contending against some being or influence.

THE RUNNER

On a flat road runs the well-train'd runner
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

Women sit or move to and fro, some old, some young
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than the young.

MOTHER AND BABE

I see the sleeping babe nestling the breast of its mother
The sleeping mother and babe—hush'd, I study them long and long.

THOUGHT

Of obedience, faith, adhesiveness;
As I stand aloof and look there is to me something profoundly affecting
in large masses of men following the lead of those who do not believe
in men.

VISOR'D

A mask, a perpetual natural disguiser of herself
Concealing her face, concealing her form
Changes and transformations every hour, every moment
Falling upon her even when she sleeps.

THOUGHT

Of justice—as If could be any thing but the same ample law expounded
by natural judges and saviors
As if it might be this thing or that thing, according to decisions.

GLIDING O'ER ALL

Gliding o'er all, through all
Through Nature, Time, and Space
As a ship on the waters advancing
The voyage of the soul—not life alone
Death, many deaths I'll sing.

HAST NEVER COME TO THEE AN HOUR

Hast never come to thee an hour
A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting all these bubbles fash-
ions, wealth?
These eager business aims—books, politics, art, amours
To utter nothingness?

THOUGHT

Of Equality—as if it harm'd me, giving others the same chances and rights
as myself—as if it were not indispensable to my own rights that others
possess the same.

TO OLD AGE

I see in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself grandly as it pours
in the great sea.

LOCATIONS AND TIMES

Locations and times—what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?
Forms, colors, densities, odors—what is it in me that corresponds with them?

OFFERINGS

A thousand perfect men and women appear
Around each gathers a cluster of friends, and gay children and youths,
with offerings.

TO THE STATES (TO IDENTIFY THE 16TH, 17TH, OR 18TH
PRESIDENTIAD)

Why reclining, interrogating? why myself and all drowsing?
What deepening twilight-scum floating atop of the waters
Who are they as bats and night-dogs askant in the capitol?
What a filthy Presidentiad! (O South, your torrid suns! O North, your
arctic freezings!)
Are those really Congressmen? are those the great Judges? is that the
President?
Then I will sleep awhile yet, for I see that these States sleep, for reasons;
(With gathering murk, with muttering thunder and lambent shoots we
all duly awake
South, North, East, West, inland and seaboard, we will surely awake.)

BOOK XXI. DRUM-TAPS

FIRST O SONGS FOR A PRELUDE

First O songs for a prelude
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum pride and joy in my city
How she led the rest to arms, how she gave the cue
How at once with lithe limbs unwaiting a moment she sprang
(O superb! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless!
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis! O truer than steel!)
How you sprang—how you threw off the costumes of peace with indiffer-
ent hand
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and fife were heard
in their stead
How you led to the war, (that shall serve for our prelude, songs of sol-
diers,)
How Manhattan drum-taps led.
Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading
Forty years as a pageant, till unawares the lady of this teeming and tur-
bulent city
Sleepless amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable wealth
With her million children around her, suddenly
At dead of night, at news from the south
Incens'd struck with clinch'd hand the pavement.
A shock electric, the night sustain'd it
Till with ominous hum our hive at daybreak pour'd out its myriads.
From the houses then and the workshops, and through all the doorways
Leapt they tumultuous, and lo! Manhattan arming.
To the drum-taps prompt
The young men falling in and arming
The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the blacksmith's ham-
mer, tost aside with precipitation,)
The lawyer leaving his office and arming, the judge leaving the court

The driver deserting his wagon in the street, jumping down, throwing
the reins abruptly down on the horses' backs
The salesman leaving the store, the boss, book-keeper, porter, all leaving;
Squads gather everywhere by common consent and arm
The new recruits, even boys, the old men show them how to wear their
accoutrements, they buckle the straps carefully
Outdoors arming, indoors arming, the flash of the musket-barrels
The white tents cluster in camps, the arm'd sentries around, the sunrise
cannon and again at sunset
Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the city, and embark
from the wharves
(How good they look as they tramp down to the river, sweaty, with their
guns on their shoulders!
How I love them! how I could hug them, with their brown faces and their
clothes and knapsacks cover'd with dust!)
The blood of the city up-arm'd! arm'd! the cry everywhere
The flags flung out from the steeples of churches and from all the public
buildings and stores
The tearful parting, the mother kisses her son, the son kisses his mother
(Loth is the mother to part, yet not a word does she speak to detain him,)
The tumultuous escort, the ranks of policemen preceding, clearing the
way
The unpent enthusiasm, the wild cheers of the crowd for their favorites
The artillery, the silent cannons bright as gold, drawn along, rumble
lightly over the stones
(Silent cannons, soon to cease your silence
Soon unlimber'd to begin the red business;)
All the mutter of preparation, all the determin'd arming
The hospital service, the lint, bandages and medicines
The women volunteering for nurses, the work begun for in earnest, no
mere parade now;
War! an arm'd race is advancing! the welcome for battle, no turning
away!
War! be it weeks, months, or years, an arm'd race is advancing to wel-
come it.
Mannahatta a-march—and it's O to sing it well!
It's O for a manly life in the camp.
And the sturdy artillery
The guns bright as gold, the work for giants, to serve well the guns
Unlimber them! (no more as the past forty years for salutes for courtesies
merely
Put in something now besides powder and wadding.)
And you lady of ships, you Mannahatta
Old matron of this proud, friendly, turbulent city
Often in peace and wealth you were pensive or covertly frown'd amid
all your children

But now you smile with joy exulting old Mannahatta.

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE

Arm'd year-year of the struggle
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you terrible year
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping cadenzas piano
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue clothes, advancing carrying
rifle on your shoulder
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands, with a knife in the
belt at your side
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonorous voice ringing across the
continent
Your masculine voice O year, as rising amid the great cities
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you as one of the workmen, the
dwellers in Manhattan
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois and Indiana
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait and descending the Allgha-
nies
Or down from the great lakes or in Pennsylvania, or on deck along the
Ohio river
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers, or at
Chattanooga on the mountain top
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs clothed in blue, bearing
weapons, robust year
Heard your determin'd voice launch'd forth again and again
Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-lipp'd cannon
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with
his bride

Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his
grain

So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must
sleep in those beds

No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they
continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley—stop for no expostulation
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the
hearses

So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE A BIRD

From Paumanok starting I fly like a bird
Around and around to soar to sing the idea of all
To the north betaking myself to sing there arctic songs
To Kanada till I absorb Kanada in myself, to Michigan then
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs, (they are inimitable;)
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs, to Missouri and Kansas and
Arkansas to sing theirs
To Tennessee and Kentucky, to the Carolinas and Georgia to sing theirs
To Texas and so along up toward California, to roam accepted every-
where;
To sing first, (to the tap of the war-drum if need be,)
The idea of all, of the Western world one and inseparable
And then the song of each member of these States.

SONG OF THE BANNER AT DAYBREAK

Poet:

O A new song, a free song
Flapping, flapping, flapping, flapping, by sounds, by voices clearer
By the wind's voice and that of the drum
By the banner's voice and child's voice and sea's voice and father's voice
Low on the ground and high in the air
On the ground where father and child stand
In the upward air where their eyes turn
Where the banner at daybreak is flapping.

Words! book-words! what are you?
Words no more, for hearken and see
My song is there in the open air, and I must sing
With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

I'll weave the chord and twine in
Man's desire and babe's desire, I'll twine them in, I'll put in life
I'll put the bayonet's flashing point, I'll let bullets and slugs whizz
(As one carrying a symbol and menace far into the future
Crying with trumpet voice, Arouse and beware! Beware and arouse!)
I'll pour the verse with streams of blood, full of volition, full of joy
Then loosen, launch forth, to go and compete
With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

Pennant:

Come up here, bard, bard
Come up here, soul, soul
Come up here, dear little child
To fly in the clouds and winds with me, and play with the measureless
light.

Child:

Father what is that in the sky beckoning to me with long finger?
And what does it say to me all the while?

Father:

Nothing my babe you see in the sky
And nothing at all to you it says—but look you my babe
Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see you the money-shops
opening
And see you the vehicles preparing to crawl along the streets with goods;
These, ah these, how valued and toil'd for these!
How envied by all the earth.

Poet:

Fresh and rosy red the sun is mounting high
On floats the sea in distant blue careering through its channels
On floats the wind over the breast of the sea setting in toward land
The great steady wind from west or west-by-south

Floating so buoyant with milk-white foam on the waters.

But I am not the sea nor the red sun

I am not the wind with girlish laughter

Not the immense wind which strengthens, not the wind which lashes

Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror and death

But I am that which unseen comes and sings, sings, sings

Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the land

Which the birds know in the woods mornings and evenings

And the shore-sands know and the hissing wave, and that banner and
pennant

Aloft there flapping and flapping.

Child:

O father it is alive—it is full of people—it has children

O now it seems to me it is talking to its children

I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful!

O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast—O my father

It is so broad it covers the whole sky.

Father:

Cease, cease, my foolish babe

What you are saying is sorrowful to me, much 't displeases me;

Behold with the rest again I say, behold not banners and pennants aloft

But the well-prepared pavements behold, and mark the solid-wall'd
houses.

Banner and Pennant:

Speak to the child O bard out of Manhattan

To our children all, or north or south of Manhattan

Point this day, leaving all the rest, to us over all—and yet we know not
why

For what are we, mere strips of cloth profiting nothing

Only flapping in the wind?

Poet:

I hear and see not strips of cloth alone

I hear the tramp of armies, I hear the challenging sentry

I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men, I hear Liberty!

I hear the drums beat and the trumpets blowing

I myself move abroad swift-rising flying then

I use the wings of the land-bird and use the wings of the sea-bird, and
look down as from a height

I do not deny the precious results of peace, I see populous cities with
wealth incalculable

I see numberless farms, I see the farmers working in their fields or barns

I see mechanics working, I see buildings everywhere founded, going up,
or finish'd

I see trains of cars swiftly speeding along railroad tracks drawn by the
locomotives

I see the stores, depots, of Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans
I see far in the West the immense area of grain, I dwell awhile hovering
I pass to the lumber forests of the North, and again to the Southern plan-
tation, and again to California;

Sweeping the whole I see the countless profit, the busy gatherings, earn'd
wages

See the Identity formed out of thirty-eight spacious and haughty
States, (and many more to come,)

See forts on the shores of harbors, see ships sailing in and out;

Then over all, (aye! aye!) my little and lengthen'd pennant shaped like a
sword

Runs swiftly up indicating war and defiance—and now the halyards have
rais'd it

Side of my banner broad and blue, side of my starry banner

Discarding peace over all the sea and land.

Banner and Pennant:

Yet louder, higher, stronger, bard! yet farther, wider cleave!

No longer let our children deem us riches and peace alone

We may be terror and carnage, and are so now

Not now are we any one of these spacious and haughty States, (nor any
five, nor ten,)

Nor market nor depot we, nor money-bank in the city

But these and all, and the brown and spreading land, and the mines be-
low, are ours

And the shores of the sea are ours, and the rivers great and small

And the fields they moisten, and the crops and the fruits are ours

Bays and channels and ships sailing in and out are ours—while we over
all

Over the area spread below, the three or four millions of square miles, the
capitals

The forty millions of people,—O bard! in life and death supreme

We, even we, henceforth flaunt out masterful, high up above

Not for the present alone, for a thousand years chanting through you

This song to the soul of one poor little child.

Child:

O my father I like not the houses

They will never to me be any thing, nor do I like money

But to mount up there I would like, O father dear, that banner I like

That pennant I would be and must be.

Father:

Child of mine you fill me with anguish

To be that pennant would be too fearful

Little you know what it is this day, and after this day, forever

It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy every thing

Forward to stand in front of wars—and O, such wars!—what have you to
do with them?

With passions of demons, slaughter, premature death?

Banner:

Demons and death then I sing
Put in all, aye all will I, sword-shaped pennant for war
And a pleasure new and ecstatic, and the prattled yearning of children
Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land and the liquid wash of the sea
And the black ships fighting on the sea envelop'd in smoke
And the icy cool of the far, far north, with rustling cedars and pines
And the whirr of drums and the sound of soldiers marching, and the hot
sun shining south
And the beach-waves combing over the beach on my Eastern shore, and
my Western shore the same
And all between those shores, and my ever running Mississippi with
bends and chutes
And my Illinois fields, and my Kansas fields, and my fields of Missouri
The Continent, devoting the whole identity without reserving an atom
Pour in! whelm that which asks, which sings, with all and the yield of all
Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole
No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound
But out of the night emerging for good, our voice persuasive no more
Croaking like crows here in the wind.

Poet:

My limbs, my veins dilate, my theme is clear at last
Banner so broad advancing out of the night, I sing you haughty and res-
olute
I burst through where I waited long, too long, deafen'd and blinded
My hearing and tongue are come to me, (a little child taught me.)
I hear from above O pennant of war your ironical call and demand
Insensate! insensate! (yet I at any rate chant you,) O banner!

Not houses of peace indeed are you, nor any nor all their prosperity, (if
need be, you shall again have every one of those houses to destroy
them

You thought not to destroy those valuable houses, standing fast, full of
comfort, built with money

May they stand fast, then? not an hour except you above them and all
stand fast;)

O banner, not money so precious are you, not farm produce you, nor the
material good nutriment

Nor excellent stores, nor landed on wharves from the ships

Not the superb ships with sail-power or steam-power, fetching and carry-
ing cargoes

Nor machinery, vehicles, trade, nor revenues—but you as henceforth

I see you

Running up out of the night, bringing your cluster of stars, (ever-
enlarging stars.)

Divider of daybreak you, cutting the air, touch'd by the sun, measuring

the sky
(Passionately seen and yearn'd for by one poor little child
While others remain busy or smartly talking, forever teaching thrift,
thrift;)
O you up there! O pennant! where you undulate like a snake hissing so
curious
Out of reach, an idea only, yet furiously fought for, risking bloody death,
loved by me
So loved—O you banner leading the day with stars brought from the
night!
Valueless, object of eyes, over all and demanding all—(absolute owner of
all)
—O banner and pennant!
I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—houses, machines are
nothing—I see them not
I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad, with stripes, sing
you only
Flapping up there in the wind.

RISE O DAYS FROM YOUR FATHOMLESS DEEPS

1

Rise O days from your fathomless deeps, till you loftier, fiercer sweep
Long for my soul hungering gymnastic I devour'd what the earth gave
me
Long I roam'd amid the woods of the north, long I watch'd Niagara pour-
ing
I travel'd the prairies over and slept on their breast
I cross'd the Nevadas
I cross'd the plateaus
I ascended the towering rocks along the Pacific, I sail'd out to sea
I sail'd through the storm, I was refresh'd by the storm
I watch'd with joy the threatening maws of the waves
I mark'd the white combs where they career'd so high, curling over
I heard the wind piping, I saw the black clouds
Saw from below what arose and mounted, (O superb! O wild as my
heart, and powerful!)
Heard the continuous thunder as it bellow'd after the lightning
Noted the slender and jagged threads of lightning as sudden and fast
amid the din they chased each other across the sky;
These, and such as these, I, elate, saw-saw with wonder, yet pensive and
masterful
All the menacing might of the globe uprisen around me
Yet there with my soul I fed, I fed content, supercilious.

2

'Twas well, O soul-'twas a good preparation you gave me
Now we advance our latent and ampler hunger to fill
Now we go forth to receive what the earth and the sea never gave us
Not through the mighty woods we go, but through the mightier cities
Something for us is pouring now more than Niagara pouring
Torrents of men, (sources and rills of the Northwest are you indeed inex-
haustible?)
What, to pavements and homesteads here, what were those storms of the
mountains and sea?
What, to passions I witness around me to-day? was the sea risen?
Was the wind piping the pipe of death under the black clouds?
Lo! from deeps more unfathomable, something more deadly and savage
Manhattan rising, advancing with menacing front-Cincinnati, Chicago
unchain'd;
What was that swell I saw on the ocean? behold what comes here
How it climbs with daring feet and hands-how it dashes!
How the true thunder bellows after the lightning-how bright the
flashes of lightning!
How Democracy with desperate vengeful port strides on, shown
through the dark by those flashes of lightning!

(Yet a mournful wail and low sob I fancied I heard through the dark
In a lull of the deafening confusion.)

3

Thunder on! stride on, Democracy! strike with vengeful stroke!
And do you rise higher than ever yet O days, O cities!
Crash heavier, heavier yet O storms! you have done me good
My soul prepared in the mountains absorbs your immortal strong nutri-
ment
Long had I walk'd my cities, my country roads through farms, only half
satisfied
One doubt nauseous undulating like a snake, crawl'd on the ground be-
fore me
Continually preceding my steps, turning upon me oft, ironically hissing
low;
The cities I loved so well I abandon'd and left, I sped to the certainties
suitable to me
Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies and Nature's
dauntlessness
I refresh'd myself with it only, I could relish it only
I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the water and air waited
long;
But now I no longer wait, I am fully satisfied, I am glutted
I have witness'd the true lightning, I have witness'd my cities electric
I have lived to behold man burst forth and warlike America rise
Hence I will seek no more the food of the northern solitary wilds
No more the mountains roam or sail the stormy sea.

VIRGINIA—THE WEST

The noble sire fallen on evil days
I saw with hand uplifted, menacing, brandishing
(Memories of old in abeyance, love and faith in abeyance,)
The insane knife toward the Mother of All.

The noble son on sinewy feet advancing
I saw, out of the land of prairies, land of Ohio's waters and of Indiana
To the rescue the stalwart giant hurry his plenteous offspring
Drest in blue, bearing their trusty rifles on their shoulders.

Then the Mother of All with calm voice speaking
As to you Rebellious, (I seemed to hear her say,) why strive against me,
and why seek my life?
When you yourself forever provide to defend me?
For you provided me Washington—and now these also.

CITY OF SHIPS

City of ships!

(O the black ships! O the fierce ships!

O the beautiful sharp-bow'd steam-ships and sail-ships!)

City of the world! (for all races are here

All the lands of the earth make contributions here;)

City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!

City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede, whirling in and out with eddies and foam!

City of wharves and stores—city of tall facades of marble and iron!

Proud and passionate city—mettlesome, mad, extravagant city!

Spring up O city—not for peace alone, but be indeed yourself, warlike!

Fear not—submit to no models but your own O city!

Behold me—incarnate me as I have incarnated you!

I have rejected nothing you offer'd me—whom you adopted I have
adopted

Good or bad I never question you—I love all—I do not condemn any thing

I chant and celebrate all that is yours—yet peace no more

In peace I chanted peace, but now the drum of war is mine

War, red war is my song through your streets, O city!

THE CENTENARIAN'S STORY

(Volunteer of 1861-2, at Washington Park, Brooklyn, assisting the Centenarian.)

Give me your hand old Revolutionary
The hill-top is nigh, but a few steps, (make room gentlemen,
Up the path you have follow'd me well, spite of your hundred and extra
years

You can walk old man, though your eyes are almost done
Your faculties serve you, and presently I must have them serve me.

Rest, while I tell what the crowd around us means
On the plain below recruits are drilling and exercising
There is the camp, one regiment departs to-morrow
Do you hear the officers giving their orders?
Do you hear the clank of the muskets?
Why what comes over you now old man?
Why do you tremble and clutch my hand so convulsively?
The troops are but drilling, they are yet surrounded with smiles
Around them at hand the well-drest friends and the women
While splendid and warm the afternoon sun shines down
Green the midsummer verdure and fresh blows the dallying breeze
O'er proud and peaceful cities and arm of the sea between.

But drill and parade are over, they march back to quarters
Only hear that approval of hands! hear what a clapping!

As wending the crowds now part and disperse—but we old man
Not for nothing have I brought you hither—we must remain
You to speak in your turn, and I to listen and tell.

(The Centenarian)

When I clutch'd your hand it was not with terror
But suddenly pouring about me here on every side
And below there where the boys were drilling, and up the slopes they
ran

And where tents are pitch'd, and wherever you see south and south-east
and south-west

Over hills, across lowlands, and in the skirts of woods
And along the shores, in mire (now fill'd over) came again and suddenly
raged

As eighty-five years ago no mere parade receiv'd with applause of
friends

But a battle which I took part in myself—aye, long ago as it is, I took part
in it

Walking then this hilltop, this same ground.

Aye, this is the ground
My blind eyes even as I speak behold it re-peopled from graves
The years recede, pavements and stately houses disappear

Rude forts appear again, the old hoop'd guns are mounted
 I see the lines of rais'd earth stretching from river to bay
 I mark the vista of waters, I mark the uplands and slopes;
 Here we lay encamp'd, it was this time in summer also.

As I talk I remember all, I remember the Declaration
 It was read here, the whole army paraded, it was read to us here
 By his staff surrounded the General stood in the middle, he held up his
 unsheath'd sword
 It glitter'd in the sun in full sight of the army.

Twas a bold act then—the English war-ships had just arrived
 We could watch down the lower bay where they lay at anchor
 And the transports swarming with soldiers.

A few days more and they landed, and then the battle.

Twenty thousand were brought against us
 A veteran force furnish'd with good artillery.

I tell not now the whole of the battle
 But one brigade early in the forenoon order'd forward to engage the red-
 coats
 Of that brigade I tell, and how steadily it march'd
 And how long and well it stood confronting death.

Who do you think that was marching steadily sternly confronting death?
 It was the brigade of the youngest men, two thousand strong
 Rais'd in Virginia and Maryland, and most of them known personally to
 the General.

Jauntily forward they went with quick step toward Gowanus' waters
 Till of a sudden unlook'd for by defiles through the woods, gain'd at
 night
 The British advancing, rounding in from the east, fiercely playing their
 guns
 That brigade of the youngest was cut off and at the enemy's mercy.

The General watch'd them from this hill
 They made repeated desperate attempts to burst their environment
 Then drew close together, very compact, their flag flying in the middle
 But O from the hills how the cannon were thinning and thinning them!

It sickens me yet, that slaughter!

I saw the moisture gather in drops on the face of the General.

I saw how he wrung his hands in anguish.

Meanwhile the British manoeuvr'd to draw us out for a pitch'd battle
 But we dared not trust the chances of a pitch'd battle.

We fought the fight in detachments
 Sallying forth we fought at several points, but in each the luck was
 against us

Our foe advancing, steadily getting the best of it, push'd us back to the works on this hill

Till we turn'd menacing here, and then he left us.

That was the going out of the brigade of the youngest men, two thousand strong

Few return'd, nearly all remain in Brooklyn.

That and here my General's first battle

No women looking on nor sunshine to bask in, it did not conclude with applause

Nobody clapp'd hands here then.

But in darkness in mist on the ground under a chill rain

Wearied that night we lay foil'd and sullen

While scornfully laugh'd many an arrogant lord off against us encamp'd
Quite within hearing, feasting, clinking wineglasses together over their victory.

So dull and damp and another day

But the night of that, mist lifting, rain ceasing

Silent as a ghost while they thought they were sure of him, my General retreated.

I saw him at the river-side

Down by the ferry lit by torches, hastening the embarkation;

My General waited till the soldiers and wounded were all pass'd over

And then, (it was just ere sunrise,) these eyes rested on him for the last time.

Every one else seem'd fill'd with gloom

Many no doubt thought of capitulation.

But when my General pass'd me

As he stood in his boat and look'd toward the coming sun

I saw something different from capitulation.

(Terminus)

Enough, the Centenarian's story ends

The two, the past and present, have interchanged

I myself as connector, as chansonnier of a great future, am now speaking.

And is this the ground Washington trod?

And these waters I listlessly daily cross, are these the waters he cross'd

As resolute in defeat as other generals in their proudest triumphs?

I must copy the story, and send it eastward and westward

I must preserve that look as it beam'd on you rivers of Brooklyn.

See—as the annual round returns the phantoms return

It is the 27th of August and the British have landed

The battle begins and goes against us, behold through the smoke

Washington's face

The brigade of Virginia and Maryland have march'd forth to intercept the enemy

They are cut off, murderous artillery from the hills plays upon them
Rank after rank falls, while over them silently droops the flag
Baptized that day in many a young man's bloody wounds.

In death, defeat, and sisters', mothers' tears.

Ah, hills and slopes of Brooklyn! I perceive you are more valuable than
your owners supposed;

In the midst of you stands an encampment very old
Stands forever the camp of that dead brigade.

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A line in long array where they wind betwixt green islands
They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun—hark to the
musical clank

Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop to drink
Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture, the neg-
ligent rest on the saddles

Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the ford—
while

Scarlet and blue and snowy white
The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE

I see before me now a traveling army halting
Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the orchards of summer
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in places rising high
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes dingily seen
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up on the
mountain

The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized, flickering
And over all the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded
breaking out, the eternal stars.

AN ARMY CORPS ON THE MARCH

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a whip, and now an
irregular volley
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd men
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the horses sweat
As the army corps advances.

BY THE BIVOUAC'S FITFUL FLAME

By the bivouac's fitful flame
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow—but first I
note
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim outline
The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving
The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily watching
me,)
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous thoughts
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those that are
far away;
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER

Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn

Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder

Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate
wind

Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?)

Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with
wondrous clouds

Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well

But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call.

And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly

O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd

O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's soul!

All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main
words only

Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish, taken
to hospital

At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah now the single figure to me

Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms

Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint

By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter speaks through her
sobs

The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd,)

See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be needs to be better, that
brave and simple soul,)

While they stand at home at the door he is dead already

The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better

She with thin form presently drest in black

By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking

In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night;
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day
One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look I shall
never forget
One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the
ground
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made my way
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your body son of re-
sponding kisses, (never again on earth responding,)
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate
night-wind
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battlefield
spreading
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning my chin in
my hands
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you dearest
comrade—not a tear, not a word
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son and my soldier
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely
meet again,)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully un-
der feet
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in
his rude-dug grave I deposited
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-field dim
Vigil for boy of responding kisses, (never again on earth responding,)
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket
And buried him where he fell.

A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND THE ROAD
UNKNOWN

A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown
A route through a heavy wood with muffled steps in the darkness
Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant retreating
Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-lighted building
We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-lighted
building
'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads, now an impromptu hospital
Entering but for a minute I see a sight beyond all the pictures and poems
ever made
Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles and lamps
And by one great pitchy torch stationary with wild red flame and clouds
of smoke
By these, crowds, groups of forms vaguely I see on the floor, some in the
pews laid down
At my feet more distinctly a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of bleeding to
death, (he is shot in the abdomen,)
I stanch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face is white as a lily,)
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene fain to absorb it all
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity, some of
them dead
Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether, odor of
blood
The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms, the yard outside also fill'd
Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some in the
death-spasm sweating
An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders or calls
The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of the torches
These I resume as I chant, I see again the forms, I smell the odor
Then hear outside the orders given, Fall in, my men, fall in;
But first I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open, a half-smile gives he me
Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the darkness
Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks
The unknown road still marching.

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK GRAY AND DIM

A sight in camp in the daybreak gray and dim
 As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless
 As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent
 Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying
 Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woolen blanket
 Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.
 Curious I halt and silent stand
 Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first just lift the
 blanket;
 Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-gray'd hair, and
 flesh all sunken about the eyes?
 Who are you my dear comrade?
 Then to the second I step—and who are you my child and darling?
 Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?
 Then to the third—a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of beautiful
 yellow-white ivory;
 Young man I think I know you—I think this face is the face of the Christ
 himself
 Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS

As toilsome I wander'd Virginia's woods
 To the music of rustling leaves kick'd by my feet, (for 'twas autumn,)
 I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;
 Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat, (easily all could under-
 stand,)
 The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose—yet this sign left
 On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave
 Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.
 Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering
 Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene of life
 Yet at times through changeful season and scene, abrupt, alone, or in the
 crowded street
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave, comes the inscription
 rude in Virginia's woods
 Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

NOT THE PILOT

Not the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship into port, though
beaten back and many times baffled;
Not the pathfinder penetrating inland weary and long
By deserts parch'd, snows chill'd, rivers wet, perseveres till he reaches
his destination
More than I have charged myself, heeded or unheeded, to compose
march for these States
For a battle-call, rousing to arms if need be, years, centuries hence.

YEAR THAT TREMBLED AND REEL'D BENEATH ME

Year that trembled and reel'd beneath me!
Your summer wind was warm enough, yet the air I breathed froze me
A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd me
Must I change my triumphant songs? said I to myself
Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the baffled?
And sullen hymns of defeat?

THE WOUND-DRESSER

1

An old man bending I come among new faces
 Years looking backward resuming in answer to children
 Come tell us old man, as from young men and maidens that love me
 (Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarum, and urge relentless
 war
 But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd myself
 To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the dead;)
 Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions, these chances
 Of unsurpass'd heroes, (was one side so brave? the other was equally
 brave;)
 Now be witness again, paint the mightiest armies of earth
 Of those armies so rapid so wondrous what saw you to tell us?
 What stays with you latest and deepest? of curious panics
 Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous what deepest re-
 mains?

2

O maidens and young men I love and that love me
 What you ask of my days those the strangest and sudden your talking
 recalls
 Soldier alert I arrive after a long march cover'd with sweat and dust
 In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly shout in the rush of
 successful charge
 Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running river they fade
 Pass and are gone they fade—I dwell not on soldiers' perils or soldiers'
 joys
 (Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the joys, yet I was con-
 tent.)
 But in silence, in dreams' projections
 While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes on
 So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the imprints off the sand
 With hinged knees returning I enter the doors, (while for you up there
 Whoever you are, follow without noise and be of strong heart.)
 Bearing the bandages, water and sponge
 Straight and swift to my wounded I go
 Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in
 Where their priceless blood reddens the grass the ground
 Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd hospital
 To the long rows of cots up and down each side I return
 To each and all one after another I draw near, not one do I miss
 An attendant follows holding a tray, he carries a refuse pail
 Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and fill'd again.
 I onward go, I stop
 With hinged knees and steady hand to dress wounds

I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp yet unavoidable
 One turns to me his appealing eyes—poor boy! I never knew you
 Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for you, if that would
 save you.

3

On, on I go, (open doors of time! open hospital doors!)
 The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand tear not the bandage away,)
 The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through and through exam-
 ine

Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life struggles
 hard

(Come sweet death! be persuaded O beautiful death!

In mercy come quickly.)

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand

I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood
 Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side falling
 head

His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the bloody stump
 And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep

But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking
 And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound

Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so
 offensive

While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out

The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen

These and more I dress with impassive hand, (yet deep in my breast a
 fire, a burning flame.)

4

Thus in silence in dreams' projections

Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals

The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand

I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so young

Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and sad

(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested

Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips.)

LONG, TOO LONG AMERICA

Long, too long America

Traveling roads all even and peaceful you learn'd from joys and prosperity only

But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish, advancing, grappling with direst fate and recoiling not

And now to conceive and show to the world what your children en-masse really are

(For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your children en-masse really are?)

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling
Give me autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching
content
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Missis-
sippi, and I looking up at the stars
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can
walk undisturb'd
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never
tire
Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the world
a rural domestic life
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears
only
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal
sanities!
These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and
rack'd by the war-strife,)
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city
Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me up
Yet giving to make me gluttled, enrich'd of soul, you give me forever
faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries see my
own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid silent sun
Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-fields and orchards
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees
hum;
Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless
along the trottoirs!
Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me comrades and
lovers by the thousand!
Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the hand every
day!
Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!

Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!

(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away, flush'd and reckless

Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks, young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)

Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!

O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!

The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!

The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torchlight procession!

The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons following;

People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants

Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now

The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets, (even the sight of the wounded,)

Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!

Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending
Up from the east the silvery round moon
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession
And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding
And the small drums steady whirring
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell
Two veterans son and father dropt together
And the double grave awaits them.)
Now nearer blow the bugles
And the drums strike more convulsive
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd
('Tis some mother's large transparent face
In heaven brighter growing.)
O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light
And the bugles and the drums give you music
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans
My heart gives you love.

OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHETIC A VOICE

Over the carnage rose prophetic a voice
Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet
Those who love each other shall become invincible
They shall yet make Columbia victorious.
Sons of the Mother of All, you shall yet be victorious
You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of the earth.
No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers
If need be a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves for one.
One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade
From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an Oregonese, shall be
friends triune
More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth.
To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come
Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond death.
It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see manly affection
The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly
The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers
The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.
These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of iron
I, ecstatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers tie you.
(Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?
Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?
Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY

I saw old General at bay
(Old as he was, his gray eyes yet shone out in battle like stars.)
His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his works
He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines, a desperate emergency
I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks, but two or three
were selected
I saw them receive their orders aside, they listen'd with care, the adjutant
was very grave
I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives.

THE ARTILLERYMAN'S VISION

While my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars are over long
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the vacant midnight
passes
And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear, just hear, the breath
of my infant
There in the room as I wake from sleep this vision presses upon me;
The engagement opens there and then in fantasy unreal
The skirmishers begin, they crawl cautiously ahead, I hear the irregular
snap! snap!
I hear the sounds of the different missiles, the short t-h-t! t-h-t! of the
rifle-balls
I see the shells exploding leaving small white clouds, I hear the great
shells shrieking as they pass
The grape like the hum and whirr of wind through the trees, (tumultuous
now the contest rages,)
All the scenes at the batteries rise in detail before me again
The crashing and smoking, the pride of the men in their pieces
The chief-gunner ranges and sights his piece and selects a fuse of the
right time
After firing I see him lean aside and look eagerly off to note the effect;
Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging, (the young colonel leads
himself this time with brandish'd sword,)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly fill'd up, no delay.)
I breathe the suffocating smoke, then the flat clouds hover low concealing
all;
Now a strange lull for a few seconds, not a shot fired on either side
Then resumed the chaos louder than ever, with eager calls and orders of
officers
While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts to my ears a
shout of applause, (some special success,)
And ever the sound of the cannon far or near, (rousing even in dreams a
devilish exultation and all the old mad joy in the depths of my soul,)
And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions, batteries
cavalry, moving hither and thither
(The falling, dying, I heed not, the wounded dripping and red heed not,
some to the rear are hobbling,)
Grime, heat, rush, aide-de-camps galloping by or on a full run
With the patter of small arms, the warning s-s-t of the rifles, (these in my
vision I hear or see,)
And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-color'd rockets.

ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLORS

Who are you dusky woman, so ancient hardly human
With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare bony feet?
Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colors greet?
('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sands and pines
Forth from thy hovel door thou Ethiopia com'st to me
As under doughty Sherman I march toward the sea.)
Me master years a hundred since from my parents sunder'd
A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.

No further does she say, but lingering all the day
Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her darkling eye
And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

What is it fateful woman, so bleak, hardly human?
Why wag your head with turban bound, yellow, red and green?
Are the things so strange and marvelous you see or have seen?

NOT YOUTH PERTAINS TO ME

Not youth pertains to me
Nor delicatesse, I cannot beguile the time with talk
Awkward in the parlor, neither a dancer nor elegant
In the learn'd coterie sitting constrain'd and still, for learning inures not
to me
Beauty, knowledge, inure not to me—yet there are two or three things
inure to me
I have nourish'd the wounded and sooth'd many a dying soldier
And at intervals waiting or in the midst of camp
Composed these songs.

RACE OF VETERANS

Race of veterans—race of victors!
Race of the soil, ready for conflict—race of the conquering march!
(No more credulity's race, abiding-temper'd race,)
Race henceforth owning no law but the law of itself
Race of passion and the storm.

WORLD TAKE GOOD NOTICE

World take good notice, silver stars fading
Milky hue ript, wet of white detaching
Coals thirty-eight, baleful and burning
Scarlet, significant, hands off warning
Now and henceforth flaunt from these shores.

O TAN-FACED PRAIRIE-BOY

O tan-faced prairie-boy
Before you came to camp came many a welcome gift
Praises and presents came and nourishing food, till at last among the
recruits
You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd on each other
When lo! more than all the gifts of the world you gave me.

LOOK DOWN FAIR MOON

Look down fair moon and bathe this scene
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly, swollen, purple
On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide
Pour down your unstinted nimbus sacred moon.

RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash
again, and ever again, this solid world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

HOW SOLEMN AS ONE BY ONE (WASHINGTON CITY, 1865)

How solemn as one by one

As the ranks returning worn and sweaty, as the men file by where stand
As the faces the masks appear, as I glance at the faces studying the masks
(As I glance upward out of this page studying you, dear friend, whoever
you are,)

How solemn the thought of my whispering soul to each in the ranks, and
to you

I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul

O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear friend

Nor the bayonet stab what you really are;

The soul! yourself I see, great as any, good as the best

Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could never kill

Nor the bayonet stab O friend.

AS I LAY WITH MY HEAD IN YOUR LAP CAMERADO

As I lay with my head in your lap camerado

The confession I made I resume, what I said to you and the open air

I resume

I know I am restless and make others so

I know my words are weapons full of danger, full of death

For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws, to unsettle them

I am more resolute because all have denied me than I could ever have
been had all accepted me

I heed not and have never heeded either experience, cautions, majorities,
nor ridicule

And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing to me

And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing to me;

Dear camerado! I confess I have urged you onward with me, and still
urge you, without the least idea what is our destination

Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and defeated.

DELICATE CLUSTER

Delicate cluster! flag of teeming life!
 Covering all my lands—all my seashores lining!
 Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through the smoke of battle pressing!
 How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant!)
 Flag cerulean—sunny flag, with the orbs of night dappled!
 Ah my silvery beauty—ah my woolly white and crimson!
 Ah to sing the song of you, my matron mighty!
 My sacred one, my mother.

TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN

Did you ask dulcet rhymes from me?
 Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing rhymes?
 Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow?
 Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to understand—nor am
 I now;
 (I have been born of the same as the war was born
 The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet music, I love well the martial
 dirge
 With slow wail and convulsive throb leading the officer's funeral;)
 What to such as you anyhow such a poet as I? therefore leave my works
 And go lull yourself with what you can understand, and with piano-
 tunes
 For I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.

LO, VICTRESS ON THE PEAKS

Lo, Victress on the peaks
 Where thou with mighty brow regarding the world
 (The world O Libertad, that vainly conspired against thee,)
 Out of its countless beleaguering toils, after thwarting them all
 Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee
 Flauntest now unharm'd in immortal soundness and bloom—lo, in these
 hours supreme
 No poem proud, I chanting bring to thee, nor mastery's rapturous verse
 But a cluster containing night's darkness and blood-dripping wounds
 And psalms of the dead.

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE (WASHINGTON CITY, 1865)

Spirit whose work is done—spirit of dreadful hours!

Ere departing fade from my eyes your forests of bayonets;

Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts, (yet onward ever unfaltering pressing,)

Spirit of many a solemn day and many a savage scene—electric spirit
That with muttering voice through the war now closed, like a tireless
phantom flitted

Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat and beat the drum
Now as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to the last, reverberates
round me

As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return from the battles

As the muskets of the young men yet lean over their shoulders

As I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoulders

As those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them appearing in the distance,
approach and pass on, returning homeward

Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro to the right and left

Evenly lightly rising and falling while the steps keep time;

Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but pale as death next day

Touch my mouth ere you depart, press my lips close

Leave me your pulses of rage—bequeath them to me—fill me with currents
convulsive

Let them scorch and blister out of my chants when you are gone

Let them identify you to the future in these songs.

ADIEU TO A SOLDIER

Adieu O soldier
You of the rude campaigning, (which we shared,)
The rapid march, the life of the camp
The hot contention of opposing fronts, the long manoeuvre
Red battles with their slaughter, the stimulus, the strong terrific game
Spell of all brave and manly hearts, the trains of time through you and
 like of you all fill'd
With war and war's expression.

Adieu dear comrade
Your mission is fulfill'd—but I, more warlike
Myself and this contentious soul of mine
Still on our own campaigning bound
Through untried roads with ambushes opponents lined
Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis, often baffled
Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out—aye here
To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.

TURN O LIBERTAD

Turn O Libertad, for the war is over
From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no more, resolute,
 sweeping the world
Turn from lands retrospective recording proofs of the past
From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the past
From the chants of the feudal world, the triumphs of kings, slavery, caste
Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—give up that back-
 ward world
Leave to the singers of hitherto, give them the trailing past
But what remains remains for singers for you—wars to come are for you
(Lo, how the wars of the past have duly inured to you, and the wars of
 the present also inure;)
Then turn, and be not alarm'd O Libertad—turn your undying face
To where the future, greater than all the past
Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

TO THE LEAVEN'D SOIL THEY TROD

To the leaven'd soil they trod calling I sing for the last
(Forth from my tent emerging for good, loosing, untying the tent-ropes,
In the freshness the forenoon air, in the far-stretching circuits and vistas
again to peace restored
To the fiery fields emanative and the endless vistas beyond, to the South
and the North
To the leaven'd soil of the general Western world to attest my songs
To the Alleghanian hills and the tireless Mississippi
To the rocks I calling sing, and all the trees in the woods
To the plains of the poems of heroes, to the prairies spreading wide
To the far-off sea and the unseen winds, and the sane impalpable air;
And responding they answer all, (but not in words,
The average earth, the witness of war and peace, acknowledges mutely
The prairie draws me close, as the father to bosom broad the son
The Northern ice and rain that began me nourish me to the end
But the hot sun of the South is to fully ripen my songs.

BOOK XXII. MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd pal-
ings
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I
love
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary the thrush
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements

Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat

Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know

If thou wast not granted to sing thou wouldst surely die.)

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities

Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from
the ground, spotting the gray debris

Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless
grass

Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the
dark-brown fields uprisen

Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards

Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave

Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets

Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land

With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black

With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women stand-
ing

With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night

With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared
heads

With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces

With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and
solemn

With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin

The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you
journey

With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang

Here, coffin that slowly passes

I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone

Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring

For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane
and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses

O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies

But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first

Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes

With loaded arms I come, pouring for you

For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven
 Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd
 As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night
 As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night
 As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other
 stars all look'd on,)
 As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not
 what kept me from sleep,)
 As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you
 were of woe
 As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night
 As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of
 the night
 As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb
 Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp
 O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call
 I hear, I come presently, I understand you
 But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me
 The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
 And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
 And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?
 Sea-winds blown from east and west
 Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on
 the prairies meeting
 These and with these and the breath of my chant
 I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
 And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls
 To adorn the burial-house of him I love?
 Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes
 With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and
 bright
 With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun,
 burning, expanding the air
 With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves
 of the trees prolific
 In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-
 dapple here and there

With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides,
and the ships
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light
Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.
Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes
The gentle soft-born measureless light
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.
Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.
O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,) Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages
And the streets how their throbbings throb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there

Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of
 companions

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving
In the day, in the night, to all, to each
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!

For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unflinchingly.

Approach strong deliveress
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for
 thee

And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread shy are fitting
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death

And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song
 Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the
 prairies wide
 Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways
 I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

15

To the tally of my soul
 Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird
 With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim
 Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume
 And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed
 As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies
 I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags
 Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw
 them

And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody
 And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
 And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them
 And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them
 I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war
 But I saw they were not as was thought
 They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not
 The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd
 And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd
 And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16

Passing the visions, passing the night
 Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands
 Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul
 Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song
 As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the
 night

Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again burst-
 ing with joy

Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven
 As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses
 Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves
 I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.
 I cease from my song for thee

From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee

O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night

The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird

And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul

With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe

With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird

Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well

For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake

Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul

There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done

The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red

Where on the deck my Captain lies

Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills

For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck

You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will

The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread

Walk the deck my Captain lies

Fallen cold and dead.

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY (MAY 4, 1865)

Hush'd be the camps to-day
And soldiers let us drape our war-worn weapons
And each with musing soul retire to celebrate
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing poet in our name

Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in camps, know it
truly.

As they invault the coffin there
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—one verse
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

THIS DUST WAS ONCE THE MAN

This dust was once the man
Gentle, plain, just and resolute, under whose cautious hand
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land or age
Was saved the Union of these States.

BOOK XXIII

BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE

1

By blue Ontario's shore
As I mused of these warlike days and of peace return'd, and the dead
that return no more
A Phantom gigantic superb, with stern visage accosted me
Chant me the poem, it said, that comes from the soul of America
chant me the carol of victory
And strike up the marches of Libertad, marches more powerful yet
And sing me before you go the song of the throes of Democracy.
(Democracy, the destin'd conqueror, yet treacherous lip-smiles every-
where
And death and infidelity at every step.)

2

A Nation announcing itself
I myself make the only growth by which I can be appreciated
I reject none, accept all, then reproduce all in my own forms.
A breed whose proof is in time and deeds
What we are we are, nativity is answer enough to objections
We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded
We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves
We are executive in ourselves, we are sufficient in the variety of ourselves
We are the most beautiful to ourselves and in ourselves
We stand self-pois'd in the middle, branching thence over the world
From Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks to scorn.
Nothing is sinful to us outside of ourselves
Whatever appears, whatever does not appear, we are beautiful or sinful
in ourselves only.
(O Mother—O Sisters dear!
If we are lost, no victor else has destroy'd us

It is by ourselves we go down to eternal night.)

3

Have you thought there could be but a single supreme?
There can be any number of supremes—one does not countervail another
any more than one eyesight countervails another, or one life counter-
vails another.

All is eligible to all
All is for individuals, all is for you
No condition is prohibited, not God's or any.
All comes by the body, only health puts you rapport with the universe.
Produce great Persons, the rest follows.

4

Piety and conformity to them that like
Peace, obesity, allegiance, to them that like
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations
Crying, Leap from your seats and contend for your lives!
I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue, questioning everyone
I meet
Who are you that wanted only to be told what you knew before?
Who are you that wanted only a book to join you in your nonsense?
(With pangs and cries as thine own O bearer of many children
These clamors wild to a race of pride I give.)
O lands, would you be freer than all that has ever been before?
If you would be freer than all that has been before, come listen to me.
Fear grace, elegance, civilization, delicatessen
Fear the mellow sweet, the sucking of honey-juice
Beware the advancing mortal ripening of Nature
Beware what precedes the decay of the ruggedness of states and men.

5

Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating undirected materials
America brings builders, and brings its own styles.
The immortal poets of Asia and Europe have done their work and pass'd
to other spheres
A work remains, the work of surpassing all they have done.
America, curious toward foreign characters, stands by its own at all haz-
ards
Stands removed, spacious, composite, sound, initiates the true use of
precedents
Does not repel them or the past or what they have produced under their
forms
Takes the lesson with calmness, perceives the corpse slowly borne from
the house
Perceives that it waits a little while in the door, that it was fittest for its
days

That its life has descended to the stalwart and well-shaped heir who approaches
 And that he shall be fittest for his days.

Any period one nation must lead
 One land must be the promise and reliance of the future.

These States are the amplest poem
 Here is not merely a nation but a teeming Nation of nations
 Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast doings of the day
 and night
 Here is what moves in magnificent masses careless of particulars
 Here are the roughs, beards, friendliness, combativeness, the soul loves
 Here the flowing trains, here the crowds, equality, diversity, the soul
 loves.

6

Land of lands and bards to corroborate!

Of them standing among them, one lifts to the light a west-bred face
 To him the hereditary countenance bequeath'd both mother's and father's

His first parts substances, earth, water, animals, trees
 Built of the common stock, having room for far and near
 Used to dispense with other lands, incarnating this land
 Attracting it body and soul to himself, hanging on its neck with incomparable love

Plunging his seminal muscle into its merits and demerits
 Making its cities, beginnings, events, diversities, wars, vocal in him
 Making its rivers, lakes, bays, embouchure in him
 Mississippi with yearly freshets and changing chutes, Columbia
 Niagara, Hudson, spending themselves lovingly in him
 If the Atlantic coast stretch or the Pacific coast stretch, he stretching with them North or South

Spanning between them East and West, and touching whatever is between them

Growths growing from him to offset the growths of pine, cedar, hemlock live-oak, locust, chestnut, hickory, cottonwood, orange, magnolia
 Tangles as tangled in him as any canebrake or swamp
 He likening sides and peaks of mountains, forests coated with northern transparent ice

Off him pasturage sweet and natural as savanna, upland, prairie
 Through him flights, whirls, screams, answering those of the fish-hawk, mocking-bird, night-heron, and eagle

His spirit surrounding his country's spirit, unclosed to good and evil
 Surrounding the essences of real things, old times and present times
 Surrounding just found shores, islands, tribes of red aborigines
 Weather-beaten vessels, landings, settlements, embryo stature and muscle

The haughty defiance of the Year One, war, peace, the formation of the
 Constitution
 The separate States, the simple elastic scheme, the immigrants
 The Union always swarming with blatherers and always sure and im-
 pregnable
 The unsurvey'd interior, log-houses, clearings, wild animals, hunters,
 trappers
 Surrounding the multiform agriculture, mines, temperature, the gesta-
 tion of new States
 Congress convening every Twelfth-month, the members duly coming up
 from the uttermost parts
 Surrounding the noble character of mechanics and farmers, especially the
 young men
 Responding their manners, speech, dress, friendships, the gait they have
 of persons who never knew how it felt to stand in the presence of
 superiors
 The freshness and candor of their physiognomy, the copiousness and deci-
 sion of their phrenology
 The picturesque looseness of their carriage, their fierceness when
 wrong'd
 The fluency of their speech, their delight in music, their curiosity, good
 temper and open-handedness, the whole composite make
 The prevailing ardor and enterprise, the large amativeness
 The perfect equality of the female with the male, the fluid movement of
 the population
 The superior marine, free commerce, fisheries, whaling, gold-digging
 Wharf-hemm'd cities, railroad and steamboat lines intersecting all points
 Factories, mercantile life, labor-saving machinery, the Northeast, North-
 west, Southwest
 Manhattan firemen, the Yankee swap, southern plantation life
 Slavery—the murderous, treacherous conspiracy to raise it upon the ruins
 of all the rest
 On and on to the grapple with it—Assassin! then your life or ours be the
 stake, and respite no more.

7

(Lo, high toward heaven, this day
 Libertad, from the conqueress' field return'd
 I mark the new aureola around your head
 No more of soft astral, but dazzling and fierce
 With war's flames and the lambent lightnings playing
 And your port immovable where you stand
 With still the inextinguishable glance and the clinch'd and lifted fist
 And your foot on the neck of the menacing one, the scorner utterly
 crush'd beneath you
 The menacing arrogant one that strode and advanced with his
 senseless scorn, bearing the murderous knife, The wide-swelling one, the
 braggart that would yesterday do so much

To-day a carrion dead and damn'd, the despised of all the earth
An offal rank, to the dunghill maggots spurn'd.)

8

Others take finish, but the Republic is ever constructive and ever keeps
vista

Others adorn the past, but you O days of the present, I adorn you
O days of the future I believe in you—I isolate myself for your sake
O America because you build for mankind I build for you
O well-beloved stone-cutters, I lead them who plan with decision and
science

Lead the present with friendly hand toward the future.

(Bravas to all impulses sending sane children to the next age!

But damn that which spends itself with no thought of the stain
pains, dismay, feebleness, it is bequeathing.)

9

I listened to the Phantom by Ontario's shore
I heard the voice arising demanding bards
By them all native and grand, by them alone can these States be fused
into the compact organism of a Nation.

To hold men together by paper and seal or by compulsion is no account
That only holds men together which aggregates all in a living principle,
as the hold of the limbs of the body or the fibres of plants.

Of all races and eras these States with veins full of poetical stuff most
need poets, and are to have the greatest, and use them the greatest
Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so much as their poets
shall.

(Soul of love and tongue of fire!

Eye to pierce the deepest deeps and sweep the world!

Ah Mother, prolific and full in all besides, yet how long barren, barren?)

10

Of these States the poet is the equable man
Not in him but off from him things are grotesque, eccentric, fail of their
full returns

Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place is bad
He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportion, neither more nor
less

He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key

He is the equalizer of his age and land

He supplies what wants supplying, he checks what wants checking

In peace out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large, rich
thrifty, building populous towns, encouraging agriculture, arts, com-
merce, lighting the study of man, the soul, health, immortality, gov-
ernment

In war he is the best backer of the war, he fetches artillery as good as the
 engineer's, he can make every word he speaks draw blood
 The years straying toward infidelity he withholds by his steady faith
 He is no arguer, he is judgment, (Nature accepts him absolutely,)
 He judges not as the judge judges but as the sun failing round helpless
 thing

As he sees the farthest he has the most faith
 His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things
 In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent
 He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and denouement
 He sees eternity in men and women, he does not see men and women as
 dreams or dots.

For the great Idea, the idea of perfect and free individuals
 For that, the bard walks in advance, leader of leaders
 The attitude of him cheers up slaves and horrifies foreign despots.

Without extinction is Liberty, without retrograde is Equality
 They live in the feelings of young men and the best women
 (Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth been always
 ready to fall for Liberty.)

11

For the great Idea
 That, O my brethren, that is the mission of poets.

Songs of stern defiance ever ready
 Songs of the rapid arming and the march
 The flag of peace quick-folded, and instead the flag we know
 Warlike flag of the great Idea.

(Angry cloth I saw there leaping!

I stand again in leaden rain your flapping folds saluting
 I sing you over all, flying beckoning through the fight—O the hard-
 contested fight!

The cannons open their rosy-flashing muzzles—the hurtled balls scream
 The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys pour incessant from
 the line

Hark, the ringing word Charge!—now the tussle and the furious madden-
 ing yells

Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground
 Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you
 Angry cloth I saw there leaping.)

12

Are you he who would assume a place to teach or be a poet here in
 the States?

The place is august, the terms obdurate.

Who would assume to teach here may well prepare himself body and
 mind

He may well survey, ponder, arm, fortify, harden, make lithe himself
 He shall surely be question'd beforehand by me with many and stern
 questions.

Who are you indeed who would talk or sing to America?
 Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men?
 Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology, politics, geography, pride,
 freedom, friendship of the land? its substratums and objects?
 Have you consider'd the organic compact of the first day of the first year
 of Independence, sign'd by the Commissioners, ratified by the States,
 and read by Washington at the head of the army?
 Have you possess'd yourself of the Federal Constitution?
 Do you see who have left all feudal processes and poems behind them,
 and assumed the poems and processes of Democracy?
 Are you faithful to things? do you teach what the land and sea, the bodies
 of men, womanhood, amateness, heroic angers, teach?
 Have you sped through fleeting customs, popularities?
 Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies, whirls, fierce con-
 tentions? are you very strong? are you really of the whole People?
 Are you not of some coterie? some school or mere religion?
 Are you done with reviews and criticisms of life? animating now to life
 itself?
 Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of these States?
 Have you too the old ever-fresh forbearance and impartiality?
 Do you hold the like love for those hardening to maturity? for the last-
 born? little and big? and for the errant?
 What is this you bring my America?
 Is it uniform with my country?
 Is it not something that has been better told or done before?
 Have you not imported this or the spirit of it in some ship?
 Is it not a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness?—Is the good old cause in it?
 Has it not dangled long at the heels of the poets, politicians, literats, of
 enemies' lands?
 Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is still here?
 Does it answer universal needs? will it improve manners?
 Does it sound with trumpet-voice the proud victory of the Union in that
 secession war?
 Can your performance face the open fields and the seaside?
 Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air, to appear again in my strength,
 gait, face?
 Have real employments contributed to it? original makers, not mere
 amanuenses?
 Does it meet modern discoveries, calibres, facts, face to face?
 What does it mean to American persons, progresses, cities? Chicago,
 Kanada, Arkansas?
 Does it see behind the apparent custodians the real custodians
 standing, menacing, silent, the mechanics, Manhattanese, Western men,
 Southerners, significant alike in their apathy, and in the promptness

of their love?

Does it see what finally befalls, and has always finally befallen, each temporizer, patcher, outsider, partialist, alarmist, infidel, who has ever ask'd any thing of America?

What mocking and scornful negligence?

The track strew'd with the dust of skeletons

By the roadside others disdainfully toss'd.

13

Rhymes and rhymers pass away, poems distill'd from poems pass away
The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave ashes

Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the soil of literature

America justifies itself, give it time, no disguise can deceive it or conceal
from it, it is impassive enough

Only toward the likes of itself will it advance to meet them

If its poets appear it will in due time advance to meet them, there is no
fear of mistake

(The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferr'd till his country absorbs him
as affectionately as he has absorb'd it.)

He masters whose spirit masters, he tastes sweetest who results sweetest
in the long run

The blood of the brawn beloved of time is unconstraint;

In the need of songs, philosophy, an appropriate native grand-opera,
shipcraft, any craft

He or she is greatest who contributes the greatest original practical ex-
ample.

Already a nonchalant breed, silently emerging, appears on the streets

People's lips salute only doers, lovers, satisfiers, positive knowers

There will shortly be no more priests, I say their work is done

Death is without emergencies here, but life is perpetual emergencies here

Are your body, days, manners, superb? after death you shall be superb

Justice, health, self-esteem, clear the way with irresistible power;

How dare you place any thing before a man?

14

Fall behind me States!

A man before all—myself, typical, before all.

Give me the pay I have served for

Give me to sing the songs of the great Idea, take all the rest

I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised riches

I have given aims to every one that ask'd, stood up for the stupid and
crazy, devoted my income and labor to others

Hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience and indulgence
toward the people, taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown

Gone freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young, and
with the mothers of families

Read these leaves to myself in the open air, tried them by trees, stars,
 rivers
 Dismiss'd whatever insulted my own soul or defiled my body
 Claim'd nothing to myself which I have not carefully claim'd for others
 on the same terms
 Sped to the camps, and comrades found and accepted from every State
 (Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd to breathe his last
 This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd, restored
 To life recalling many a prostrate form;)
 I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of the taste of myself
 Rejecting none, permitting all.
 (Say O Mother, have I not to your thought been faithful?
 Have I not through life kept you and yours before me?)

15

I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things
 It is not the earth, it is not America who is so great
 It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there, or any one
 It is to walk rapidly through civilizations, governments, theories
 Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.
 Underneath all, individuals
 I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals
 The American compact is altogether with individuals
 The only government is that which makes minute of individuals
 The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to onessingle
 individual—namely to You.
 (Mother! with subtle sense severe, with the naked sword in your hand
 I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with individuals.)

16

Underneath all, Nativity
 I swear I will stand by my own nativity, pious or impious so be it;
 I swear I am charm'd with nothing except nativity
 Men, women, cities, nations, are only beautiful from nativity.
 Underneath all is the Expression of love for men and women
 (I swear I have seen enough of mean and impotent modes of expressing
 love for men and women
 After this day I take my own modes of expressing love for men and
 women.) in myself
 I swear I will have each quality of my race in myself
 (Talk as you like, he only suits these States whose manners favor the au-
 dacity and sublime turbulence of the States.)
 Underneath the lessons of things, spirits, Nature, governments, owner-
 ships, I swear I perceive other lessons
 Underneath all to me is myself, to you yourself, (the same monotonous
 old song.)

17

O I see flashing that this America is only you and me
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me
Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, are you and me
Its Congress is you and me, the officers, capitols, armies, ships, are you
and me
Its endless gestations of new States are you and me
The war, (that war so bloody and grim, the war I will henceforth forget),
was you and me
Natural and artificial are you and me
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and me
Past, present, future, are you and me.
I dare not shirk any part of myself
Not any part of America good or bad
Not to build for that which builds for mankind
Not to balance ranks, complexions, creeds, and the sexes
Not to justify science nor the march of equality
Nor to feed the arrogant blood of the brawn below'd of time.
I am for those that have never been master'd
For men and women whose tempers have never been master'd
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never master.
I am for those who walk abreast with the whole earth
Who inaugurate one to inaugurate all.
I will not be outfaced by irrational things
I will penetrate what it is in them that is sarcastic upon me
I will make cities and civilizations defer to me
This is what I have learnt from America—it is the amount, and it I teach
again.
(Democracy, while weapons were everywhere aim'd at your breast
I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children, saw in dreams your
dilating form
Saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.)

18

I will confront these shows of the day and night
I will know if I am to be less than they
I will see if I am not as majestic as they
I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they
I will see if I am to be less generous than they
I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and ships have meaning
I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for themselves, and I am
not to be enough for myself.
I match my spirit against yours you orbs, growths, mountains, brutes
Copious as you are I absorb you all in myself, and become the master
myself

America isolated yet embodying all, what is it finally except myself?
 These States, what are they except myself?
 I know now why the earth is gross, tantalizing, wicked, it is for my sake
 I take you specially to be mine, you terrible, rude forms.

(Mother, bend down, bend close to me your face
 I know not what these plots and wars and deferments are for
 I know not fruition's success, but I know that through war and crime
 your work goes on, and must yet go on.)

19

Thus by blue Ontario's shore
 While the winds fann'd me and the waves came trooping toward me
 I thrill'd with the power's pulsations, and the charm of my theme
 was upon me
 Till the tissues that held me parted their ties upon me.
 And I saw the free souls of poets
 The loftiest bards of past ages strode before me
 Strange large men, long unawaked, undisclosed, were disclosed to me.

20

O my rapt verse, my call, mock me not!
 Not for the bards of the past, not to invoke them have I launch'd you
 forth
 Not to call even those lofty bards here by Ontario's shores
 Have I sung so capricious and loud my savage song.
 Bards for my own land only I invoke
 (For the war the war is over, the field is clear'd,)
 Till they strike up marches henceforth triumphant and onward
 To cheer O Mother your boundless expectant soul.
 Bards of the great Idea! bards of the peaceful inventions! (for the war, the
 war is over!)
 Yet bards of latent armies, a million soldiers waiting ever-ready
 Bards with songs as from burning coals or the lightning's fork'd stripes!
 Ample Ohio's, Kanada's bards—bards of California! inland bards— bards
 of the war!
 You by my charm I invoke.

REVERSALS

Let that which stood in front go behind
Let that which was behind advance to the front
Let bigots, fools, unclean persons, offer new propositions
Let the old propositions be postponed
Let a man seek pleasure everywhere except in himself
Let a woman seek happiness everywhere except in herself

BOOK XXIV. AUTUMN RIVULETS

AS CONSEQUENT, ETC.

As consequent from store of summer rains
Or wayward rivulets in autumn flowing
Or many a herb-lined brook's reticulations
Or subterranean sea-rills making for the sea
Songs of continued years I sing.

Life's ever-modern rapids first, (soon, soon to blend
With the old streams of death.)
Some threading Ohio's farm-fields or the woods
Some down Colorado's canons from sources of perpetual snow
Some half-hid in Oregon, or away southward in Texas
Some in the north finding their way to Erie, Niagara, Ottawa
Some to Atlantica's bays, and so to the great salt brine.

In you whoe'er you are my book perusing
In I myself, in all the world, these currents flowing
All, all toward the mystic ocean tending.

Currents for starting a continent new
Overtures sent to the solid out of the liquid
Fusion of ocean and land, tender and pensive waves
(Not safe and peaceful only, waves rous'd and ominous too
Out of the depths the storm's abysmic waves, who knows whence?
Raging over the vast, with many a broken spar and tatter'd sail.)
Or from the sea of Time, collecting vasting all, I bring
A windrow-drift of weeds and shells.

O little shells, so curious-convolute, so limpid-cold and voiceless
Will you not little shells to the tympan of temples held
Murmurs and echoes still call up, eternity's music faint and far
Wafted inland, sent from Atlantica's rim, strains for the soul of the
prairies
Whisper'd reverberations, chords for the ear of the West joyously sound-
ing

Your tidings old, yet ever new and untranslatable
Infinitesimals out of my life, and many a life
(For not my life and years alone I give—all, all I give,)
These waifs from the deep, cast high and dry
Wash'd on America's shores?

THE RETURN OF THE HEROES

1

For the lands and for these passionate days and for myself
Now I awhile retire to thee O soil of autumn fields
Reclining on thy breast, giving myself to thee
Answering the pulses of thy sane and equable heart
Turning a verse for thee.

O earth that hast no voice, confide to me a voice
O harvest of my lands—O boundless summer growths
O lavish brown parturient earth—O infinite teeming womb
A song to narrate thee.

2

Ever upon this stage
Is acted God's calm annual drama
Gorgeous processions, songs of birds
Sunrise that fullest feeds and freshens most the soul
The heaving sea, the waves upon the shore, the musical, strong waves
The woods, the stalwart trees, the slender, tapering trees
The liliput countless armies of the grass
The heat, the showers, the measureless pasturages
The scenery of the snows, the winds' free orchestra
The stretching light-hung roof of clouds, the clear cerulean and the sil-
very fringes
The high-dilating stars, the placid beckoning stars
The moving flocks and herds, the plains and emerald meadows
The shows of all the varied lands and all the growths and products.

3

Fecund America—today
Thou art all over set in births and joys!
Thou groan'st with riches, thy wealth clothes thee as a swathing-garment
Thou laughest loud with ache of great possessions
A myriad-twinning life like interlacing vines binds all thy vast demesne
As some huge ship freighted to water's edge thou ridest into port
As rain falls from the heaven and vapors rise from earth, so have
the precious values fallen upon thee and risen out of thee;
Thou envy of the globe! thou miracle!
Thou, bathed, choked, swimming in plenty
Thou lucky Mistress of the tranquil barns
Thou Prairie Dame that sittest in the middle and lookest out upon thy
world, and lookest East and lookest West
Dispensatress, that by a word givest a thousand miles, a million
farms, and missest nothing

Thou all-acceptress—thou hospitable, (thou only art hospitable as God is hospitable.)

4

When late I sang sad was my voice
Sad were the shows around me with deafening noises of hatred and
smoke of war;

In the midst of the conflict, the heroes, I stood
Or pass'd with slow step through the wounded and dying.

But now I sing not war
Nor the measur'd march of soldiers, nor the tents of camps
Nor the regiments hastily coming up deploying in line of battle;
No more the sad, unnatural shows of war.

Ask'd room those flush'd immortal ranks, the first forth-stepping armies?
Ask room alas the ghastly ranks, the armies dread that follow'd.

(Pass, pass, ye proud brigades, with your tramping sinewy legs
With your shoulders young and strong, with your knapsacks and your
muskets;

How elate I stood and watch'd you, where starting off you march'd.

Pass—then rattle drums again
For an army heaves in sight, O another gathering army
Swarming, trailing on the rear, O you dread accruing army
O you regiments so piteous, with your mortal diarrhoea, with your fever
O my land's maim'd darlings, with the plenteous bloody bandage and
the crutch

Lo, your pallid army follows.)

5

But on these days of brightness
On the far-stretching beauteous landscape, the roads and lanes the high-
piled farm-wagons, and the fruits and barns

Should the dead intrude?

Ah the dead to me mar not, they fit well in Nature
They fit very well in the landscape under the trees and grass
And along the edge of the sky in the horizon's far margin.

Nor do I forget you Departed
Nor in winter or summer my lost ones
But most in the open air as now when my soul is rapt and at peace like
pleasing phantoms
Your memories rising glide silently by me.

6

I saw the day the return of the heroes
(Yet the heroes never surpass'd shall never return
Them that day I saw not.)
I saw the interminable corps, I saw the processions of armies

I saw them approaching, defiling by with divisions
 Streaming northward, their work done, camping awhile in clusters of
 mighty camps.

No holiday soldiers—youthful, yet veterans
 Worn, swart, handsome, strong, of the stock of homestead and workshop
 Harden'd of many a long campaign and sweaty march
 Inured on many a hard-fought bloody field.

A pause—the armies wait
 A million flush'd embattled conquerors wait
 The world too waits, then soft as breaking night and sure as dawn
 They melt, they disappear.

Exult O lands! victorious lands!

Not there your victory on those red shuddering fields
 But here and hence your victory.

Melt, melt away ye armies—disperse ye blue-clad soldiers
 Resolve ye back again, give up for good your deadly arms
 Other the arms the fields henceforth for you, or South or North
 With saner wars, sweet wars, life-giving wars.

7

Loud O my throat, and clear O soul!

The season of thanks and the voice of full-yielding
 The chant of joy and power for boundless fertility.

All till'd and untill'd fields expand before me
 I see the true arenas of my race, or first or last
 Man's innocent and strong arenas.

I see the heroes at other toils
 I see well-wielded in their hands the better weapons.

I see where the Mother of All
 With full-spanning eye gazes forth, dwells long
 And counts the varied gathering of the products.

Busy the far, the sunlit panorama
 Prairie, orchard, and yellow grain of the North
 Cotton and rice of the South and Louisianian cane
 Open unseeded fallows, rich fields of clover and timothy
 Kine and horses feeding, and droves of sheep and swine
 And many a stately river flowing and many a jocund brook
 And healthy uplands with herby-perfumed breezes
 And the good green grass, that delicate miracle the ever-recurring grass.

8

Toil on heroes! harvest the products!

Not alone on those warlike fields the Mother of All
 With dilated form and lambent eyes watch'd you.

Toil on heroes! toil well! handle the weapons well!
The Mother of All, yet here as ever she watches you.
Well-pleased America thou beholdest
Over the fields of the West those crawling monsters
The human-divine inventions, the labor-saving implements;
Beholdest moving in every direction imbued as with life the revolving
 hay-rakes
The steam-power reaping-machines and the horse-power machines
The engines, thrashers of grain and cleaners of grain, well separating the
 straw, the nimble work of the patent pitchfork
Beholdest the newer saw-mill, the southern cotton-gin, and the rice-
 cleanser.
Beneath thy look O Maternal
With these and else and with their own strong hands the heroes harvest.
All gather and all harvest
Yet but for thee O Powerful, not a scythe might swing as now in security
Not a maize-stalk dangle as now its silken tassels in peace.
Under thee only they harvest, even but a wisp of hay under thy great face
 only
Harvest the wheat of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, every barbed spear under
 thee
Harvest the maize of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, each ear in its light-
 green sheath
Gather the hay to its myriad mows in the odorous tranquil barns
Oats to their bins, the white potato, the buckwheat of Michigan, to theirs;
Gather the cotton in Mississippi or Alabama, dig and hoard the golden
 the sweet potato of Georgia and the Carolinas
Clip the wool of California or Pennsylvania
Cut the flax in the Middle States, or hemp or tobacco in the Borders
Pick the pea and the bean, or pull apples from the trees or bunches of
 grapes from the vines
Or aught that ripens in all these States or North or South
Under the beaming sun and under thee.

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

There was a child went forth every day
 And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became
 And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the
 day

Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child
 And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover,
 and the song of the phoebe-bird
 And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the
 mare's foal and the cow's calf
 And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side
 And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the
 beautiful curious liquid
 And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of
 him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him
 Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent
 roots of the garden

And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and
 wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road
 And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern
 whence he had lately risen

And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school
 And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys
 And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl
 And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd
 him in her womb and birth'd him

They gave this child more of themselves than that
 They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table
 The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor
 falling off her person and clothes as she walks by

The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust
 The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure
 The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearn-
 ing and swelling heart

Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the thought
 if after all it should prove unreal

The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether
 and how

Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
 Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes and
 specks what are they?

The streets themselves and the facades of houses, and goods in the windows
 Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries
 The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between
 Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white
 or brown two miles off
 The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat
 slack-tow'd astern
 The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping
 The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by
 itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in
 The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and
 shore mud
 These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now
 goes, and will always go forth every day.

OLD IRELAND

Far hence amid an isle of wondrous beauty
 Crouching over a grave an ancient sorrowful mother
 Once a queen, now lean and tatter'd seated on the ground
 Her old white hair drooping dishevel'd round her shoulders
 At her feet fallen an unused royal harp
 Long silent, she too long silent, mourning her shrouded hope and heir
 Of all the earth her heart most full of sorrow because most full of love.
 Yet a word ancient mother
 You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground with forehead be-
 tween your knees
 O you need not sit there veil'd in your old white hair so dishevel'd
 For know you the one you mourn is not in that grave
 It was an illusion, the son you love was not really dead
 The Lord is not dead, he is risen again young and strong in another coun-
 try
 Even while you wept there by your fallen harp by the grave
 What you wept for was translated, pass'd from the grave
 The winds favor'd and the sea sail'd it
 And now with rosy and new blood
 Moves to-day in a new country.

THE CITY DEAD-HOUSE

By the city dead-house by the gate
As idly sauntering wending my way from the clangor
I curious pause, for lo, an outcast form, a poor dead prostitute brought
Her corpse they deposit unclaim'd, it lies on the damp brick pavement
The divine woman, her body, I see the body, I look on it alone
That house once full of passion and beauty, all else I notice not
Nor stillness so cold, nor running water from faucet, nor odors morbidic
 impress me
But the house alone—that wondrous house—that delicate fair house
—that ruin!
That immortal house more than all the rows of dwellings ever built!
Or white-domed capitol with majestic figure surmounted, or all the old
 high-spired cathedrals
That little house alone more than them all—poor, desperate house!
Fair, fearful wreck—tenement of a soul—itsself a soul
Unclaim'd, avoided house—take one breath from my tremulous lips
Take one tear dropt aside as I go for thought of you
Dead house of love—house of madness and sin, crumbled, crush'd
House of life, erewhile talking and laughing—but ah, poor house, dead
 even then
Months, years, an echoing, garnish'd house—but dead, dead, dead.

THIS COMPOST

1

Something startles me where I thought I was safest
 I withdraw from the still woods I loved
 I will not go now on the pastures to walk
 I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea
 I will not touch my flesh to the earth as to other flesh to renew me.

O how can it be that the ground itself does not sicken?
 How can you be alive you growths of spring?
 How can you furnish health you blood of herbs, roots, orchards, grain?
 Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses within you?
 Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead?
 Where have you disposed of their carcasses?
 Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations?
 Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?
 I do not see any of it upon you to-day, or perhaps I am deceiv'd
 I will run a furrow with my plough, I will press my spade through
 the sod and turn it up underneath
 I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

2

Behold this compost! behold it well!
 Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person--yet behold!
 The grass of spring covers the prairies
 The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden
 The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward
 The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches
 The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves
 The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree
 The he-birds carol mornings and evenings while the she-birds sit on their
 nests
 The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs
 The new-born of animals appear, the calf is dropt from the cow, the colt
 from the mare
 Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves
 Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk, the lilacs bloom in the door-
 yards
 The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of
 sour dead.
 What chemistry!
 That the winds are really not infectious
 That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea which is so
 amorous after me
 That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its tongues

That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited themselves in it
That all is clean forever and forever
That the cool drink from the well tastes so good
That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy
That the fruits of the apple-orchard and the orange-orchard, that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will none of them poison me
That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease
Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once catching disease.

Now I am terrified at the Earth, it is that calm and patient
It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions
It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless successions of diseas'd corpses
It distills such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor
It renews with such unwitting looks its prodigal, annual, sumptuous crops
It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last.

TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE

Courage yet, my brother or my sister!
 Keep on—Liberty is to be subserv'd whatever occurs;
 That is nothing that is quell'd by one or two failures, or any number of
 failures
 Or by the indifference or ingratitude of the people, or by any unfaithful-
 ness
 Or the show of the tushes of power, soldiers, cannon, penal statutes.
 What we believe in waits latent forever through all the continents
 Invites no one, promises nothing, sits in calmness and light, is positive
 and composed, knows no discouragement
 Waiting patiently, waiting its time.
 (Not songs of loyalty alone are these
 But songs of insurrection also
 For I am the sworn poet of every dauntless rebel the world over
 And he going with me leaves peace and routine behind him
 And stakes his life to be lost at any moment.)
 The battle rages with many a loud alarm and frequent advance and re-
 treat
 The infidel triumphs, or supposes he triumphs
 The prison, scaffold, garrote, handcuffs, iron necklace and leadballs do
 their work
 The named and unnamed heroes pass to other spheres
 The great speakers and writers are exiled, they lie sick in distant lands
 The cause is asleep, the strongest throats are choked with their own blood
 The young men droop their eyelashes toward the ground when they
 meet;
 But for all this Liberty has not gone out of the place, nor the infidel en-
 ter'd into full possession.
 When liberty goes out of a place it is not the first to go, nor the second or
 third to go
 It waits for all the rest to go, it is the last.
 When there are no more memories of heroes and martyrs
 And when all life and all the souls of men and women are discharged
 from any part of the earth
 Then only shall liberty or the idea of liberty be discharged from that part
 of the earth
 And the infidel come into full possession.
 Then courage European revolter, revoltress!
 For till all ceases neither must you cease.
 I do not know what you are for, (I do not know what I am for myself, nor
 what any thing is for,)
 But I will search carefully for it even in being foil'd

In defeat, poverty, misconception, imprisonment—for they too are great.
Did we think victory great?
So it is—but now it seems to me, when it cannot be help'd, that defeat is
great
And that death and dismay are great.

UNNAMED LAND

Nations ten thousand years before these States, and many times ten thousand years before these States
 Garner'd clusters of ages that men and women like us grew up and travel'd their course and pass'd on
 What vast-built cities, what orderly republics, what pastoral tribes and nomads
 What histories, rulers, heroes, perhaps transcending all others
 What laws, customs, wealth, arts, traditions
 What sort of marriage, what costumes, what physiology and phrenology
 What of liberty and slavery among them, what they thought of death and the soul
 Who were witty and wise, who beautiful and poetic, who brutish and undevelop'd
 Not a mark, not a record remains—and yet all remains.
 O I know that those men and women were not for nothing, any more than we are for nothing
 I know that they belong to the scheme of the world every bit as much as we now belong to it.
 Afar they stand, yet near to me they stand
 Some with oval countenances learn'd and calm
 Some naked and savage, some like huge collections of insects
 Some in tents, herdsman, patriarchs, tribes, horsemen
 Some prowling through woods, some living peaceably on farms, laboring, reaping, filling barns
 Some traversing paved avenues, amid temples, palaces, factories, libraries, shows, courts, theatres, wonderful monuments.
 Are those billions of men really gone?
 Are those women of the old experience of the earth gone?
 Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us?
 Did they achieve nothing for good for themselves?
 I believe of all those men and women that fill'd the unnamed lands, every one exists this hour here or elsewhere, invisible to us.
 In exact proportion to what he or she grew from in life, and out of what he or she did, felt, became, loved, sinn'd, in life.
 I believe that was not the end of those nations or any person of them, any more than this shall be the end of my nation, or of me;
 Of their languages, governments, marriage, literature, products, games, wars, manners, crimes, prisons, slaves, heroes, poets
 I suspect their results curiously await in the yet unseen world, counterparts of what accrued to them in the seen world
 I suspect I shall meet them there
 I suspect I shall there find each old particular of those unnamed lands.

SONG OF PRUDENCE

Manhattan's streets I saunter'd pondering
On Time, Space, Reality—on such as these, and abreast with them Prudence.

The last explanation always remains to be made about prudence
Little and large alike drop quietly aside from the prudence that suits immortality.

The soul is of itself
All verges to it, all has reference to what ensues
All that a person does, says, thinks, is of consequence
Not a move can a man or woman make, that affects him or her in a day,
month, any part of the direct lifetime, or the hour of death
But the same affects him or her onward afterward through the indirect lifetime.

The indirect is just as much as the direct
The spirit receives from the body just as much as it gives to the body, if not more.

Not one word or deed, not venereal sore, discoloration, privacy of the onanist
Putridity of gluttons or rum-drinkers, speculation, cunning, betrayal, murder, seduction, prostitution
But has results beyond death as really as before death.

Charity and personal force are the only investments worth any thing.
No specification is necessary, all that a male or female does, that is vigorous, benevolent, clean, is so much profit to him or her
In the unshakable order of the universe and through the whole scope of it forever.

Who has been wise receives interest
Savage, felon, President, judge, farmer, sailor, mechanic, literate young, old, it is the same
The interest will come round—all will come round.

Singly, wholly, to affect now, affected their time, will forever affect all of the past and all of the present and all of the future
All the brave actions of war and peace
All help given to relatives, strangers, the poor, old, sorrowful young children, widows, the sick, and to shunn'd persons
All self-denial that stood steady and aloof on wrecks, and saw others fill the seats of the boats
All offering of substance or life for the good old cause, or for a friend's sake, or opinion's sake
All pains of enthusiasts scoff'd at by their neighbors
All the limitless sweet love and precious suffering of mothers
All honest men baffled in strifes recorded or unrecorded

All the grandeur and good of ancient nations whose fragments we inherit
All the good of the dozens of ancient nations unknown to us by name
date, location

All that was ever manfully begun, whether it succeeded or no
All suggestions of the divine mind of man or the divinity of his mouth,
or the shaping of his great hands

All that is well thought or said this day on any part of the globe or on any
of the wandering stars, or on any of the fix'd stars by those there as
we are here

All that is henceforth to be thought or done by you whoever you are or
by any one

These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the identities from which they
sprang, or shall spring.

Did you guess any thing lived only its moment?

The world does not so exist, no parts palpable or impalpable so exist

No consummation exists without being from some long previous con-
summation, and that from some other

Without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit nearer the beginning
than any.

Whatever satisfies souls is true;

Prudence entirely satisfies the craving and glut of souls

Itself only finally satisfies the soul

The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from every lesson but
its own.

Now I breathe the word of the prudence that walks abreast with time
space, reality

That answers the pride which refuses every lesson but its own.

What is prudence is indivisible

Declines to separate one part of life from every part

Divides not the righteous from the unrighteous or the living from the
dead

Matches every thought or act by its correlative

Knows no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement

Knows that the young man who composedly peril'd his life and lost it
has done exceedingly well for himself without doubt

That he who never peril'd his life, but retains it to old age in riches and
ease, has probably achiev'd nothing for himself worth mentioning

Knows that only that person has really learn'd who has learn'd to prefer
results

Who favors body and soul the same

Who perceives the indirect assuredly following the direct

Who in his spirit in any emergency whatever neither hurries nor avoids
death.

THE SINGER IN THE PRISON

O sight of pity, shame and dole!
 O fearful thought—a convict soul.

1

Rang the refrain along the hall, the prison
 Rose to the roof, the vaults of heaven above
 Pouring in floods of melody in tones so pensive sweet and strong the like
 whereof was never heard
 Reaching the far-off sentry and the armed guards, who ceas'd their pac-
 ing
 Making the hearer's pulses stop for ecstasy and awe.

2

The sun was low in the west one winter day
 When down a narrow aisle amid the thieves and outlaws of the land
 (There by the hundreds seated, sear-faced murderers, wily counterfeiters
 Gather'd to Sunday church in prison walls, the keepers round
 Plenteous, well-armed, watching with vigilant eyes,
 Calmly a lady walk'd holding a little innocent child by either hand
 Whom seating on their stools beside her on the platform
 She, first preluding with the instrument a low and musical prelude
 In voice surpassing all, sang forth a quaint old hymn.

A soul confined by bars and bands
 Cries, help! O help! and wrings her hands
 Blinded her eyes, bleeding her breast
 Nor pardon finds, nor balm of rest.

Ceaseless she paces to and fro
 O heart-sick days! O nights of woe!
 Nor hand of friend, nor loving face
 Nor favor comes, nor word of grace.

It was not I that sinn'd the sin
 The ruthless body dragg'd me in;
 Though long I strove courageously
 The body was too much for me.

Dear prison'd soul bear up a space
 For soon or late the certain grace;
 To set thee free and bear thee home
 The heavenly pardoner death shall come.

Convict no more, nor shame, nor dole!
 Depart—a God-enfranchis'd soul!

3

The singer ceas'd

One glance swept from her clear calm eyes o'er all those upturn'd faces
Strange sea of prison faces, a thousand varied, crafty, brutal seam'd and
 beauteous faces

Then rising, passing back along the narrow aisle between them
While her gown touch'd them rustling in the silence
She vanish'd with her children in the dusk.

While upon all, convicts and armed keepers ere they stirr'd
(Convict forgetting prison, keeper his loaded pistol,)

A hush and pause fell down a wondrous minute
With deep half-stifled sobs and sound of bad men bow'd and moved to
 weeping

And youth's convulsive breathings, memories of home
The mother's voice in lullaby, the sister's care, the happy childhood
The long-pent spirit rous'd to reminiscence;

A wondrous minute then—but after in the solitary night, to many many
 there

Years after, even in the hour of death, the sad refrain, the tune the voice,
 the words

Resumed, the large calm lady walks the narrow aisle
The wailing melody again, the singer in the prison sings
O sight of pity, shame and dole!

O fearful thought—a convict soul.

WARBLE FOR LILAC-TIME

Warble me now for joy of lilac-time, (returning in reminiscence,
Sort me O tongue and lips for Nature's sake, souvenirs of earliest summer
Gather the welcome signs, (as children with pebbles or stringing shells,)
Put in April and May, the hylas croaking in the ponds, the elastic air
Bees, butterflies, the sparrow with its simple notes
Blue-bird and darting swallow, nor forget the high-hole flashing his
golden wings
The tranquil sunny haze, the clinging smoke, the vapor
Shimmer of waters with fish in them, the cerulean above
All that is jocund and sparkling, the brooks running
The maple woods, the crisp February days and the sugar-making
The robin where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted
With musical clear call at sunrise, and again at sunset
Or flitting among the trees of the apple-orchard, building the nest
of his mate
The melted snow of March, the willow sending forth its yellow-green
sprouts
For spring-time is here! the summer is here! and what is this in it and
from it?
Thou, soul, unloosen'd—the restlessness after I know not what;
Come, let us lag here no longer, let us be up and away!
O if one could but fly like a bird!
O to escape, to sail forth as in a ship!
To glide with thee O soul, o'er all, in all, as a ship o'er the waters;
Gathering these hints, the preludes, the blue sky, the grass, the morning
drops of dew
The lilac-scent, the bushes with dark green heart-shaped leaves
Wood-violets, the little delicate pale blossoms called innocence
Samples and sorts not for themselves alone, but for their atmosphere
To grace the bush I love—to sing with the birds
A warble for joy of returning in reminiscence.

OUTLINES FOR A TOMB (G. P., BURIED 1870)

1

What may we chant, O thou within this tomb?
 What tablets, outlines, hang for thee, O millionaire?
 The life thou lived'st we know not
 But that thou walk'dst thy years in barter, 'mid the haunts of brokers
 Nor heroism thine, nor war, nor glory.

2

Silent, my soul
 With drooping lids, as waiting, ponder'd
 Turning from all the samples, monuments of heroes.

While through the interior vistas
 Noiseless uprose, phantasmic, (as by night Auroras of the north,)
 Lambent tableaux, prophetic, bodiless scenes
 Spiritual projections.

In one, among the city streets a laborer's home appear'd
 After his day's work done, cleanly, sweet-air'd, the gaslight burning
 The carpet swept and a fire in the cheerful stove.

In one, the sacred parturition scene
 A happy painless mother birth'd a perfect child.

In one, at a bounteous morning meal
 Sat peaceful parents with contented sons.

In one, by twos and threes, young people
 Hundreds concentrating, walk'd the paths and streets and roads
 Toward a tall-domed school.

In one a trio beautiful
 Grandmother, loving daughter, loving daughter's daughter, sat
 Chatting and sewing.

In one, along a suite of noble rooms
 'Mid plenteous books and journals, paintings on the walls, fine statuettes
 Were groups of friendly journeymen, mechanics young and old
 Reading, conversing.

All, all the shows of laboring life
 City and country, women's, men's and children's
 Their wants provided for, hued in the sun and tinged for once with joy
 Marriage, the street, the factory, farm, the house-room, lodging-room
 Labor and toll, the bath, gymnasium, playground, library, college
 The student, boy or girl, led forward to be taught
 The sick cared for, the shoeless shod, the orphan father'd and mother'd
 The hungry fed, the houseless housed;
 (The intentions perfect and divine
 The workings, details, haply human.)

3

O thou within this tomb
From thee such scenes, thou stintless, lavish giver
Tallying the gifts of earth, large as the earth
Thy name an earth, with mountains, fields and tides.
Nor by your streams alone, you rivers
By you, your banks Connecticut
By you and all your teeming life old Thames
By you Potomac laving the ground Washington trod, by you Patapsco
You Hudson, you endless Mississippi—nor you alone
But to the high seas launch, my thought, his memory.

OUT FROM BEHIND THIS MASK (TO CONFRONT A PORTRAIT)

1

Out from behind this bending rough-cut mask
These lights and shades, this drama of the whole
This common curtain of the face contain'd in me for me, in you for you,
in each for each
(Tragedies, sorrows, laughter, tears—0 heaven!
The passionate teeming plays this curtain hid!)
This glaze of God's serenest purest sky
This film of Satan's seething pit
This heart's geography's map, this limitless small continent, this sound-
less sea;
Out from the convolutions of this globe
This subtler astronomic orb than sun or moon, than Jupiter, Venus, Mars
This condensation of the universe, (nay here the only universe
Here the idea, all in this mystic handful wrapt;)
These burin'd eyes, flashing to you to pass to future time
To launch and spin through space revolving sideling, from these to em-
anate
To you whoe'er you are—a look.

2

A traveler of thoughts and years, of peace and war
Of youth long sped and middle age declining
(As the first volume of a tale perused and laid away, and this the second
Songs, ventures, speculations, presently to close,)
Lingering a moment here and now, to you I opposite turn
As on the road or at some crevice door by chance, or open'd window
Pausing, inclining, baring my head, you specially I greet
To draw and clinch your soul for once inseparably with mine
Then travel travel on.

VOCALISM

1

Vocalism, measure, concentration, determination, and the divine power
to speak words;
Are you full-lung'd and limber-lipp'd from long trial? from vigorous
practice? from physique?
Do you move in these broad lands as broad as they?
Come duly to the divine power to speak words?
For only at last after many years, after chastity, friendship procreation,
prudence, and nakedness
After treading ground and breasting river and lake
After a loosen'd throat, after absorbing eras, temperaments, races after
knowledge, freedom, crimes
After complete faith, after clarifyings, elevations, and removing obstruc-
tions
After these and more, it is just possible there comes to a man woman, the
divine power to speak words;
Then toward that man or that woman swiftly hasten all—none refuse, all
attend
Armies, ships, antiquities, libraries, paintings, machines, cities hate, de-
spair, amity, pain, theft, murder, aspiration, form in close ranks
They debouch as they are wanted to march obediently through the mouth
of that man or that woman.

2

O what is it in me that makes me tremble so at voices?
Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps, anywhere
around the globe.
All waits for the right voices;
Where is the practis'd and perfect organ? where is the develop'd soul?
For I see every word utter'd thence has deeper, sweeter, new sounds
impossible on less terms.
I see brains and lips closed, tympan and temples unstruck
Until that comes which has the quality to strike and to unclose
Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth what lies slumber-
ing forever ready in all words.

TO HIM THAT WAS CRUCIFIED

My spirit to yours dear brother
 Do not mind because many sounding your name do not understand you
 I do not sound your name, but I understand you
 I specify you with joy O my comrade to salute you, and to salute those
 who are with you, before and since, and those to come also
 That we all labor together transmitting the same charge and succession
 We few equals indifferent of lands, indifferent of times
 We, enclosers of all continents, all castes, allowers of all theologies
 Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men
 We walk silent among disputes and assertions, but reject not the disput-
 ers nor any thing that is asserted
 We hear the bawling and din, we are reach'd at by divisions jealousies,
 recriminations on every side
 They close peremptorily upon us to surround us, my comrade
 Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying up and
 down till we make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse eras
 Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women of races ages
 to come, may prove brethren and lovers as we are.

YOU FELONS ON TRIAL IN COURTS

You felons on trial in courts
 You convicts in prison-cells, you sentenced assassins chain'd and hand-
 cuff'd with iron
 Who am I too that I am not on trial or in prison?
 Me ruthless and devilish as any, that my wrists are not chain'd with iron,
 or my ankles with iron?
 You prostitutes flaunting over the trottoirs or obscene in your rooms
 Who am I that I should call you more obscene than myself?
 O culpable! I acknowledge—I expose!
 (O admirers, praise not me—compliment not me—you make me wince
 I see what you do not—I know what you do not.)
 Inside these breast-bones I lie smutch'd and choked
 Beneath this face that appears so impassive hell's tides continually run
 Lusts and wickedness are acceptable to me
 I walk with delinquents with passionate love
 I feel I am of them—I belong to those convicts and prostitutes myself
 And henceforth I will not deny them—for how can I deny myself?

LAWS FOR CREATIONS

Laws for creations

For strong artists and leaders, for fresh broods of teachers and perfect
literats for America

For noble savans and coming musicians.

All must have reference to the ensemble of the world, and the compact
truth of the world

There shall be no subject too pronounced—all works shall illustrate
the divine law of indirections.

What do you suppose creation is?

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul, except to walk free and own
no superior?

What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hundred ways, but
that man or woman is as good as God?

And that there is no God any more divine than Yourself?

And that that is what the oldest and newest myths finally mean?

And that you or any one must approach creations through such laws?

TO A COMMON PROSTITUTE

Be composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty
as Nature

Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you

Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you and the leaves to rustle for
you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you.

My girl I appoint with you an appointment, and I charge you that you
make preparation to be worthy to meet me

And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I come.

Till then I salute you with a significant look that you do not forget me.

I WAS LOOKING A LONG WHILE

I was looking a long while for Intentions
For a clew to the history of the past for myself, and for these chants—and
now I have found it
It is not in those paged fables in the libraries, (them I neither accept nor
reject,)
It is no more in the legends than in all else
It is in the present—it is this earth to-day
It is in Democracy—the purport and aim of all the past,)
It is the life of one man or one woman to-day—the average man of to-day
It is in languages, social customs, literatures, arts
It is in the broad show of artificial things, ships, machinery politics,
creeds, modern improvements, and the interchange of nations
All for the modern—all for the average man of to-day.

THOUGHT

Of persons arrived at high positions, ceremonies, wealth scholarships,
and the like;
(To me all that those persons have arrived at sinks away from them except
as it results to their bodies and souls
So that often to me they appear gaunt and naked
And often to me each one mocks the others, and mocks himself or herself
And of each one the core of life, namely happiness, is full of the rotten
excrement of maggots
And often to me those men and women pass unwittingly the true realities
of life, and go toward false realities
And often to me they are alive after what custom has served them but
nothing more
And often to me they are sad, hasty, unawaked sonnambules walking the
dusk.)

MIRACLES

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water
Or stand under trees in the woods
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night with any
 one I love
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon
Or animals feeding in the fields
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and
 bright
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.
To me the sea is a continual miracle
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the waves—the
ships with men in them
What stranger miracles are there?

SPARKLES FROM THE WHEEL

Where the city's ceaseless crowd moves on the livelong day
Withdrawn I join a group of children watching, I pause aside with them.

By the curb toward the edge of the flagging
A knife-grinder works at his wheel sharpening a great knife
Bending over he carefully holds it to the stone, by foot and knee
With measur'd tread he turns rapidly, as he presses with light but firm
hand

Forth issue then in copious golden jets
Sparkles from the wheel.

The scene and all its belongings, how they seize and affect me
The sad sharp-chinn'd old man with worn clothes and broad
shoulder-band of leather
Myself effusing and fluid, a phantom curiously floating, now here ab-
sorb'd and arrested

The group, (an unminded point set in a vast surrounding,
The attentive, quiet children, the loud, proud, restive base of the streets
The low hoarse purr of the whirling stone, the light-press'd blade
Diffusing, dropping, sideways-darting, in tiny showers of gold
Sparkles from the wheel.

TO A PUPIL

Is reform needed? is it through you?
The greater the reform needed, the greater the Personality you need to
accomplish it.

You! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes, blood complexion,
clean and sweet?

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a body and soul that
when you enter the crowd an atmosphere of desire and command
enters with you, and every one is impress'd with your Personality?

O the magnet! the flesh over and over!

Go, dear friend, if need be give up all else, and commence to-day to inure
yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness elevatedness
Rest not till you rivet and publish yourself of your own Personality.

UNFOLDED OUT OF THE FOLDS

Unfolded out of the folds of the woman man comes unfolded, and is
always to come unfolded
Unfolded only out of the superbest woman of the earth is to come the
superbest man of the earth
Unfolded out of the friendliest woman is to come the friendliest man
Unfolded only out of the perfect body of a woman can a man be form'd
of perfect body
Unfolded only out of the inimitable poems of woman can come the po-
ems of man, (only thence have my poems come;)
Unfolded out of the strong and arrogant woman I love, only thence can
appear the strong and arrogant man I love
Unfolded by brawny embraces from the well-muscled woman love, only
thence come the brawny embraces of the man
Unfolded out of the folds of the woman's brain come all the folds of the
man's brain, duly obedient
Unfolded out of the justice of the woman all justice is unfolded
Unfolded out of the sympathy of the woman is all sympathy;
A man is a great thing upon the earth and through eternity, but every of
the greatness of man is unfolded out of woman;
First the man is shaped in the woman, he can then be shaped in himself.

WHAT AM I AFTER ALL

What am I after all but a child, pleas'd with the sound of my own name?
repeating it over and over;
I stand apart to hear—it never tires me.
To you your name also;
Did you think there was nothing but two or three pronunciations in
the sound of your name?

KOSMOS

Who includes diversity and is Nature
Who is the amplitude of the earth, and the coarseness and sexuality of
the earth, and the great charity of the earth, and the equilibrium also
Who has not look'd forth from the windows the eyes for nothing or
whose brain held audience with messengers for nothing
Who contains believers and disbelievers, who is the most majestic lover
Who holds duly his or her triune proportion of realism
spiritualism, and of the aesthetic or intellectual
Who having consider'd the body finds all its organs and parts good
Who, out of the theory of the earth and of his or her body understands
by subtle analogies all other theories
The theory of a city, a poem, and of the large politics of these States;
Who believes not only in our globe with its sun and moon, but in other
globes with their suns and moons
Who, constructing the house of himself or herself, not for a day but for
all time, sees races, eras, dates, generations
The past, the future, dwelling there, like space, inseparable together.

OTHERS MAY PRAISE WHAT THEY LIKE

Others may praise what they like;
But I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise nothing in art or
aught else
Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river, also the western
prairie-scent
And exudes it all again.

WHO LEARNS MY LESSON COMPLETE?

Who learns my lesson complete?

Boss, journeyman, apprentice, churchman and atheist

The stupid and the wise thinker, parents and offspring, merchant clerk,
porter and customer

Editor, author, artist, and schoolboy—draw nigh and commence;

It is no lesson—it lets down the bars to a good lesson

And that to another, and every one to another still.

The great laws take and effuse without argument

I am of the same style, for I am their friend

I love them quits and quits, I do not halt and make salaams.

I lie abstracted and hear beautiful tales of things and the reasons of things

They are so beautiful I nudge myself to listen.

I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say it to myself—it is very
wonderful.

It is no small matter, this round and delicious globe moving so exactly in
its orbit for ever and ever, without one jolt or the untruth of a single
second

I do not think it was made in six days, nor in ten thousand years nor ten
billions of years

Nor plann'd and built one thing after another as an architect plans and
builds a house.

I do not think seventy years is the time of a man or woman

Nor that seventy millions of years is the time of a man or woman

Nor that years will ever stop the existence of me, or any one else.

Is it wonderful that I should be immortal? as every one is immortal;

I know it is wonderful, but my eyesight is equally wonderful, and how I
was conceived in my mother's womb is equally wonderful

And pass'd from a babe in the creeping trance of a couple of summers
and winters to articulate and walk—all this is equally wonderful.

And that my soul embraces you this hour, and we affect each other
without ever seeing each other, and never perhaps to see each other, is
every bit as wonderful.

And that I can think such thoughts as these is just as wonderful

And that I can remind you, and you think them and know them to be
true, is just as wonderful.

And that the moon spins round the earth and on with the earth, is equally
wonderful

And that they balance themselves with the sun and stars is equally won-
derful.

TESTS

All submit to them where they sit, inner, secure, unapproachable to analysis in the soul
Not traditions, not the outer authorities are the judges
They are the judges of outer authorities and of all traditions
They corroborate as they go only whatever corroborates themselves and touches themselves;
For all that, they have it forever in themselves to corroborate far and near without one exception.

THE TORCH

On my Northwest coast in the midst of the night a fishermen's group stands watching
Out on the lake that expands before them, others are spearing salmon
The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the black water
Bearing a torch ablaze at the prow.

O STAR OF FRANCE (1870-71)

O star of France

The brightness of thy hope and strength and fame
 Like some proud ship that led the fleet so long
 Beseems to-day a wreck driven by the gale, a mastless hulk
 And 'mid its teeming madden'd half-drown'd crowds
 Nor helm nor helmsman.

Dim smitten star

Orb not of France alone, pale symbol of my soul, its dearest hopes
 The struggle and the daring, rage divine for liberty
 Of aspirations toward the far ideal, enthusiast's dreams of brotherhood
 Of terror to the tyrant and the priest.

Star crucified—by traitors sold

Star panting o'er a land of death, heroic land
 Strange, passionate, mocking, frivolous land.

Miserable! yet for thy errors, vanities, sins, I will not now rebuke thee
 Thy unexampled woes and pangs have quell'd them all
 And left thee sacred.

In that amid thy many faults thou ever aimedst highly
 In that thou wouldst not really sell thyself however great the price
 In that thou surely wakedst weeping from thy drugg'd sleep
 In that alone among thy sisters thou, giantess, didst rend the ones
 that shamed thee

In that thou couldst not, wouldst not, wear the usual chains
 This cross, thy livid face, thy pierced hands and feet
 The spear thrust in thy side.

O star! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long!

Bear up O smitten orb! O ship continue on!

Sure as the ship of all, the Earth itself
 Product of deathly fire and turbulent chaos
 Forth from its spasms of fury and its poisons
 Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty
 Onward beneath the sun following its course
 So thee O ship of France!

Finish'd the days, the clouds dispel'd
 The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication
 When lo! reborn, high o'er the European world
 (In gladness answering thence, as face afar to face, reflecting ours
 Columbia,)

Again thy star O France, fair lustrous star
 In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever
 Shall beam immortal.

THE OX-TAMER

In a far-away northern county in the placid pastoral region
Lives my farmer friend, the theme of my recitative, a famous tamer of
oxen
There they bring him the three-year-olds and the four-year-olds to break
them
He will take the wildest steer in the world and break him and tame him
He will go fearless without any whip where the young bullock chafes
up and down the yard
The bullock's head tosses restless high in the air with raging eyes
Yet see you! how soon his rage subsides—how soon this tamer tames him;
See you! on the farms hereabout a hundred oxen young and old and he
is the man who has tamed them
They all know him, all are affectionate to him;
See you! some are such beautiful animals, so lofty looking;
Some are buff-color'd, some mottled, one has a white line running along
his back, some are brindled
Some have wide flaring horns (a good sign)—see you! the bright hides
See, the two with stars on their foreheads—see, the round bodies and
broad backs
How straight and square they stand on their legs—what fine sagacious
eyes!
How straight they watch their tamer—they wish him near them—how they
turn to look after him!
How yearning expression! how uneasy they are when he moves away
from them;
Now I marvel what it can be he appears to them, (books, politics poems,
depart—all else departs,)
I confess I envy only his fascination—my silent, illiterate friend
Whom a hundred oxen love there in his life on farms
In the northern county far, in the placid pastoral region.

AN OLD MAN'S THOUGHT OF SCHOOL

(For the Inauguration of a Public School, Camden, New Jersey, 1874)

An old man's thought of school

An old man gathering youthful memories and blooms that youth itself cannot.

Now only do I know you

O fair auroral skies—O morning dew upon the grass!

And these I see, these sparkling eyes

These stores of mystic meaning, these young lives

Building, equipping like a fleet of ships, immortal ships

Soon to sail out over the measureless seas

On the soul's voyage.

Only a lot of boys and girls?

Only the tiresome spelling, writing, ciphering classes?

Only a public school?

Ah more, infinitely more;

(As George Fox rais'd his warning cry, "Is it this pile of brick and mortar, these dead floors, windows, rails, you call the church?

Why this is not the church at all—the church is living, ever living souls.")

And you America

Cast you the real reckoning for your present?

The lights and shadows of your future, good or evil?

To girlhood, boyhood look, the teacher and the school.

WANDERING AT MORN

Wandering at morn

Emerging from the night from gloomy thoughts, thee in my thoughts
Yearning for thee harmonious Union! thee, singing bird divine!

Thee coil'd in evil times my country, with craft and black dismay with
every meanness, treason thrust upon thee
This common marvel I beheld—the parent thrush I watch'd feeding its
young

The singing thrush whose tones of joy and faith ecstatic
Fail not to certify and cheer my soul.

There ponder'd, felt I

If worms, snakes, loathsome grubs, may to sweet spiritual songs be
turn'd

If vermin so transposed, so used and bless'd may be

Then may I trust in you, your fortunes, days, my country;

Who knows but these may be the lessons fit for you?

From these your future song may rise with joyous trills

Destin'd to fill the world.

ITALIAN MUSIC IN DAKOTA

("The Seventeenth—the finest Regimental Band I ever heard.")

Through the soft evening air enwinding all

Rocks, woods, fort, cannon, pacing sentries, endless wilds

In dulcet streams, in flutes' and cornets' notes

Electric, pensive, turbulent, artificial

(Yet strangely fitting even here, meanings unknown before

Subtler than ever, more harmony, as if born here, related here

Not to the city's fresco'd rooms, not to the audience of the opera house

Sounds, echoes, wandering strains, as really here at home

Sonnambula's innocent love, trios with Norma's anguish

And thy ecstatic chorus Poliuto;)

Ray'd in the limpid yellow slanting sundown

Music, Italian music in Dakota.

While Nature, sovereign of this gnarl'd realm

Lurking in hidden barbaric grim recesses

Acknowledging rapport however far remov'd

(As some old root or soil of earth its last-born flower or fruit,)

Listens well pleas'd.

WITH ALL THY GIFTS

With all thy gifts America
Standing secure, rapidly tending, overlooking the world
Power, wealth, extent, vouchsafed to thee—with these and like of these
vouchsafed to thee
What if one gift thou lackest? (the ultimate human problem never solving,
ing,)
The gift of perfect women fit for thee—what if that gift of gifts thou lackest?
The towering feminine of thee? the beauty, health, completion, fit for thee?
The mothers fit for thee?

MY PICTURE-GALLERY

In a little house keep I pictures suspended, it is not a fix'd house
It is round, it is only a few inches from one side to the other;
Yet behold, it has room for all the shows of the world, all memories!
Here the tableaus of life, and here the groupings of death;
Here, do you know this? this is cicerone himself
With finger rais'd he points to the prodigal pictures.

THE PRAIRIE STATES

A newer garden of creation, no primal solitude
Dense, joyous, modern, populous millions, cities and farms
With iron interlaced, composite, tied, many in one
By all the world contributed—freedom's and law's and thrift's society
The crown and teeming paradise, so far, of time's accumulations
To justify the past.

BOOK XXV

PROUD MUSIC OF THE STORM

1

Proud music of the storm
Blast that careers so free, whistling across the prairies
Strong hum of forest tree-tops–wind of the mountains
Personified dim shapes–you hidden orchestras
You serenades of phantoms with instruments alert
Blending with Nature’s rhythmus all the tongues of nations;
You chords left as by vast composers–you choruses
You formless, free, religious dances–you from the Orient
You undertone of rivers, roar of pouring cataracts
You sounds from distant guns with galloping cavalry
Echoes of camps with all the different bugle-calls
Trooping tumultuous, filling the midnight late, bending me powerless
Entering my lonesome slumber-chamber, why have you seiz’d me?

2

Come forward O my soul, and let the rest retire
Listen, lose not, it is toward thee they tend
Parting the midnight, entering my slumber-chamber
For thee they sing and dance O soul.

A festival song
The duet of the bridegroom and the bride, a marriage-march
With lips of love, and hearts of lovers fill’d to the brim with love
The red-flush’d cheeks and perfumes, the cortege swarming full of
friendly faces young and old
To flutes’ clear notes and sounding harps’ cantabile.

Now loud approaching drums
Victoria! seest thou in powder-smoke the banners torn but flying? the
rout of the baffled?
Hearest those shouts of a conquering army?
(Ah soul, the sobs of women, the wounded groaning in agony)

The hiss and crackle of flames, the blacken'd ruins, the embers of cities
 The dirge and desolation of mankind.)
 Now airs antique and mediaeval fill me
 I see and hear old harpers with their harps at Welsh festivals
 I hear the minnesingers singing their lays of love
 I hear the minstrels, gleemen, troubadours, of the middle ages.

Now the great organ sounds
 Tremulous, while underneath, (as the hid footholds of the earth
 On which arising rest, and leaping forth depend
 All shapes of beauty, grace and strength, all hues we know
 Green blades of grass and warbling birds, children that gambol and play,
 the clouds of heaven above,)
 The strong base stands, and its pulsations intermits not
 Bathing, supporting, merging all the rest, maternity of all the rest
 And with it every instrument in multitudes
 The players playing, all the world's musicians
 The solemn hymns and masses rousing adoration
 All passionate heart-chants, sorrowful appeals
 The measureless sweet vocalists of ages
 And for their solvent setting earth's own diapason
 Of winds and woods and mighty ocean waves
 A new composite orchestra, binder of years and climes, ten-fold renewer
 As of the far-back days the poets tell, the Paradiso
 The straying thence, the separation long, but now the wandering done
 The journey done, the journeyman come home
 And man and art with Nature fused again.

Tutti! for earth and heaven;
 (The Almighty leader now for once has signal'd with his wand.)
 The manly strophe of the husbands of the world
 And all the wives responding.

The tongues of violins
 (I think O tongues ye tell this heart, that cannot tell itself
 This brooding yearning heart, that cannot tell itself.)

3

Ah from a little child
 Thou knowest soul how to me all sounds became music
 My mother's voice in lullaby or hymn
 (The voice, O tender voices, memory's loving voices
 Last miracle of all, O dearest mother's, sister's, voices;)
 The rain, the growing corn, the breeze among the long-leav'd corn
 The measur'd sea-surf beating on the sand
 The twittering bird, the hawk's sharp scream
 The wild-fowl's notes at night as flying low migrating north or south
 The psalm in the country church or mid the clustering trees, the open air
 camp-meeting
 The fiddler in the tavern, the glee, the long-strung sailor-song

The lowing cattle, bleating sheep, the crowing cock at dawn.

All songs of current lands come sounding round me
 The German airs of friendship, wine and love
 Irish ballads, merry jigs and dances, English warbles
 Chansons of France, Scotch tunes, and o'er the rest
 Italia's peerless compositions.

Across the stage with pallor on her face, yet lurid passion
 Stalks Norma brandishing the dagger in her hand.

I see poor crazed Lucia's eyes' unnatural gleam
 Her hair down her back falls loose and dishevel'd.

I see where Ernani walking the bridal garden
 Amid the scent of night-roses, radiant, holding his bride by the hand
 Hears the infernal call, the death-pledge of the horn.

To crossing swords and gray hairs bared to heaven
 The clear electric base and baritone of the world
 The trombone duo, Libertad forever!

From Spanish chestnut trees' dense shade
 By old and heavy convent walls a wailing song
 Song of lost love, the torch of youth and life quenched in despair
 Song of the dying swan, Fernando's heart is breaking.

Awaking from her woes at last retriev'd Amina sings
 Copious as stars and glad as morning light the torrents of her joy.

(The teeming lady comes
 The lustrious orb, Venus contralto, the blooming mother
 Sister of loftiest gods, Alboni's self I hear.)

4

I hear those odes, symphonies, operas
 I hear in the William Tell the music of an aroused and angry people
 I hear Meyerbeer's Huguenots, the Prophet, or Robert
 Gounod's Faust, or Mozart's Don Juan.

I hear the dance-music of all nations
 The waltz, some delicious measure, lapsing, bathing me in bliss
 The bolero to tinkling guitars and clattering castanets.

I see religious dances old and new
 I hear the sound of the Hebrew lyre
 I see the crusaders marching bearing the cross on high, to the martial
 clang of cymbals

I hear dervishes monotonously chanting, interspers'd with frantic shouts,
 as they spin around turning always towards Mecca

I see the rapt religious dances of the Persians and the Arabs
 Again, at Eleusis, home of Ceres, I see the modern Greeks dancing
 I hear them clapping their hands as they bend their bodies
 I hear the metrical shuffling of their feet.

I see again the wild old Corybantian dance, the performers wounding
each other
I see the Roman youth to the shrill sound of flageolets throwing and
catching their weapons
As they fall on their knees and rise again.
I hear from the Mussulman mosque the muezzin calling
I see the worshippers within, nor form nor sermon, argument nor word
But silent, strange, devout, rais'd, glowing heads, ecstatic faces.
I hear the Egyptian harp of many strings
The primitive chants of the Nile boatmen
The sacred imperial hymns of China
To the delicate sounds of the king, (the stricken wood and stone,)
Or to Hindu flutes and the fretting twang of the vina
A band of bayaderes.

5

Now Asia, Africa leave me, Europe seizing inflates me
To organs huge and bands I hear as from vast concourses of voices
Luther's strong hymn Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott
Rossini's Stabat Mater dolorosa
Or floating in some high cathedral dim with gorgeous color'd windows
The passionate Agnus Dei or Gloria in Excelsis.
Composers! mighty maestros!
And you, sweet singers of old lands, soprani, tenori, bassi!
To you a new bard caroling in the West
Obeisant sends his love.

(Such led to thee O soul
All senses, shows and objects, lead to thee
But now it seems to me sound leads o'er all the rest.)
I hear the annual singing of the children in St. Paul's cathedral
Or, under the high roof of some colossal hall, the symphonies
oratorios of Beethoven, Handel, or Haydn
The Creation in billows of godhood laves me.
Give me to hold all sounds, (I madly struggling cry,)
Fill me with all the voices of the universe
Endow me with their throbbings, Nature's also
The tempests, waters, winds, operas and chants, marches and dances
Utter, pour in, for I would take them all!

6

Then I woke softly
And pausing, questioning awhile the music of my dream
And questioning all those reminiscences, the tempest in its fury
And all the songs of sopranos and tenors
And those rapt oriental dances of religious fervor

And the sweet varied instruments, and the diapason of organs
And all the artless plaints of love and grief and death
I said to my silent curious soul out of the bed of the slumber-chamber
Come, for I have found the clew I sought so long
Let us go forth refresh'd amid the day
Cheerfully tallying life, walking the world, the real
Nourish'd henceforth by our celestial dream.

And I said, moreover
Haply what thou hast heard O soul was not the sound of winds
Nor dream of raging storm, nor sea-hawk's flapping wings nor harsh
scream
Nor vocalism of sun-bright Italy
Nor German organ majestic, nor vast concourse of voices, nor layers
of harmonies
Nor strophes of husbands and wives, nor sound of marching soldiers
Nor flutes, nor harps, nor the bugle-calls of camps
But to a new rhythmus fitted for thee
Poems bridging the way from Life to Death, vaguely wafted in night air,
uncaught, unwritten
Which let us go forth in the bold day and write.

BOOK XXVI

PASSAGE TO INDIA

1

Singing my days
Singing the great achievements of the present
Singing the strong light works of engineers
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World the east the Suez canal
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd
The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires;
Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry with thee O soul
The Past! the Past! the Past!
The Past—the dark unfathom'd retrospect!
The teeming gulf—the sleepers and the shadows!
The past—the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

2

Passage O soul to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.
Not you alone proud truths of the world
Nor you alone ye facts of modern science
But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables
The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams
The deep diving bibles and legends
The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known
mounting to heaven!

You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold!

Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams!

You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest!

You too with joy I sing.

Passage to India!

Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?

The earth to be spann'd, connected by network

The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage

The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near

The lands to be welded together.

A worship new I sing

You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours

You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours

You, not for trade or transportation only

But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul.

3

Passage to India!

Lo soul for thee of tableaus twain

I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd

I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Engenie's leading the van

I mark from on deck the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand
in the distance

I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd

The gigantic dredging machines.

In one again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same.)

I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad surmounting every barrier

I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte carrying
freight and passengers

I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle

I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world

I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks in grotesque shapes the buttes

I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions, the barren, colorless sage-
deserts

I see in glimpses afar or towering immediately above me the great moun-
tains, I see the Wind river and the Wahsatch mountains

I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest, I pass the
Promontory, I ascend the Nevadas

I scan the noble Elk mountain and wind around its base

I see the Humboldt range, I thread the valley and cross the river

I see the clear waters of lake Tahoe, I see forests of majestic pines

Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold enchanting mi-
rages of waters and meadows

Marking through these and after all, in duplicate slender lines
 Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel
 Tying the Eastern to the Western sea
 The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese thy dream! thy dream!

Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave
 The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream.)

4

Passage to India!

Struggles of many a captain, tales of many a sailor dead
 Over my mood stealing and spreading they come
 Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.

Along all history, down the slopes
 As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to the surface rising
 A ceaseless thought, a varied train—lo, soul, to thee, thy sight they rise
 The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions;
 Again Vasco de Gama sails forth
 Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's compass
 Lands found and nations born, thou born America
 For purpose vast, man's long probation fill'd
 Thou rondure of the world at last accomplish'd.

5

O vast Rondure, swimming in space
 Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty
 Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness
 Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and countless stars
 above

Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, mountains, trees
 With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention
 Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending radiating
 Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them
 Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless explorations
 With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts
 With that sad incessant refrain, Wherefore unsatisfied soul? and
 Whither O mocking life?

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?

Who Justify these restless explorations?

Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Who bind it to us? what is this separate Nature so unnatural?

What is this earth to our affections? (unloving earth, without a throb to
 answer ours

Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out

Perhaps even now the time has arrived.

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
 After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work
 After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist,
 ethnologist

Finally shall come the poet worthy that name
 The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

Then not your deeds only O voyagers, O scientists and inventors shall be
 justified

All these hearts as of fretted children shall be sooth'd
 All affection shall be fully responded to, the secret shall be told
 All these separations and gaps shall be taken up and hook'd and link'd
 together

The whole earth, this cold, impassive, voiceless earth, shall be completely
 Justified

Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish'd and compacted by the
 true son of God, the poet

(He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the mountains
 He shall double the cape of Good Hope to some purpose.)
 Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more
 The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

6

Year at whose wide-flung door I sing!

Year of the purpose accomplish'd!

Year of the marriage of continents, climates and oceans!

(No mere doge of Venice now wedding the Adriatic,)
 I see O year in you the vast terraqueous globe given and giving all
 Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to the New World
 The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding a festival garland
 As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

Passage to India!

Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man
 The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

Lo soul, the retrospect brought forward
 The old, most populous, wealthiest of earth's lands
 The streams of the Indus and the Ganges and their many affluents
 (I my shores of America walking to-day behold, resumming all,)
 The tale of Alexander on his warlike marches suddenly dying
 On one side China and on the other side Persia and Arabia
 To the south the great seas and the bay of Bengal
 The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions, castes
 Old occult Brahma interminably far back, the tender and junior Buddha
 Central and southern empires and all their belongings, possessors
 The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe

The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians, Byzantium, the
 Arabs, Portuguese
 The first travelers famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta the Moor
 Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita, blanks to be fill'd
 The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never at rest
 Thyself O soul that will not brook a challenge.

The mediaeval navigators rise before me
 The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enterprise
 Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of the earth in spring
 The sunset splendor of chivalry declining.

And who art thou sad shade?
 Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary
 With majestic limbs and pious beaming eyes
 Spreading around with every look of thine a golden world
 Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

As the chief histrion
 Down to the footlights walks in some great scena
 Dominating the rest I see the Admiral himself
 (History's type of courage, action, faith,)
 Behold him sail from Palos leading his little fleet
 His voyage behold, his return, his great fame
 His misfortunes, calumniators, behold him a prisoner, chain'd
 Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious in time I stand, noting the efforts of heroes
 Is the deferment long? bitter the slander, poverty, death?
 Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the ground? lo, to God's due oc-
 casion
 Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms
 And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

7

Passage indeed O soul to primal thought
 Not lands and seas alone, thy own clear freshness
 The young maturity of brood and bloom
 To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me
 Thy circumnavigation of the world begin
 Of man, the voyage of his mind's return
 To reason's early paradise
 Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions
 Again with fair creation.

8

O we can wait no longer
 We too take ship O soul
 Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas

Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail
 Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
 Caroling free, singing our song of God
 Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

With laugh and many a kiss
 (Let others deprecate, let others weep for sin, remorse, humiliation,)
 O soul thou pleasest me, I thee.

Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in God
 But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee
 Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night
 Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters
 flowing

Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite
 Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over
 Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee
 I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent
 Nameless, the fibre and the breath
 Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them
 Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving
 Thou moral, spiritual fountain–affection’s source–thou reservoir
 (O pensive soul of me–O thirst unsatisfied–waitest not there?
 Waitest not haply for us somewhere there the Comrade perfect?)
 Thou pulse–thou motive of the stars, suns, systems
 That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious
 Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space
 How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how speak, if, out of
 myself

I could not launch, to those, superior universes?
 Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God
 At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death
 But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me
 And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs
 Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death
 And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns
 Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;
 What love than thine and ours could wider amplify?
 What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours O soul?
 What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity, perfection, strength?
 What cheerful willingness for others’ sake to give up all?
 For others’ sake to suffer all?
 Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the time achiev’d
 The seas all cross’d, weather’d the capes, the voyage done
 Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain’d

As fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

9

Passage to more than India!

Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
O soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like those?
Disportest thou on waters such as those?
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas!

Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling problems!

You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that, living, never reach'd you.

Passage to more than India!

O secret of the earth and sky!

Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and rivers!

Of you O woods and fields! of you strong mountains of my land!

Of you O prairies! of you gray rocks!

O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!

O day and night, passage to you!

O sun and moon and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!

Passage to you!

Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!

Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!

Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!

Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?

Have we not grovel'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere
brutes?

Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?

Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only

Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me

For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go

And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!

O farther farther sail!

O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?

O farther, farther, farther sail!

BOOK XXVII

PRAYER OF COLUMBUS

A batter'd, wreck'd old man
Thrown on this savage shore, far, far from home
Pent by the sea and dark rebellious brows, twelve dreary months
Sore, stiff with many toils, sicken'd and nigh to death
I take my way along the island's edge
Venting a heavy heart.

I am too full of woe!

Haply I may not live another day;
I cannot rest O God, I cannot eat or drink or sleep
Till I put forth myself, my prayer, once more to Thee
Breathe, bathe myself once more in Thee, commune with Thee
Report myself once more to Thee.

Thou knowest my years entire, my life
My long and crowded life of active work, not adoration merely;
Thou knowest the prayers and vigils of my youth
Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and visionary meditations
Thou knowest how before I commenced I devoted all to come to Thee
Thou knowest I have in age ratified all those vows and strictly kept them
Thou knowest I have not once lost nor faith nor ecstasy in Thee
In shackles, prison'd, in disgrace, repining not
Accepting all from Thee, as duly come from Thee.

All my emprises have been fill'd with Thee
My speculations, plans, begun and carried on in thoughts of Thee
Sailing the deep or journeying the land for Thee;
Intentions, purports, aspirations mine, leaving results to Thee.

O I am sure they really came from Thee
The urge, the ardor, the unconquerable will
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words
A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in sleep
These sped me on.

By me and these the work so far accomplish'd
By me earth's elder cloy'd and stifled lands uncloy'd, unloos'd
By me the hemispheres rounded and tied, the unknown to the known.

The end I know not, it is all in Thee
Or small or great I know not—haply what broad fields, what lands
Haply the brutish measureless human undergrowth I know
Transplanted there may rise to stature, knowledge worthy Thee
Haply the swords I know may there indeed be turn'd to reaping-tools
Haply the lifeless cross I know, Europe's dead cross, may bud and blossom there.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand;
That Thou O God my life hast lighted
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee
Light rare untellable, lighting the very light
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;
For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees
Old, poor, and paralyzed, I thank Thee.

My terminus near
The clouds already closing in upon me
The voyage balk'd, the course disputed, lost
I yield my ships to Thee.

My hands, my limbs grow nerveless
My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd
Let the old timbers part, I will not part
I will cling fast to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me
Thee, Thee at least I know.

Is it the prophet's thought I speak, or am I raving?
What do I know of life? what of myself?
I know not even my own work past or present
Dim ever-shifting guesses of it spread before me
Of newer better worlds, their mighty parturition
Mocking, perplexing me.

And these things I see suddenly, what mean they?
As if some miracle, some hand divine unseal'd my eyes
Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky
And on the distant waves sail countless ships
And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

BOOK XXVIII

THE SLEEPERS

1

I wander all night in my vision
Stepping with light feet, swiftly and noiselessly stepping and stopping
Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers
Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted, contradictory
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.

How solemn they look there, stretch'd and still
How quiet they breathe, the little children in their cradles.

The wretched features of ennuyes, the white features of corpses, the livid
faces of drunkards, the sick-gray faces of onanists
The gash'd bodies on battle-fields, the insane in their
strong-door'd rooms, the sacred idiots, the new-born emerging from
gates, and the dying emerging from gates
The night pervades them and infolds them.

The married couple sleep calmly in their bed, he with his palm on
the hip of the wife, and she with her palm on the hip of the husband
The sisters sleep lovingly side by side in their bed
The men sleep lovingly side by side in theirs
And the mother sleeps with her little child carefully wrapt.

The blind sleep, and the deaf and dumb sleep
The prisoner sleeps well in the prison, the runaway son sleeps
The murderer that is to be hung next day, how does he sleep?
And the murder'd person, how does he sleep?
The female that loves unrequited sleeps
And the male that loves unrequited sleeps
The head of the money-maker that plotted all day sleeps
And the enraged and treacherous dispositions, all, all sleep.

I stand in the dark with drooping eyes by the worst-suffering and the
most restless
I pass my hands soothingly to and fro a few inches from them

The restless sink in their beds, they fitfully sleep.

Now I pierce the darkness, new beings appear

The earth recedes from me into the night

I saw that it was beautiful, and I see that what is not the earth is beautiful.

I go from bedside to bedside, I sleep close with the other sleepers each in
turn

I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers

And I become the other dreamers.

I am a dance—play up there! the fit is whirling me fast!

I am the ever-laughing—it is new moon and twilight

I see the hiding of douceurs, I see nimble ghosts whichever way look

Cache and cache again deep in the ground and sea, and where it is neither
ground nor sea.

Well do they do their jobs those journeymen divine

Only from me can they hide nothing, and would not if they could

I reckon I am their boss and they make me a pet besides

And surround me and lead me and run ahead when I walk

To lift their cunning covers to signify me with stretch'd arms, and resume
the way;

Onward we move, a gay gang of blackguards! with mirth-shouting mu-
sic and wild-flapping pennants of joy!

I am the actor, the actress, the voter, the politician

The emigrant and the exile, the criminal that stood in the box

He who has been famous and he who shall be famous after to-day

The stammerer, the well-form'd person, the wasted or feeble person.

I am she who adorn'd herself and folded her hair expectantly

My truant lover has come, and it is dark.

Double yourself and receive me darkness

Receive me and my lover too, he will not let me go without him.

I roll myself upon you as upon a bed, I resign myself to the dusk.

He whom I call answers me and takes the place of my lover

He rises with me silently from the bed.

Darkness, you are gentler than my lover, his flesh was sweaty and pant-
ing

I feel the hot moisture yet that he left me.

My hands are spread forth, I pass them in all directions

I would sound up the shadowy shore to which you are journeying.

Be careful darkness! already what was it touch'd me?

I thought my lover had gone, else darkness and he are one

I hear the heart-beat, I follow, I fade away.

I descend my western course, my sinews are flaccid

Perfume and youth course through me and I am their wake.

It is my face yellow and wrinkled instead of the old woman's
I sit low in a straw-bottom chair and carefully darn my grandson's
stockings.

It is I too, the sleepless widow looking out on the winter midnight
I see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid earth.

A shroud I see and I am the shroud, I wrap a body and lie in the coffin
It is dark here under ground, it is not evil or pain here, it is
blank here, for reasons.

(It seems to me that every thing in the light and air ought to be happy
Whoever is not in his coffin and the dark grave let him know he has
enough.)

3

I see a beautiful gigantic swimmer swimming naked through the eddies
of the sea

His brown hair lies close and even to his head, he strikes out with coura-
geous arms, he urges himself with his legs

I see his white body, I see his undaunted eyes

I hate the swift-running eddies that would dash him head-foremost on
the rocks.

What are you doing you ruffianly red-trickled waves?

Will you kill the courageous giant? will you kill him in the prime of his
middle age?

Steady and long he struggles

He is baffled, bang'd, bruise'd, he holds out while his strength holds out

The slapping eddies are spotted with his blood, they bear him away they
roll him, swing him, turn him

His beautiful body is borne in the circling eddies, it is continually bruise'd
on rocks

Swiftly and ought of sight is borne the brave corpse.

4

I turn but do not extricate myself

Confused, a past-reading, another, but with darkness yet.

The beach is cut by the razory ice-wind, the wreck-guns sound

The tempest lulls, the moon comes floundering through the drifts.

I look where the ship helplessly heads end on, I hear the burst as
she strikes, I hear the howls of dismay, they grow fainter and fainter.

I cannot aid with my wringing fingers

I can but rush to the surf and let it drench me and freeze upon me.

I search with the crowd, not one of the company is wash'd to us alive
In the morning I help pick up the dead and lay them in rows in a barn.

5

Now of the older war-days, the defeat at Brooklyn
Washington stands inside the lines, he stands on the intrench'd hills amid
a crowd of officers.

His face is cold and damp, he cannot repress the weeping drops
He lifts the glass perpetually to his eyes, the color is blanch'd from his
cheeks
He sees the slaughter of the southern braves confided to him by their
parents.

The same at last and at last when peace is declared
He stands in the room of the old tavern, the well-belov'd soldiers all pass
through
The officers speechless and slow draw near in their turns
The chief encircles their necks with his arm and kisses them on the cheek
He kisses lightly the wet cheeks one after another, he shakes hands and
bids good-by to the army.

6

Now what my mother told me one day as we sat at dinner together
Of when she was a nearly grown girl living home with her parents on the
old homestead.

A red squaw came one breakfast-time to the old homestead
On her back she carried a bundle of rushes for rush-bottoming chairs
Her hair, straight, shiny, coarse, black, profuse, half-envelop'd her face
Her step was free and elastic, and her voice sounded exquisitely as she
spoke.

My mother look'd in delight and amazement at the stranger
She look'd at the freshness of her tall-borne face and full and pliant limbs
The more she look'd upon her she loved her
Never before had she seen such wonderful beauty and purity
She made her sit on a bench by the jamb of the fireplace, she cook'd food
for her
She had no work to give her, but she gave her remembrance and fond-
ness.

The red squaw staid all the forenoon, and toward the middle of the after-
noon she went away
O my mother was loth to have her go away
All the week she thought of her, she watch'd for her many a month
She remember'd her many a winter and many a summer
But the red squaw never came nor was heard of there again.

7

A show of the summer softness—a contact of something unseen—an amour
of the light and air
I am jealous and overwhelm'd with friendliness
And will go gallivant with the light and air myself.
O love and summer, you are in the dreams and in me

Autumn and winter are in the dreams, the farmer goes with his thrift
The droves and crops increase, the barns are well-fill'd.

Elements merge in the night, ships make tacks in the dreams
The sailor sails, the exile returns home
The fugitive returns unharm'd, the immigrant is back beyond months
and years

The poor Irishman lives in the simple house of his childhood with the
well known neighbors and faces

They warmly welcome him, he is barefoot again, he forgets he is well off
The Dutchman voyages home, and the Scotchman and Welshman voyage
home, and the native of the Mediterranean voyages home

To every port of England, France, Spain, enter well-fill'd ships
The Swiss foots it toward his hills, the Prussian goes his way, the
Hungarian his way, and the Pole his way
The Swede returns, and the Dane and Norwegian return.

The homeward bound and the outward bound
The beautiful lost swimmer, the ennuye, the onanist, the female that
loves unrequited, the money-maker
The actor and actress, those through with their parts and those waiting
to commence

The affectionate boy, the husband and wife, the voter, the nominee that is
chosen and the nominee that has fail'd

The great already known and the great any time after to-day
The stammerer, the sick, the perfect-form'd, the homely
The criminal that stood in the box, the judge that sat and sentenced him,
the fluent lawyers, the jury, the audience

The laugher and weeper, the dancer, the midnight widow, the red squaw
The consumptive, the erysipalite, the idiot, he that is wrong'd
The antipodes, and every one between this and them in the dark
I swear they are averaged now—one is no better than the other
The night and sleep have liken'd them and restored them.

I swear they are all beautiful
Every one that sleeps is beautiful, every thing in the dim light is beautiful
The wildest and bloodiest is over, and all is peace.

Peace is always beautiful
The myth of heaven indicates peace and night.

The myth of heaven indicates the soul
The soul is always beautiful, it appears more or it appears less, it comes
or it lags behind

It comes from its embower'd garden and looks pleasantly on itself and
encloses the world

Perfect and clean the genitals previously jetting, and perfect and clean the
womb cohering

The head well-grown proportion'd and plumb, and the bowels and joints
proportion'd and plumb.

The soul is always beautiful
 The universe is duly in order, every thing is in its place
 What has arrived is in its place and what waits shall be in its place
 The twisted skull waits, the watery or rotten blood waits
 The child of the glutton or venerealee waits long, and the child of
 the drunkard waits long, and the drunkard himself waits long
 The sleepers that lived and died wait, the far advanced are to go on in
 their turns, and the far behind are to come on in their turns
 The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall flow and unite—they
 unite now.

8

The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed
 They flow hand in hand over the whole earth from east to west as they
 lie unclothed
 The Asiatic and African are hand in hand, the European and American
 are hand in hand
 Learn'd and unlearn'd are hand in hand, and male and female are hand
 in hand
 The bare arm of the girl crosses the bare breast of her lover, they press
 close without lust, his lips press her neck
 The father holds his grown or ungrown son in his arms with measureless
 love, and the son holds the father in his arms with measureless love
 The white hair of the mother shines on the white wrist of the daughter
 The breath of the boy goes with the breath of the man, friend is inarm'd
 by friend
 The scholar kisses the teacher and the teacher kisses the scholar the
 wrong 'd made right
 The call of the slave is one with the master's call, and the master salutes
 the slave
 The felon steps forth from the prison, the insane becomes sane, the suf-
 fering of sick persons is reliev'd
 The sweatings and fevers stop, the throat that was unsound is sound the
 lungs of the consumptive are resumed, the poor distress'd head is free
 The joints of the rheumatic move as smoothly as ever, and smoother than
 ever
 Stiflings and passages open, the paralyzed become supple
 The swell'd and convuls'd and congested awake to themselves in condi-
 tion
 They pass the invigoration of the night and the chemistry of the night,
 and awake.

I too pass from the night
 I stay a while away O night, but I return to you again and love you.

Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you?
 I am not afraid, I have been well brought forward by you
 I love the rich running day, but I do not desert her in whom I lay so long
 I know not how I came of you and I know not where I go with you, but

I know I came well and shall go well.

I will stop only a time with the night, and rise betimes

I will duly pass the day O my mother, and duly return to you.

TRANSPOSITIONS

Let the reformers descend from the stands where they are forever
bawling—let an idiot or insane person appear on each of the stands;

Let judges and criminals be transposed—let the prison-keepers be put in
prison—let those that were prisoners take the keys;

Let them that distrust birth and death lead the rest.

BOOK XXIX

TO THINK OF TIME

1

To think of time—of all that retrospection
To think of to-day, and the ages continued henceforward.

Have you guess'd you yourself would not continue?
Have you dreaded these earth-beetles?
Have you fear'd the future would be nothing to you?
Is to-day nothing? is the beginningless past nothing?
If the future is nothing they are just as surely nothing.

To think that the sun rose in the east—that men and women were
flexible, real, alive—that every thing was alive
To think that you and I did not see, feel, think, nor bear our part
To think that we are now here and bear our part.

2

Not a day passes, not a minute or second without an accouchement
Not a day passes, not a minute or second without a corpse.

The dull nights go over and the dull days also
The soreness of lying so much in bed goes over
The physician after long putting off gives the silent and terrible look for
an answer

The children come hurried and weeping, and the brothers and sisters are
sent for

Medicines stand unused on the shelf, (the camphor-smell has long per-
vaded the rooms,)

The faithful hand of the living does not desert the hand of the dying
The twitching lips press lightly on the forehead of the dying
The breath ceases and the pulse of the heart ceases
The corpse stretches on the bed and the living look upon it
It is palpable as the living are palpable.

The living look upon the corpse with their eyesight

But without eyesight lingers a different living and looks curiously
on the corpse.

3

To think the thought of death merged in the thought of materials
To think of all these wonders of city and country, and others taking
great interest in them, and we taking no interest in them.

To think how eager we are in building our houses
To think others shall be just as eager, and we quite indifferent.

(I see one building the house that serves him a few years, or seventy or
eighty years at most

I see one building the house that serves him longer than that.)

Slow-moving and black lines creep over the whole earth—they never
cease—they are the burial lines

He that was President was buried, and he that is now President shall
surely be buried.

4

A reminiscence of the vulgar fate
A frequent sample of the life and death of workmen
Each after his kind.

Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf, posh and ice in the river
half-frozen mud in the streets

A gray discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight of December
A hearse and stages, the funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver the
cortege mostly drivers.

Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the death-bell
The gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave is halted at, the living alight, the
hearse unclases

The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is laid on the coffin,
the earth is swiftly shovel'd in

The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence

A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done

He is decently put away—is there any thing more?

He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd, not bad-looking
Ready with life or death for a friend, fond of women, gambled, ate hearty,
drank hearty

Had known what it was to be flush, grew low-spirited toward the last,
sicken'd, was help'd by a contribution

Died, aged forty-one years—and that was his funeral.

Thumb extended, finger uplifted, apron, cape, gloves, strap wet-weather
clothes, whip carefully chosen

Boss, spotter, starter, hostler, somebody loafing on you, you loafing on
somebody, headway, man before and man behind

Good day's work, bad day's work, pet stock, mean stock, first out last
out, turning-in at night

To think that these are so much and so nigh to other drivers, and he there
takes no interest in them.

5

The markets, the government, the working-man's wages, to think what
account they are through our nights and days
To think that other working-men will make just as great account of them,
yet we make little or no account.

The vulgar and the refined, what you call sin and what you call goodness,
to think how wide a difference
To think the difference will still continue to others, yet we lie beyond the
difference.

To think how much pleasure there is
Do you enjoy yourself in the city? or engaged in business? or planning a
nomination and election? or with your wife and family?
Or with your mother and sisters? or in womanly housework? or the
beautiful maternal cares?

These also flow onward to others, you and I flow onward
But in due time you and I shall take less interest in them.

Your farm, profits, crops—to think how engross'd you are
To think there will still be farms, profits, crops, yet for you of what avail?

6

What will be will be well, for what is is well
To take interest is well, and not to take interest shall be well.

The domestic joys, the dally housework or business, the building of
houses, are not phantasms, they have weight, form, location
Farms, profits, crops, markets, wages, government, are none of them
phantasms

The difference between sin and goodness is no delusion
The earth is not an echo, man and his life and all the things of his life are
well-consider'd.

You are not thrown to the winds, you gather certainly and safely
around yourself
Yourself! yourself!. yourself, for ever and ever!

7

It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your mother and father, it is
to identify you

It is not that you should be undecided, but that you should be decided
Something long preparing and formless is arrived and form'd in you
You are henceforth secure, whatever comes or goes.

The threads that were spun are gather'd, the wet crosses the warp
the pattern is systematic.

The preparations have every one been justified

The orchestra have sufficiently tuned their instruments, the baton has given the signal.

The guest that was coming, he waited long, he is now housed
He is one of those who are beautiful and happy, he is one of those that to look upon and be with is enough.

The law of the past cannot be eluded
The law of the present and future cannot be eluded
The law of the living cannot be eluded, it is eternal
The law of promotion and transformation cannot be eluded
The law of heroes and good-doers cannot be eluded
The law of drunkards, informers, mean persons, not one iota thereof can be eluded.

8

Slow moving and black lines go ceaselessly over the earth
Northerner goes carried and Southerner goes carried, and they on the Atlantic side and they on the Pacific
And they between, and all through the Mississippi country, and all over the earth.

The great masters and kosmos are well as they go, the heroes and good-doers are well
The known leaders and inventors and the rich owners and pious and distinguish'd may be well
But there is more account than that, there is strict account of all.

The interminable hordes of the ignorant and wicked are not nothing
The barbarians of Africa and Asia are not nothing
The perpetual successions of shallow people are not nothing as they go.

Of and in all these things
I have dream'd that we are not to be changed so much, nor the law of us changed

I have dream'd that heroes and good-doers shall be under the present and past law
And that murderers, drunkards, liars, shall be under the present and past law

For I have dream'd that the law they are under now is enough.

And I have dream'd that the purpose and essence of the known life the transient

Is to form and decide identity for the unknown life, the permanent.

If all came but to ashes of dung
If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum! for we are betray'd
Then indeed suspicion of death.

Do you suspect death? if I were to suspect death I should die now
Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well-suited toward annihilation?

Pleasantly and well-suited I walk

Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good
The whole universe indicates that it is good
The past and the present indicate that it is good.

How beautiful and perfect are the animals!

How perfect the earth, and the minutest thing upon it!

What is called good is perfect, and what is called bad is just as perfect
The vegetables and minerals are all perfect, and the imponderable fluids
perfect;

Slowly and surely they have pass'd on to this, and slowly and surely they
yet pass on.

9

I swear I think now that every thing without exception has an eternal
soul!

The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the sea have! the
animals!

I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!

That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous float is for it, and the
cohering is for it!

And all preparation is for it—and identity is for it—and life and materials
are altogether for it!

BOOK XXX. WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH

DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL

Darest thou now O soul
Walk out with me toward the unknown region
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?
No map there, nor guide
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.
I know it not O soul
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.
Till when the ties loosen
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.
Then we burst forth, we float
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil O soul.

WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH

Whispers of heavenly death murmur'd I hear
Labial gossip of night, sibilant chorals
Footsteps gently ascending, mystical breezes wafted soft and low
Ripples of unseen rivers, tides of a current flowing, forever flowing
(Or is it the plashing of tears? the measureless waters of human tears?)
I see, just see skyward, great cloud-masses
Mournfully slowly they roll, silently swelling and mixing
With at times a half-dimm'd sadden'd far-off star
Appearing and disappearing.
(Some parturition rather, some solemn immortal birth;
On the frontiers to eyes impenetrable
Some soul is passing over.)

CHANTING THE SQUARE DEIFIC

1

Chanting the square deific, out of the One advancing, out of the sides
 Out of the old and new, out of the square entirely divine
 Solid, four-sided, (all the sides needed,) from this side Jehovah am I
 Old Brahm I, and I Saturnius am;
 Not Time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any
 Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judgments
 As the Earth, the Father, the brown old Kronos, with laws
 Aged beyond computation, yet never new, ever with those mighty laws
 rolling
 Relentless I forgive no man—whoever sins dies—I will have that man's life;
 Therefore let none expect mercy—have the seasons, gravitation, the
 appointed days, mercy? no more have I
 But as the seasons and gravitation, and as all the appointed days
 that forgive not
 I dispense from this side judgments inexorable without the least remorse.

2

Consolator most mild, the promis'd one advancing
 With gentle hand extended, the mightier God am I
 Foretold by prophets and poets in their most rapt prophecies and poems
 From this side, lo! the Lord Christ gazes—lo! Hermes I—lo! mine is Her-
 cules' face
 All sorrow, labor, suffering, I, tallying it, absorb in myself
 Many times have I been rejected, taunted, put in prison, and crucified,
 and many times shall be again
 All the world have I given up for my dear brothers' and sisters' sake, for
 the soul's sake
 Wandering my way through the homes of men, rich or poor, with the kiss
 of affection
 For I am affection, I am the cheer-bringing God, with hope and all-
 enclosing charity
 With indulgent words as to children, with fresh and sane words, mine
 only
 Young and strong I pass knowing well I am destin'd myself to an early
 death;
 But my charity has no death—my wisdom dies not, neither early nor late
 And my sweet love bequeath'd here and elsewhere never dies.

3

Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt
 Comrade of criminals, brother of slaves
 Crafty, despised, a drudge, ignorant
 With sudra face and worn brow, black, but in the depths of my heart
 proud as any

Lifted now and always against whoever scorning assumes to rule me
 Morose, full of guile, full of reminiscences, brooding, with many wiles
 (Though it was thought I was baffled, and dispel'd, and my wiles done,
 but that will never be.)
 Defiant, I, Satan, still live, still utter words, in new lands duly appearing,
 (and old ones also.)
 Permanent here from my side, warlike, equal with any, real as any
 Nor time nor change shall ever change me or my words.

4

Santa Spirita, breather, life
 Beyond the light, lighter than light
 Beyond the flames of hell, joyous, leaping easily above hell
 Beyond Paradise, perfumed solely with mine own perfume
 Including all life on earth, touching, including God, including
 Saviour and Satan
 Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me what were all? what were God?)
 Essence of forms, life of the real identities, permanent, positive
 (namely the unseen.)
 Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of man, I, the general
 soul
 Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid
 Breathe my breath also through these songs.

OF HIM I LOVE DAY AND NIGHT

Of him I love day and night I dream'd I heard he was dead
 And I dream'd I went where they had buried him I love, but he was not
 in that place
 And I dream'd I wander'd searching among burial-places to find him
 And I found that every place was a burial-place;
 The houses full of life were equally full of death, (this house is now,)
 The streets, the shipping, the places of amusement, the Chicago
 Boston, Philadelphia, the Mannahatta, were as full of the dead as
 of the living
 And fuller, O vastly fuller of the dead than of the living;
 And what I dream'd I will henceforth tell to every person and age
 And I stand henceforth bound to what I dream'd
 And now I am willing to disregard burial-places and dispense with them
 And if the memorials of the dead were put up indifferently everywhere
 even in the room where I eat or sleep, I should be satisfied
 And if the corpse of any one I love, or if my own corpse, be duly render'd
 to powder and pour'd in the sea, I shall be satisfied
 Or if it be distributed to the winds I shall be satisfied.

YET, YET, YE DOWNCAST HOURS

Yet, yet, ye downcast hours, I know ye also
Weights of lead, how ye clog and cling at my ankles
Earth to a chamber of mourning turns—I hear the o'erweening, mocking
voice
Matter is conqueror—matter, triumphant only, continues onward.
Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me
The call of my nearest lover, putting forth, alarm'd, uncertain
The sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me
Come tell me where I am speeding, tell me my destination.
I understand your anguish, but I cannot help you
I approach, hear, behold, the sad mouth, the look out of the eyes your
mute inquiry
Whither I go from the bed I recline on, come tell me,—
Old age, alarm'd, uncertain—a young woman's voice, appealing to me for
comfort;
A young man's voice, Shall I not escape?

AS IF A PHANTOM CARESS'D ME

As if a phantom caress'd me
I thought I was not alone walking here by the shore;
But the one I thought was with me as now I walk by the shore, the one I
loved that caress'd me
As I lean and look through the glimmering light, that one has utterly
disappear'd.
And those appear that are hateful to me and mock me.

ASSURANCES

I need no assurances, I am a man who is preoccupied of his own soul;
 I do not doubt that from under the feet and beside the hands and
 face I am cognizant of, are now looking faces I am not cognizant of, calm
 and actual faces
 I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty of the world are latent in any
 iota of the world
 I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes are limitless in vain
 I try to think how limitless
 I do not doubt that the orbs and the systems of orbs play their swift sports
 through the air on purpose, and that I shall one day be eligible to do
 as much as they, and more than they
 I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on millions of years
 I do not doubt interiors have their interiors, and exteriors have their ex-
 teriors, and that the eyesight has another eyesight, and the hearing
 another hearing, and the voice another voice
 I do not doubt that the passionately-wept deaths of young men are pro-
 vided for, and that the deaths of young women and the deaths of little
 children are provided for
 (Did you think Life was so well provided for, and Death, the purport of
 all Life, is not well provided for?)
 I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no matter what the horrors of them, no
 matter whose wife, child, husband, father, lover, has gone down, are
 provided for, to the minutest points
 I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen anywhere at any time,
 is provided for in the inherences of things
 I do not think Life provides for all and for Time and Space, but I believe
 Heavenly Death provides for all.

QUICKSAND YEARS

Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither
 Your schemes, politics, fail, lines give way, substances mock and elude
 me
 Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd soul, eludes not
 One's-self must never give way—that is the final substance—that
 out of all is sure
 Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life, what at last finally remains?
 When shows break up what but One's-Self is sure?

THAT MUSIC ALWAYS ROUND ME

That music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning, yet long untaught
I did not hear
But now the chorus I hear and am elated
A tenor, strong, ascending with power and health, with glad notes of
daybreak I hear
A soprano at intervals sailing buoyantly over the tops of immense waves
A transparent base shuddering lusciously under and through the uni-
verse
The triumphant tutti, the funeral wailings with sweet flutes and violins,
all these I fill myself with
I hear not the volumes of sound merely, I am moved by the exquisite
meanings
I listen to the different voices winding in and out, striving contending
with fiery vehemence to excel each other in emotion;
I do not think the performers know themselves—but now I think begin to
know them.

WHAT SHIP PUZZLED AT SEA

What ship puzzled at sea, cons for the true reckoning?
Or coming in, to avoid the bars and follow the channel a perfect pilot
needs?
Here, sailor! here, ship! take aboard the most perfect pilot
Whom, in a little boat, putting off and rowing, I hailing you offer.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A noiseless patient spider
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament out of itself
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.
And you O my soul where you stand
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect
them
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

O LIVING ALWAYS, ALWAYS DYING

O living always, always dying!

O the burials of me past and present

O me while I stride ahead, material, visible, imperious as ever;

O me, what I was for years, now dead, (I lament not, I am content;)

O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which I turn and look
at where I cast them

To pass on, (O living! always living!) and leave the corpses behind.

TO ONE SHORTLY TO DIE

From all the rest I single out you, having a message for you

You are to die—let others tell you what they please, I cannot prevaricate

I am exact and merciless, but I love you—there is no escape for you.

Softly I lay my right hand upon you, you 'ust feel it

I do not argue, I bend my head close and half envelop it

I sit quietly by, I remain faithful

I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor

I absolve you from all except yourself spiritual bodily, that is eternal, you
yourself will surely escape

The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

The sun bursts through in unlooked-for directions

Strong thoughts fill you and confidence, you smile

You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick

You do not see the medicines, you do not mind the weeping friends

I am with you

I exclude others from you, there is nothing to be commiserated

I do not commiserate, I congratulate you.

NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES

Night on the prairies
The supper is over, the fire on the ground burns low
The wearied emigrants sleep, wrapt in their blankets;
I walk by myself—I stand and look at the stars, which I think now never
realized before.

Now I absorb immortality and peace
I admire death and test propositions.

How plenteous! how spiritual! how resume!

The same old man and soul—the same old aspirations, and the same content.

I was thinking the day most splendid till I saw what the not-day exhibited
I was thinking this globe enough till there sprang out so noiseless
around me myriads of other globes.

Now while the great thoughts of space and eternity fill me I will measure
myself by them

And now touch'd with the lives of other globes arrived as far along as
those of the earth

Or waiting to arrive, or pass'd on farther than those of the earth
I henceforth no more ignore them than I ignore my own life
Or the lives of the earth arrived as far as mine, or waiting to arrive.

O I see now that life cannot exhibit all to me, as the day cannot
I see that I am to wait for what will be exhibited by death.

THOUGHT

As I sit with others at a great feast, suddenly while the music is playing
 To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,) spectral in mist of a wreck at
 sea
 Of certain ships, how they sail from port with flying streamers and
 wafted kisses, and that is the last of them
 Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate of the President
 Of the flower of the marine science of fifty generations founder'd off the
 Northeast coast and going down—of the steamship Arctic going down
 Of the veil'd tableau-women gather'd together on deck, pale, heroic wait-
 ing the moment that draws so close—O the moment!
 A huge sob—a few bubbles—the white foam spirting up—and then the
 women gone
 Sinking there while the passionless wet flows on—and I now pondering,
 Are those women indeed gone?
 Are souls drown'd and destroy'd so?
 Is only matter triumphant?

THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly
 From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house
 From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors
 Let me be wafted.
 Let me glide noiselessly forth;
 With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a whisper
 Set ope the doors O soul.
 Tenderly—be not impatient
 (Strong is your hold O mortal flesh
 Strong is your hold O love.)

AS I WATCH THE PLOUGHMAN PLOUGHING

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing
 Or the sower sowing in the fields, or the harvester harvesting
 I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies;
 (Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest according.)

PENSIVE AND FALTERING

Pensive and faltering
The words the Dead I write
For living are the Dead
(Haply the only living, only real
And I the apparition, I the spectre.)

BOOK XXXI

THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD

1

Thou Mother with thy equal brood
Thou varied chain of different States, yet one identity only
A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all the rest
For thee, the future.

I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality
I'd fashion thy ensemble including body and soul
I'd show away ahead thy real Union, and how it may be accomplish'd.

The paths to the house I seek to make
But leave to those to come the house itself.

Belief I sing, and preparation;
As Life and Nature are not great with reference to the present only
But greater still from what is yet to come
Out of that formula for thee I sing.

2

As a strong bird on pinions free
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving
Such be the thought I'd think of thee America
Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee not
Nor the compliments that have served their turn so long
Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign court or indoor li-
brary;

But an odor I'd bring as from forests of pine in Maine, or breath of an
Illinois prairie

With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or Tennessee, or from Texas up-
lands, or Florida's glades

Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the wide blue spread of Huron
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yosemite

And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the rustling sea-sound
That endlessly sounds from the two Great Seas of the world.

And for thy subtler sense subtler refrains dread Mother
Preludes of intellect tallying these and thee, mind-formulas fitted for
thee, real and sane and large as these and thee
Thou! mounting higher, diving deeper than we knew, thou transcenden-
tal Union!

By thee fact to be justified, blended with thought
Thought of man justified, blended with God
Through thy idea, lo, the immortal reality!
Through thy reality, lo, the immortal idea!

3

Brain of the New World, what a task is thine
To formulate the Modern—out of the peerless grandeur of the modern
Out of thyself, comprising science, to recast poems, churches, art
(Recast, may-be discard them, end them—maybe their work is done who
knows?)

By vision, hand, conception, on the background of the mighty past, the
dead

To limn with absolute faith the mighty living present.

And yet thou living present brain, heir of the dead, the Old World brain
Thou that lay folded like an unborn babe within its folds so long
Thou carefully prepared by it so long—haply thou but unfoldest it only
maturest it

It to eventuate in thee—the essence of the by-gone time contain'd in thee
Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to themselves, destined with refer-
ence to thee;

Thou but the apples, long, long, long a-growing
The fruit of all the Old ripening to-day in thee.

4

Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the Present only
The Past is also stored in thee

Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone, not of the Western conti-
nent alone

Earth's resume entire floats on thy keel O ship, is steadied by thy spars
With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent nations sink or swim
with thee

With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics, wars, thou bear'st
the other continents

Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port triumphant;
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye O helmsman, thou carri-
est great companions

Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee
And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.

Beautiful world of new superber birth that rises to my eyes
 Like a limitless golden cloud filling the westernr sky
 Emblem of general maternity lifted above all
 Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters and sons
 Out of thy teeming womb thy giant babes in ceaseless procession issuing
 Acceding from such gestation, taking and giving continual strength and
 life
 World of the real–world of the twain in one
 World of the soul, born by the world of the real alone, led to identity,
 body, by it alone
 Yet in beginning only, incalculable masses of composite precious materi-
 als
 By history’s cycles forwarded, by every nation, language, hither sent
 Ready, collected here, a freer, vast, electric world, to be constructed here
 (The true New World, the world of orbic science, morals, literatures to
 come,)
 Thou wonder world yet undefined, unform’d, neither do I define thee
 How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future?
 I feel thy ominous greatness evil as well as good
 I watch thee advancing, absorbing the present, transcending the past
 I see thy light lighting, and thy shadow shadowing, as if the entire globe
 But I do not undertake to define thee, hardly to comprehend thee
 I but thee name, thee prophesy, as now
 I merely thee ejaculate!
 Thee in thy future
 Thee in thy only permanent life, career, thy own unloosen’d mind
 thy soaring spirit
 Thee as another equally needed sun, radiant, ablaze, swift-moving fruc-
 tifying all
 Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy, in endless great hilarity
 Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long, that weigh’d so long
 upon the mind of man
 The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain decadence of man;
 Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female, male–thee in thy athletes,
 moral, spiritual, South, North, West, East
 (To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy every daughter, son endear’d
 alike, forever equal,)
 Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn yet, but certain
 Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization, (until which thy proudest ma-
 terial civilization must remain in vain,)
 Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing worship–thee in no single bible,
 saviour, merely
 Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself, thy bibles incessant within
 thyself, equal to any, divine as any
 (Thy soaring course thee formulating, not in thy two great wars, nor in
 thy century’s visible growth

But far more in these leaves and chants, thy chants, great Mother!)
 Thee in an education grown of thee, in teachers, studies, students born of
 thee
 Thee in thy democratic fetes en-masse, thy high original festivals operas,
 lecturers, preachers
 Thee in thy ultimate, (the preparations only now completed, the edifice
 on sure foundations tied.)
 Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought, thy topmost rational joys, thy
 love and godlike aspiration
 In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full-lung'd orators, thy sacerdotal
 bards, kosmic savans
 These! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I prophesy.

6

Land tolerating all, accepting all, not for the good alone, all good for thee
 Land in the realms of God to be a realm unto thyself
 Under the rule of God to be a rule unto thyself.

(Lo, where arise three peerless stars
 To be thy natal stars my country, Ensemble, Evolution, Freedom
 Set in the sky of Law.)
 Land of unprecedented faith, God's faith
 Thy soil, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd
 The general inner earth so long so sedulously draped over, now hence
 for what it is boldly laid bare
 Open'd by thee to heaven's light for benefit or bale.

Not for success alone
 Not to fair-sail unintermitted always
 The storm shall dash thy face, the murk of war and worse than war shall
 cover thee all over
 (Wert capable of war, its tug and trials? be capable of peace, its trials
 For the tug and mortal strain of nations come at last in prosperous peace,
 not war;)
 In many a smiling mask death shall approach beguiling thee, thou in
 disease shalt swelter
 The livid cancer spread its hideous claws, clinging upon thy breasts, seek-
 ing to strike thee deep within
 Consumption of the worst, moral consumption, shall rouge thy face with
 hectic
 But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy diseases, and surmount them all
 Whatever they are to-day and whatever through time they may be
 They each and all shall lift and pass away and cease from thee
 While thou, Time's spirals rounding, out of thyself, thyself still extricat-
 ing, fusing
 Equable, natural, mystical Union thou, (the mortal with immortal blent,)
 Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the future, the spirit of the body and
 the mind
 The soul, its destinies.

The soul, its destinies, the real real
(Purport of all these apparitions of the real;)
In thee America, the soul, its destinies
Thou globe of globes! thou wonder nebulous!
By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd, (by these thyself solidifying,)
Thou mental, moral orb—thou New, indeed new, Spiritual World!
The Present holds thee not—for such vast growth as thine
For such unparallel'd flight as thine, such brood as thine
The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold thee.

A PAUMANOK PICTURE

Two boats with nets lying off the sea-beach, quite still
Ten fishermen waiting—they discover a thick school of mossbonkers
—they drop the join'd seine-ends in the water
The boats separate and row off, each on its rounding course to the beach,
enclosing the mossbonkers
The net is drawn in by a windlass by those who stop ashore
Some of the fishermen lounge in their boats, others stand ankle-deep in
the water, pois'd on strong legs
The boats partly drawn up, the water slapping against them
Strew'd on the sand in heaps and windrows, well out from the water the
green-back'd spotted mossbonkers.

BOOK XXXII. FROM NOON TO STARRY NIGHT

THOU ORB ALOFT FULL-DAZZLING

Thou orb aloft full-dazzling! thou hot October noon!

Flooding with sheeny light the gray beach sand
The sibilant near sea with vistas far and foam
And tawny streaks and shades and spreading blue;
O sun of noon refulgent! my special word to thee.

Hear me illustrious!

Thy lover me, for always I have loved thee
Even as basking babe, then happy boy alone by some wood edge, thy
touching-distant beams enough
Or man matured, or young or old, as now to thee I launch my invocation.

(Thou canst not with thy dumbness me deceive
I know before the fitting man all Nature yields
Though answering not in words, the skies, trees, hear his voice—and thou
O sun

As for thy throes, thy perturbations, sudden breaks and shafts of flame
gigantic

I understand them, I know those flames, those perturbations well.)

Thou that with fructifying heat and light

O'er myriad farms, o'er lands and waters North and South

O'er Mississippi's endless course, o'er Texas' grassy plains Kanada's
woods

O'er all the globe that turns its face to thee shining in space

Thou that impartially enfoldest all, not only continents, seas

Thou that to grapes and weeds and little wild flowers givest so liberally
Shed, shed thyself on mine and me, with but a fleeting ray out of thy
million millions

Strike through these chants.

Nor only launch thy subtle dazzle and thy strength for these

Prepare the later afternoon of me myself—prepare my lengthening shadows
Prepare my starry nights.

FACES

1

Sauntering the pavement or riding the country by-road, faces!
 Faces of friendship, precision, caution, suavity, ideality
 The spiritual-prescient face, the always welcome common benevolent
 face
 The face of the singing of music, the grand faces of natural lawyers and
 judges broad at the back-top
 The faces of hunters and fishers bulged at the brows, the shaved blanch'd
 faces of orthodox citizens
 The pure, extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's face
 The ugly face of some beautiful soul, the handsome detested or despised
 face
 The sacred faces of infants, the illuminated face of the mother of many
 children
 The face of an amour, the face of veneration
 The face as of a dream, the face of an immobile rock
 The face withdrawn of its good and bad, a castrated face
 A wild hawk, his wings clipp'd by the clipper
 A stallion that yielded at last to the thongs and knife of the gelder.
 Sauntering the pavement thus, or crossing the ceaseless ferry, faces and
 faces and faces
 I see them and complain not, and am content with all.

2

Do you suppose I could be content with all if I thought them their own
 finale?
 This now is too lamentable a face for a man
 Some abject louse asking leave to be, cringing for it
 Some milk-nosed maggot blessing what lets it wrig to its hole.
 This face is a dog's snout sniffing for garbage
 Snakes nest in that mouth, I hear the sibilant threat.
 This face is a haze more chill than the arctic sea
 Its sleepy and wobbling icebergs crunch as they go.
 This is a face of bitter herbs, this an emetic, they need no label
 And more of the drug-shelf, laudanum, caoutchouc, or hog's-lard.
 This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out the unearthly cry
 Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they show nothing but
 their whites
 Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the turn'd-in nails
 The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground, while he speculates
 well.
 This face is bitten by vermin and worms

And this is some murderer's knife with a half-pull'd scabbard.

This face owes to the sexton his dismalest fee
An unceasing death-bell tolls there.

3

Features of my equals would you trick me with your creas'd and cadaverous march?

Well, you cannot trick me.

I see your rounded never-erased flow
I see 'neath the rims of your haggard and mean disguises.

Splay and twist as you like, poke with the tangling fores of fishes or rats
You'll be unmuzzled, you certainly will.

I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering idiot they had at the asylum

And I knew for my consolation what they knew not
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenement
And I shall look again in a score or two of ages
And I shall meet the real landlord perfect and unharm'd, every inch as good as myself.

4

The Lord advances, and yet advances
Always the shadow in front, always the reach'd hand bringing up the laggards.

Out of this face emerge banners and horses—O superb! I see what is coming

I see the high pioneer-caps, see staves of runners clearing the way
I hear victorious drums.

This face is a life-boat

This is the face commanding and bearded, it asks no odds of the rest
This face is flavor'd fruit ready for eating
This face of a healthy honest boy is the programme of all good.

These faces bear testimony slumbering or awake
They show their descent from the Master himself.

Off the word I have spoken I except not one—red, white, black, are all deific

In each house is the ovum, it comes forth after a thousand years.

Spots or cracks at the windows do not disturb me
Tall and sufficient stand behind and make signs to me
I read the promise and patiently wait.

This is a full-grown lily's face

She speaks to the limber-hipp'd man near the garden pickets
Come here she blushingly cries, Come nigh to me limber-hipp'd man

Stand at my side till I lean as high as I can upon you
Fill me with albescent honey, bend down to me
Rub to me with your chafing beard, rub to my breast and shoulders.

5

The old face of the mother of many children
Whist! I am fully content.

Lull'd and late is the smoke of the First-day morning
It hangs low over the rows of trees by the fences
It hangs thin by the sassafras and wild-cherry and cat-brier under them.

I saw the rich ladies in full dress at the soiree
I heard what the singers were singing so long
Heard who sprang in crimson youth from the white froth and the water-
blue.

Behold a woman!

She looks out from her quaker cap, her face is clearer and more
beautiful than the sky.

She sits in an armchair under the shaded porch of the farmhouse
The sun just shines on her old white head.

Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen
Her grandsons raised the flax, and her grand-daughters spun it with the
distaff and the wheel.

The melodious character of the earth
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go and does not wish to go
The justified mother of men.

THE MYSTIC TRUMPETER

1

Hark, some wild trumpeter, some strange musician
 Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious tunes to-night.

I hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I catch thy notes
 Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me
 Now low, subdued, now in the distance lost.

2

Come nearer bodiless one, haply in thee resounds
 Some dead composer, haply thy pensive life
 Was fill'd with aspirations high, unform'd ideals
 Waves, oceans musical, chaotically surging
 That now ecstatic ghost, close to me bending, thy cornet echoing, pealing
 Gives out to no one's ears but mine, but freely gives to mine
 That I may thee translate.

3

Blow trumpeter free and clear, I follow thee
 While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene
 The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of day withdraw
 A holy calm descends like dew upon me
 I walk in cool refreshing night the walks of Paradise
 I scent the grass, the moist air and the roses;
 Thy song expands my numb'd imbonded spirit, thou freest, launchest
 me
 Floating and basking upon heaven's lake.

4

Blow again trumpeter! and for my sensuous eyes
 Bring the old pageants, show the feudal world.
 What charm thy music works! thou makest pass before me
 Ladies and cavaliers long dead, barons are in their castle halls the
 troubadours are singing
 Arm'd knights go forth to redress wrongs, some in quest of the holy
 Graal;
 I see the tournament, I see the contestants incased in heavy armor
 seated on stately champing horses
 I hear the shouts, the sounds of blows and smiting steel;
 I see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies—hark, how the cymbals clang
 Lo, where the monks walk in advance, bearing the cross on high.

5

Blow again trumpeter! and for thy theme
 Take now the enclosing theme of all, the solvent and the setting
 Love, that is pulse of all, the sustenance and the pang

The heart of man and woman all for love
 No other theme but love—knitting, enclosing, all-diffusing love.
 O how the immortal phantoms crowd around me!
 I see the vast alembic ever working, I see and know the flames that
 heat the world
 The glow, the blush, the beating hearts of lovers
 So blissful happy some, and some so silent, dark, and nigh to death;
 Love, that is all the earth to lovers—love, that mocks time and space
 Love, that is day and night—love, that is sun and moon and stars
 Love, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with perfume
 No other words but words of love, no other thought but love.

6

Blow again trumpeter—conjure war's alarums.
 Swift to thy spell a shuddering hum like distant thunder rolls
 Lo, where the arm'd men hasten—lo, mid the clouds of dust the glint of
 bayonets
 I see the grime-faced cannoneers, I mark the rosy flash amid the smoke, I
 hear the cracking of the guns;
 Nor war alone—thy fearful music-song, wild player, brings every sight of
 fear
 The deeds of ruthless brigands, rapine, murder—I hear the cries for help!
 I see ships foundering at sea, I behold on deck and below deck the terrible
 tableaux.

7

O trumpeter, methinks I am myself the instrument thou playest
 Thou melt'st my heart, my brain—thou movest, drawest, changest them
 at will;
 And now thy sullen notes send darkness through me
 Thou takest away all cheering light, all hope
 I see the enslaved, the overthrown, the hurt, the opprest of the whole
 earth
 I feel the measureless shame and humiliation of my race, it becomes all
 mine
 Mine too the revenges of humanity, the wrongs of ages, baffled feuds and
 hatreds
 Utter defeat upon me weighs—all lost—the foe victorious
 (Yet 'mid the ruins Pride colossal stands unshaken to the last
 Endurance, resolution to the last.)

8

Now trumpeter for thy close
 Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet
 Sing to my soul, renew its languishing faith and hope
 Rouse up my slow belief, give me some vision of the future
 Give me for once its prophecy and joy.

O glad, exulting, culminating song!

A vigor more than earth's is in thy notes

Marches of victory—man disenthral'd—the conqueror at last

Hymns to the universal God from universal man—all joy!

A reborn race appears—a perfect world, all joy!

Women and men in wisdom innocence and health—all joy!

Riotous laughing bacchanals fill'd with joy!

War, sorrow, suffering gone—the rank earth purged—nothing but joy left!

The ocean fill'd with joy—the atmosphere all joy!

Joy! joy! in freedom, worship, love! joy in the ecstasy of life!

Enough to merely be! enough to breathe!

Joy! joy! all over joy!

TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

Thee for my recitative
 Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter-day declin-
 ing
 Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat convul-
 sive
 Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel
 Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating shut-
 tling at thy sides
 Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the distance
 Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front
 Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple
 The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack
 Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle of thy
 wheels
 Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following
 Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
 Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power—pulse of the continent
 For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I see thee
 With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow
 By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes
 By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.
 Fierce-throated beauty!
 Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging lamps at
 night
 Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake
 rousing all
 Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding
 (No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,)
 Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd
 Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes
 To the free skies unpent and glad and strong.

O MAGNET-SOUTH

O magnet-south! O glistening perfumed South! my South!
 O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse and love! good and evil! O all dear
 to me!
 O dear to me my birth-things—all moving things and the trees where
 I was born—the grains, plants, rivers
 Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they flow, distant
 over flats of slivery sands or through swamps
 Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw, the Pedee, the
 Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa and the Sabine
 O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my soul to haunt their
 banks again
 Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes, I float on the
 Okeechobee, I cross the hummock-land or through pleasant openings or
 dense forests
 I see the parrots in the woods, I see the papaw-tree and the blossoming
 titi;
 Again, sailing in my coaster on deck, I coast off Georgia, I coast up the
 Carolinas
 I see where the live-oak is growing, I see where the yellow-pine the
 scented bay-tree, the lemon and orange, the cypress, the graceful pal-
 metto
 I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico sound through an inlet and
 dart my vision inland;
 O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar, hemp!
 The cactus guarded with thorns, the laurel-tree with large white flowers
 The range afar, the richness and barrenness, the old woods charged with
 mistletoe and trailing moss
 The piney odor and the gloom, the awful natural stillness, (here in these
 dense swamps the freebooter carries his gun, and the fugitive has his
 conceal'd hut;)
 O the strange fascination of these half-known half-impassable
 swamps, infested by reptiles, resounding with the bellow of the alligator,
 the sad noises of the night-owl and the wild-cat, and the whirr of the
 rattlesnake
 The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the forenoon singing
 through the moon-lit night
 The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the opossum;
 A Kentucky corn-field, the tall, graceful, long-leav'd corn slender, flap-
 ping, bright green, with tassels, with beautiful ears each well-sheath'd
 in its husk;
 O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs, I can stand them not, I will depart;
 O to be a Virginian where I grew up! O to be a Carolinian!
 O longings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Tennessee and never
 wander more.

MANNAHATTA

I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city
Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane, unruly musical,
self-sufficient

I see that the word of my city is that word from of old

Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays, superb

Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and steamships, an island
sixteen miles long, solid-founded

Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender, strong light,
splendidly uprising toward clear skies

Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sundown

The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining islands, the
heights, the villas

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the ferry-
boats, the black sea-steamers well-model'd

The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the houses of
business of the ship-merchants and money-brokers, the river-streets

Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week

The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses, the brown-
faced sailors

The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft

The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice in the river passing
along up or down with the flood-tide or ebb-tide

The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd beautiful-faced, look-
ing you straight in the eyes

Trottoirs throug'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and shows
A million people—manners free and superb—open voices—hospitality—the

most courageous and friendly young men

City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!

City nested in bays! my city!

ALL IS TRUTH

O me, man of slack faith so long
Standing aloof, denying portions so long
Only aware to-day of compact all-diffused truth
Discovering to-day there is no lie or form of lie, and can be none but
grows as inevitably upon itself as the truth does upon itself
Or as any law of the earth or any natural production of the earth does.
(This is curious and may not be realized immediately, but it must be
realized
I feel in myself that I represent falsehoods equally with the rest
And that the universe does.)
Where has fail'd a perfect return indifferent of lies or the truth?
Is it upon the ground, or in water or fire? or in the spirit of man? or in the
meat and blood?
Meditating among liars and retreating sternly into myself, I see that there
are really no liars or lies after all
And that nothing fails its perfect return, and that what are called lies are
perfect returns
And that each thing exactly represents itself and what has preceded it
And that the truth includes all, and is compact just as much as space is
compact
And that there is no flaw or vacuum in the amount of the truth—but that
all is truth without exception;
And henceforth I will go celebrate any thing I see or am
And sing and laugh and deny nothing.

A RIDDLE SONG

That which eludes this verse and any verse
Unheard by sharpest ear, unform'd in clearest eye or cunningest mind
Nor lore nor fame, nor happiness nor wealth
And yet the pulse of every heart and life throughout the world incessantly

Which you and I and all pursuing ever ever miss
Open but still a secret, the real of the real, an illusion
Costless, vouchsafed to each, yet never man the owner
Which poets vainly seek to put in rhyme, historians in prose
Which sculptor never chisel'd yet, nor painter painted
Which vocalist never sung, nor orator nor actor ever utter'd
Invoking here and now I challenge for my song.

Indifferently, 'mid public, private haunts, in solitude
Behind the mountain and the wood
Companion of the city's busiest streets, through the assemblage
It and its radiations constantly glide.

In looks of fair unconscious babes
Or strangely in the coffin'd dead
Or show of breaking dawn or stars by night
As some dissolving delicate film of dreams
Hiding yet lingering.

Two little breaths of words comprising it
Two words, yet all from first to last comprised in it.

How ardently for it!

How many ships have sail'd and sunk for it!

How many travelers started from their homes and neer return'd!

How much of genius boldly staked and lost for it!

What countless stores of beauty, love, ventur'd for it!

How all superbest deeds since Time began are traceable to it—and shall
be to the end!

How all heroic martyrdoms to it!

How, justified by it, the horrors, evils, battles of the earth!

How the bright fascinating lambent flames of it, in every age and land,
have drawn men's eyes

Rich as a sunset on the Norway coast, the sky, the islands, and the cliffs
Or midnight's silent glowing northern lights unreachable.

Haply God's riddle it, so vague and yet so certain
The soul for it, and all the visible universe for it
And heaven at last for it.

EXCELSIOR

Who has gone farthest? for I would go farther
 And who has been just? for I would be the most just person of the earth
 And who most cautious? for I would be more cautious
 And who has been happiest? O I think it is I—I think no one was ever
 happier than I
 And who has lavish'd all? for I lavish constantly the best I have
 And who proudest? for I think I have reason to be the proudest son
 alive—for I am the son of the brawny and tall-topt city
 And who has been bold and true? for I would be the boldest and truest
 being of the universe
 And who benevolent? for I would show more benevolence than all the
 rest
 And who has receiv'd the love of the most friends? for I know what it is
 to receive the passionate love of many friends
 And who possesses a perfect and enamour'd body? for I do not believe
 any one possesses a more perfect or enamour'd body than mine
 And who thinks the amplest thoughts? for I would surround those
 thoughts
 And who has made hymns fit for the earth? for I am mad with devouring
 ecstasy to make joyous hymns for the whole earth.

AH POVERTIES, WINCINGS, AND SULKY RETREATS

Ah poverties, wincings, and sulky retreats
 Ah you foes that in conflict have overcome me
 (For what is my life or any man's life but a conflict with foes, the old, the
 incessant war?)
 You degradations, you tussle with passions and appetites
 You smarts from dissatisfied friendships, (ah wounds the sharpest of all!)
 You toil of painful and choked articulations, you meannesses
 You shallow tongue-talks at tables, (my tongue the shallowest of any;)
 You broken resolutions, you racking angers, you smother'd ennui!
 Ah think not you finally triumph, my real self has yet to come forth
 It shall yet march forth o'ermastering, till all lies beneath me
 It shall yet stand up the soldier of ultimate victory.

THOUGHTS

Of public opinion
 Of a calm and cool fiat sooner or later, (how impassive! how certain and final!)
 Of the President with pale face asking secretly to himself, What will the people say at last?
 Of the frivolous Judge—of the corrupt Congressman, Governor Mayor—of such as these standing helpless and exposed
 Of the mumbling and screaming priest, (soon, soon deserted,)
 Of the lessening year by year of venerableness, and of the dicta of officers, statutes, pulpits, schools
 Of the rising forever taller and stronger and broader of the intuitions of men and women, and of Self-esteem and Personality;
 Of the true New World—of the Democracies resplendent en-masse
 Of the conformity of politics, armies, navies, to them
 Of the shining sun by them—of the inherent light, greater than the rest
 Of the envelopment of all by them, and the effusion of all from them.

MEDIUMS

They shall arise in the States
 They shall report Nature, laws, physiology, and happiness
 They shall illustrate Democracy and the kosmos
 They shall be alimentive, amative, perceptive
 They shall be complete women and men, their pose brawny and supple
 their drink water, their blood clean and clear
 They shall fully enjoy materialism and the sight of products, they shall enjoy the sight of the beef, lumber, bread-stuffs, of Chicago the great city.
 They shall train themselves to go in public to become orators and oratresses
 Strong and sweet shall their tongues be, poems and materials of poems shall come from their lives, they shall be makers and finders
 Of them and of their works shall emerge divine conveyers, to convey gospels
 Characters, events, retrospections, shall be convey'd in gospels trees, animals, waters, shall be convey'd
 Death, the future, the invisible faith, shall all be convey'd.

WEAVE IN, MY HARDY LIFE

Weave in, weave in, my hardy life
Weave yet a soldier strong and full for great campaigns to come
Weave in red blood, weave sinews in like ropes, the senses, sight weave
in
Weave lasting sure, weave day and night the wet, the warp, incessant
weave, tire not
(We know not what the use O life, nor know the aim, the end, nor
really aught we know
But know the work, the need goes on and shall go on, the death-
envelop'd march of peace as well as war goes on,)
For great campaigns of peace the same the wiry threads to weave
We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.

SPAIN, 1873-74

Out of the murk of heaviest clouds
Out of the feudal wrecks and heap'd-up skeletons of kings
Out of that old entire European debris, the shatter'd mummeries
Ruin'd cathedrals, crumble of palaces, tombs of priests
Lo, Freedom's features fresh undimm'd look forth—the same immortal
face looks forth;
(A glimpse as of thy Mother's face Columbia
A flash significant as of a sword
Beaming towards thee.)
Nor think we forget thee maternal;
Lag'd'st thou so long? shall the clouds close again upon thee?
Ah, but thou hast thyself now appear'd to us—we know thee
Thou hast given us a sure proof, the glimpse of thyself
Thou waitest there as everywhere thy time.

BY BROAD POTOMAC'S SHORE

By broad Potomac's shore, again old tongue
(Still uttering, still ejaculating, canst never cease this babble?)
Again old heart so gay, again to you, your sense, the full flush spring
 returning
Again the freshness and the odors, again Virginia's summer sky
pellucid blue and silver
Again the forenoon purple of the hills
Again the deathless grass, so noiseless soft and green
Again the blood-red roses blooming.
Perfume this book of mine O blood-red roses!
Lave subtly with your waters every line Potomac!
Give me of you O spring, before I close, to put between its pages!
O forenoon purple of the hills, before I close, of you!
O deathless grass, of you!

FROM FAR DAKOTA'S CANYONS (JUNE 25, 1876)

From far Dakota's canyons
Lands of the wild ravine, the dusky Sioux, the lonesome stretch, the silence
Haply to-day a mournful wall, haply a trumpet-note for heroes.
The battle-bulletin
The Indian ambuscade, the craft, the fatal environment
The cavalry companies fighting to the last in sternest heroism
In the midst of their little circle, with their slaughter'd horses for breast-works
The fall of Custer and all his officers and men.
Continues yet the old, old legend of our race
The loftiest of life upheld by death
The ancient banner perfectly maintain'd
O lesson opportune, O how I welcome thee!
As sitting in dark days
Lone, sulky, through the time's thick murk looking in vain for light, for hope
From unsuspected parts a fierce and momentary proof
(The sun there at the centre though conceal'd
Electric life forever at the centre,)
Breaks forth a lightning flash.
Thou of the tawny flowing hair in battle
I erewhile saw, with erect head, pressing ever in front, bearing a bright sword in thy hand
Now ending well in death the splendid fever of thy deeds
(I bring no dirge for it or thee, I bring a glad triumphal sonnet,)
Desperate and glorious, aye in defeat most desperate, most glorious
After thy many battles in which never yielding up a gun or a color
Leaving behind thee a memory sweet to soldiers
Thou yieldest up thyself.

OLD WAR-DREAMS

In midnight sleep of many a face of anguish
 Of the look at first of the mortally wounded, (of that indescribable look,)
 Of the dead on their backs with arms extended wide
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains
 Of skies so beautiful after a storm, and at night the moon so unearthly
 bright
 Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the trenches and gather the
 heaps
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

Long have they pass'd, faces and trenches and fields
 Where through the carnage I moved with a callous composure, or away
 from the fallen
 Onward I sped at the time—but now of their forms at night
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

THICK-SPRINKLED BUNTING

Thick-sprinkled bunting! flag of stars!
 Long yet your road, fateful flag—long yet your road, and lined with
 bloody death
 For the prize I see at issue at last is the world
 All its ships and shores I see interwoven with your threads greedy ban-
 ner;
 Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest borne to flaunt unrival'd?
 O hasten flag of man—O with sure and steady step, passing highest flags
 of kings
 Walk supreme to the heavens mighty symbol—run up above them all
 Flag of stars! thick-sprinkled bunting!

WHAT BEST I SEE IN THEE

(To U. S. G. return'd from his World's Tour)

What best I see in thee
Is not that where thou mov'st down history's great highways
Ever undimm'd by time shoots warlike victory's dazzle
Or that thou sat'st where Washington sat, ruling the land in peace
Or thou the man whom feudal Europe feted, venerable Asia swarm'd
upon
Who walk'd with kings with even pace the round world's promenade;
But that in foreign lands, in all thy walks with kings
Those prairie sovereigns of the West, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois
Ohio's, Indiana's millions, comrades, farmers, soldiers, all to the front
Invisibly with thee walking with kings with even pace the round world's
promenade
Were all so justified.

SPIRIT THAT FORM'D THIS SCENE

(Written in Platte Canyon, Colorado)

Spirit that form'd this scene
These tumbled rock-piles grim and red
These reckless heaven-ambitious peaks
These gorges, turbulent-clear streams, this naked freshness
These formless wild arrays, for reasons of their own
I know thee, savage spirit—we have communed together
Mine too such wild arrays, for reasons of their own;
Wast charged against my chants they had forgotten art?
To fuse within themselves its rules precise and delicatessen?
The lyrist's measur'd beat, the wrought-out temple's grace—column and
polish'd arch forgot?
But thou that revelest here—spirit that form'd this scene
They have remember'd thee.

AS I WALK THESE BROAD MAJESTIC DAYS

As I walk these broad majestic days of peace
(For the war, the struggle of blood finish'd, wherein, O terrific Ideal
Against vast odds erewhile having gloriously won
Now thou stridest on, yet perhaps in time toward denser wars
Perhaps to engage in time in still more dreadful contests, dangers
Longer campaigns and crises, labors beyond all others.)
Around me I hear that eclat of the world, politics, produce
The announcements of recognized things, science
The approved growth of cities and the spread of inventions.

I see the ships, (they will last a few years,)
The vast factories with their foremen and workmen
And hear the indorsement of all, and do not object to it.

But I too announce solid things
Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are not nothing
Like a grand procession to music of distant bugles pouring
triumphantly moving, and grander heaving in sight
They stand for realities—all is as it should be.

Then my realities;
What else is so real as mine?
Libertad and the divine average, freedom to every slave on the face of
the earth
The rapt promises and luminescence of seers, the spiritual world, these
centuries-lasting songs
And our visions, the visions of poets, the most solid announcements
of any.

A CLEAR MIDNIGHT

This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou
lovest best
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

BOOK XXXIII. SONGS OF PARTING

AS THE TIME DRAWS NIGH

As the time draws nigh glooming a cloud
A dread beyond of I know not what darkens me.

I shall go forth
I shall traverse the States awhile, but I cannot tell whither or how long
Perhaps soon some day or night while I am singing my voice will
suddenly cease.

O book, O chants! must all then amount to but this?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us? –and yet it is enough, O
soul;
O soul, we have positively appear'd—that is enough.

YEARS OF THE MODERN

Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd!
 Your horizon rises, I see it parting away for more august dramas
 I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation but other nations prepar-
 ing
 I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations, the solidarity
 of races
 I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage
 (Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable
 to them closed?)
 I see Freedom, completely arm'd and victorious and very haughty with
 Law on one side and Peace on the other
 A stupendous trio all issuing forth against the idea of caste;
 What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?
 I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions
 I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken
 I see the landmarks of European kings removed
 I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way;)
 Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day
 Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God
 Lo, how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest!
 His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere, he colonizes the
 Pacific, the archipelagoes
 With the steamship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale
 engines of war
 With these and the world-spreading factories he interlinks all geography,
 all lands;
 What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you, passing under
 the seas?
 Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the
 globe?
 Is humanity forming en-masse? for lo, tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim
 The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war
 No one knows what will happen next, such portents fill the days and
 nights;
 Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is
 full of phantoms
 Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me
 This incredible rush and heat, this strange ecstatic fever of dreams
 O years!
 Your dreams O years, how they penetrate through me! (I know not
 whether I sleep or wake;)
 The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind
 me
 The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance upon me.

ASHES OF SOLDIERS

Ashes of soldiers South or North
As I muse retrospective murmuring a chant in thought
The war resumes, again to my sense your shapes
And again the advance of the armies.

Noiseless as mists and vapors
From their graves in the trenches ascending
From cemeteries all through Virginia and Tennessee
From every point of the compass out of the countless graves
In wafted clouds, in myriads large, or squads of twos or threes or
single ones they come
And silently gather round me.

Now sound no note O trumpeters
Not at the head of my cavalry parading on spirited horses
With sabres drawn and glistening, and carbines by their thighs, (ah my
brave horsemen!

My handsome tan-faced horsemen! what life, what joy and pride
With all the perils were yours.)
Nor you drummers, neither at reveille at dawn
Nor the long roll alarming the camp, nor even the muffled beat for burial
Nothing from you this time O drummers bearing my warlike drums.
But aside from these and the marts of wealth and the crowded prome-
nade

Admitting around me comrades close unseen by the rest and voiceless
The slain elate and alive again, the dust and debris alive
I chant this chant of my silent soul in the name of all dead soldiers.
Faces so pale with wondrous eyes, very dear, gather closer yet
Draw close, but speak not.

Phantoms of countless lost
Invisible to the rest henceforth become my companions
Follow me ever—desert me not while I live.

Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living—sweet are the musical voices
sounding
But sweet, ah sweet, are the dead with their silent eyes.

Dearest comrades, all is over and long gone
But love is not over—and what love, O comrades!

Perfume from battle-fields rising, up from the foetor arising.

Perfume therefore my chant, O love, immortal love
Give me to bathe the memories of all dead soldiers
Shroud them, embalm them, cover them all over with tender pride.

Perfume all—make all wholesome
Make these ashes to nourish and blossom

O love, solve all, fructify all with the last chemistry.

Give me exhaustless, make me a fountain

That I exhale love from me wherever I go like a moist perennial dew

For the ashes of all dead soldiers South or North.

THOUGHTS

1

Of these years I sing
 How they pass and have pass'd through convuls'd pains, as through par-
 turations
 How America illustrates birth, muscular youth, the promise, the sure ful-
 filment, the absolute success, despite of people—illustrates evil as well
 as good
 The vehement struggle so fierce for unity in one's-self
 How many hold despairingly yet to the models departed, caste, myths
 obedience, compulsion, and to infidelity
 How few see the arrived models, the athletes, the Western States, or see
 freedom or spirituality, or hold any faith in results
 (But I see the athletes, and I see the results of the war glorious and in-
 evitable, and they again leading to other results.)
 How the great cities appear—how the Democratic masses,
 turbulent willful, as I love them
 How the whirl, the contest, the wrestle of evil with good, the sounding
 and resounding, keep on and on
 How society waits uniform'd, and is for a while between things ended
 and things begun
 How America is the continent of glories, and of the triumph of freedom
 and of the Democracies, and of the fruits of society, and of all that is
 begun
 And how the States are complete in themselves—and how all triumphs
 and glories are complete in themselves, to lead onward
 And how these of mine and of the States will in their turn be convuls'd,
 and serve other parturations and transitions
 And how all people, sights, combinations, the democratic masses too
 serve—and how every fact, and war itself, with all its horrors serves
 And how now or at any time each serves the exquisite transition of death.

2

Of seeds dropping into the ground, of births
 Of the steady concentration of America, inland, upward, to impregnable
 and swarming places
 Of what Indiana, Kentucky, Arkansas, and the rest, are to be
 Of what a few years will show there in Nebraska, Colorado,
 Nevada and the rest
 (Or afar, mounting the Northern Pacific to Sitka or Aliaska.)
 Of what the feuillage of America is the preparation for—and of what all
 sights, North, South, East and West, are
 Of this Union welded in blood, of the solemn price paid, of the unnamed
 lost ever present in my mind;
 Of the temporary use of materials for identity's sake

Of the present, passing, departing—of the growth of completer men than
any yet
Of all sloping down there where the fresh free give the mother, the Mis-
sissippi flows
Of mighty inland cities yet unsurvey'd and unsuspected
Of the new and good names, of the modern developments, of inalienable
homesteads
Of a free and original life there, of simple diet and clean and sweet blood
Of liveness, majestic faces, clear eyes, and perfect physique there
Of immense spiritual results future years far West, each side of the
Anahuacs
Of these songs, well understood there, (being made for that area,
Of the native scorn of grossness and gain there
(O it lurks in me night and day—what is gain after all to savageness and
freedom?)

SONG AT SUNSET

Splendor of ended day floating and filling me
Hour prophetic, hour resuming the past
Inflating my throat, you divine average
You earth and life till the last ray gleams I sing.

Open mouth of my soul uttering gladness
Eyes of my soul seeing perfection
Natural life of me faithfully praising things
Corroborating forever the triumph of things.

Illustrious every one!

Illustrious what we name space, sphere of unnumber'd spirits
Illustrious the mystery of motion in all beings, even the tiniest insect
Illustrious the attribute of speech, the senses, the body
Illustrious the passing light—illustrious the pale reflection on
the new moon in the western sky
Illustrious whatever I see or hear or touch, to the last.

Good in all
In the satisfaction and aplomb of animals
In the annual return of the seasons
In the hilarity of youth
In the strength and flush of manhood
In the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age
In the superb vistas of death.

Wonderful to depart!

Wonderful to be here!

The heart, to jet the all-alike and innocent blood!

To breathe the air, how delicious!

To speak—to walk—to seize something by the hand!

To prepare for sleep, for bed, to look on my rose-color'd flesh!

To be conscious of my body, so satisfied, so large!

To be this incredible God I am!

To have gone forth among other Gods, these men and women I love.

Wonderful how I celebrate you and myself

How my thoughts play subtly at the spectacles around!

How the clouds pass silently overhead!

How the earth darts on and on! and how the sun, moon, stars, dart on
and on!

How the water sports and sings! (surely it is alive!)

How the trees rise and stand up, with strong trunks, with branches
and leaves!

(Surely there is something more in each of the trees, some living soul.)

O amazement of things—even the least particle!

O spirituality of things!

O strain musical flowing through ages and continents, now reaching me
and America!

I take your strong chords, intersperse them, and cheerfully pass them
forward.

I too carol the sun, usher'd or at noon, or as now, setting

I too throb to the brain and beauty of the earth and of all the growths of
the earth

I too have felt the resistless call of myself.

As I steam'd down the Mississippi

As I wander'd over the prairies

As I have lived, as I have look'd through my windows my eyes

As I went forth in the morning, as I beheld the light breaking in the east

As I bathed on the beach of the Eastern Sea, and again on the beach of the
Western Sea

As I roam'd the streets of inland Chicago, whatever streets I have roam'd

Or cities or silent woods, or even amid the sights of war

Wherever I have been I have charged myself with contentment and tri-
umph.

I sing to the last the equalities modern or old

I sing the endless finales of things

I say Nature continues, glory continues

I praise with electric voice

For I do not see one imperfection in the universe

And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last in the universe.

O setting sun! though the time has come

I still warble under you, if none else does, unmitigated adoration.

AS AT THY PORTALS ALSO DEATH

As at thy portals also death
Entering thy sovereign, dim, illimitable grounds
To memories of my mother, to the divine blending, maternity
To her, buried and gone, yet buried not, gone not from me
(I see again the calm benignant face fresh and beautiful still
I sit by the form in the coffin
I kiss and kiss convulsively again the sweet old lips, the cheeks
the closed eyes in the coffin;)
To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of earth life, love, to
me the best
I grave a monumental line, before I go, amid these songs
And set a tombstone here.

MY LEGACY

The business man the acquirer vast
After assiduous years surveying results, preparing for departure
Devises houses and lands to his children, bequeaths stocks, goods funds
for a school or hospital
Leaves money to certain companions to buy tokens, souvenirs of gems
and gold.
But I, my life surveying, closing
With nothing to show to devise from its idle years
Nor houses nor lands, nor tokens of gems or gold for my friends
Yet certain remembrances of the war for you, and after you
And little souvenirs of camps and soldiers, with my love
I bind together and bequeath in this bundle of songs.

PENSIVE ON HER DEAD GAZING

Pensive on her dead gazing I heard the Mother of All
Desperate on the torn bodies, on the forms covering the battlefields gaz-
ing
(As the last gun ceased, but the scent of the powder-smoke linger'd,)
As she call'd to her earth with mournful voice while she stalk'd
Absorb them well O my earth, she cried, I charge you lose not my sons,
lose not an atom
And you streams absorb them well, taking their dear blood
And you local spots, and you airs that swim above lightly impalpable
And all you essences of soil and growth, and you my rivers' depths
And you mountain sides, and the woods where my dear children's blood
trickling redden'd
And you trees down in your roots to bequeath to all future trees
My dead absorb or South or North—my young men's bodies absorb and
their precious precious blood
Which holding in trust for me faithfully back again give me many a year
hence
In unseen essence and odor of surface and grass, centuries hence
In blowing airs from the fields back again give me my darlings, give my
immortal heroes
Exhale me them centuries hence, breathe me their breath, let not an atom
be lost
O years and graves! O air and soil! O my dead, an aroma sweet!
Exhale them perennial sweet death, years, centuries hence.

CAMPS OF GREEN

Nor alone those camps of white, old comrades of the wars
 When as order'd forward, after a long march
 Footsore and weary, soon as the light lessens we halt for the night
 Some of us so fatigued carrying the gun and knapsack, dropping asleep
 in our tracks
 Others pitching the little tents, and the fires lit up begin to sparkle
 Outposts of pickets posted surrounding alert through the dark
 And a word provided for countersign, careful for safety
 Till to the call of the drummers at daybreak loudly beating the drums
 We rise up refresh'd, the night and sleep pass'd over, and resume our
 journey
 Or proceed to battle.

Lo, the camps of the tents of green
 Which the days of peace keep filling, and the days of war keep filling
 With a mystic army, (is it too order'd forward? is it too only halting
 awhile
 Till night and sleep pass over?)
 Now in those camps of green, in their tents dotting the world
 In the parents, children, husbands, wives, in them, in the old and young
 Sleeping under the sunlight, sleeping under the moonlight, content and
 silent there at last
 Behold the mighty bivouac-field and waiting-camp of all
 Of the corps and generals all, and the President over the corps and gen-
 erals all
 And of each of us O soldiers, and of each and all in the ranks we fought
 (There without hatred we all, all meet.)
 For presently O soldiers, we too camp in our place in the bivouac-camps
 of green
 But we need not provide for outposts, nor word for the countersign
 Nor drummer to beat the morning drum.

THE SOBBING OF THE BELLS (MIDNIGHT, SEPT. 19-20, 1881)

The sobbing of the bells, the sudden death-news everywhere
 The slumberers rouse, the rapport of the People
 (Full well they know that message in the darkness
 Full well return, respond within their breasts, their brains, the sad rever-
 berations,)
 The passionate toll and clang-city to city, joining, sounding, passing
 Those heart-beats of a Nation in the night.

AS THEY DRAW TO A CLOSE

As they draw to a close
Of what underlies the precedent songs—of my aims in them
Of the seed I have sought to plant in them
Of joy, sweet joy, through many a year, in them
(For them, for them have I lived, in them my work is done,
Of many an aspiration fond, of many a dream and plan;
Through Space and Time fused in a chant, and the flowing eternal identity
To Nature encompassing these, encompassing God—to the joyous electric
all
To the sense of Death, and accepting exulting in Death in its turn the same
as life
The entrance of man to sing;
To compact you, ye parted, diverse lives
To put rapport the mountains and rocks and streams
And the winds of the north, and the forests of oak and pine
With you O soul.

JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY!

Joy, shipmate, Joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,
Our life is closed, our life begins
The long, long anchorage we leave
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore
Joy, shipmate, joy.

THE UNTOLD WANT

The untold want by life and land ne'er granted
Now voyager sail thou forth to seek and find.

PORTALS

What are those of the known but to ascend and enter the Unknown?
And what are those of life but for Death?

THESE CAROLS

These carols sung to cheer my passage through the world I see
For completion I dedicate to the Invisible World.

NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE

Now finale to the shore
Now land and life finale and farewell
Now Voyager depart, (much, much for thee is yet in store,)
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas
Cautiously cruising, studying the charts
Duly again to port and hawser's tie returning;
But now obey thy cherish'd secret wish
Embrace thy friends, leave all in order
To port and hawser's tie no more returning
Depart upon thy endless cruise old Sailor.

SO LONG!

To conclude, I announce what comes after me.

I remember I said before my leaves sprang at all
I would raise my voice jocund and strong with reference to consumma-
tions.

When America does what was promis'd
When through these States walk a hundred millions of superb persons
When the rest part away for superb persons and contribute to them
When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote America
Then to me and mine our due fruition.

I have press'd through in my own right
I have sung the body and the soul, war and peace have I sung, and the
songs of life and death
And the songs of birth, and shown that there are many births.

I have offer'd my style to every one, I have journey'd with confident step;
While my pleasure is yet at the full I whisper So long!

And take the young woman's hand and the young man's hand for the
last time.

I announce natural persons to arise
I announce justice triumphant
I announce uncompromising liberty and equality
I announce the justification of candor and the justification of pride.

I announce that the identity of these States is a single identity only
I announce the Union more and more compact, indissoluble
I announce splendors and majesties to make all the previous politics of
the earth insignificant.

I announce adhesiveness, I say it shall be limitless, unloosen'd
I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking for.

I announce a man or woman coming, perhaps you are the one, (So long!)
I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste affectionate, com-
passionate, fully arm'd.

I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual, bold
I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation.

I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded
I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

O thicker and faster—(So long!)
O crowding too close upon me
I foresee too much, it means more than I thought
It appears to me I am dying.

Hasten throat and sound your last
Salute me—salute the days once more. Peel the old cry once more.

Screaming electric, the atmosphere using
 At random glancing, each as I notice absorbing
 Swiftly on, but a little while alighting
 Curious envelop'd messages delivering
 Sparkles hot, seed ethereal down in the dirt dropping
 Myself unknowing, my commission obeying, to question it never daring
 To ages and ages yet the growth of the seed leaving
 To troops out of the war arising, they the tasks I have set promulging
 To women certain whispers of myself bequeathing, their affection more
 clearly explaining
 To young men my problems offering—no dallier I—I the muscle of their
 brains trying
 So I pass, a little time vocal, visible, contrary
 Afterward a melodious echo, passionately bent for, (death making me
 really undying.)
 The best of me then when no longer visible, for toward that I have been
 incessantly preparing.

What is there more, that I lag and pause and crouch extended with un-
 shut mouth?

Is there a single final farewell?
 My songs cease, I abandon them
 From behind the screen where I hid I advance personally solely to you.

Camerado, this is no book
 Who touches this touches a man
 (Is it night? are we here together alone?)
 It is I you hold and who holds you
 I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls me forth.

O how your fingers drowse me
 Your breath falls around me like dew, your pulse lulls the tympan of my
 ears

I feel immersed from head to foot
 Delicious, enough.

Enough O deed impromptu and secret
 Enough O gliding present—enough O summ'd-up past.

Dear friend whoever you are take this kiss
 I give it especially to you, do not forget me
 I feel like one who has done work for the day to retire awhile
 I receive now again of my many translations, from my avatars
 ascending, while others doubtless await me
 An unknown sphere more real than I dream'd, more direct, darts awak-
 ening rays about me, So long!

Remember my words, I may again return
 I love you, I depart from materials
 I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

BOOK XXXIV. SANDS AT SEVENTY

MANNAHATTA

My city's fit and noble name resumed
Choice aboriginal name, with marvellous beauty, meaning
A rocky founded island—shores where ever gayly dash the coming going,
hurrying sea waves.

PAUMANOK

Sea-beauty! stretch'd and basking!
One side thy inland ocean laving, broad, with copious commerce steam-
ers, sails
And one the Atlantic's wind caressing, fierce or gentle—mighty hulls
dark-gliding in the distance.
Isle of sweet brooks of drinking-water—healthy air and soil!
Isle of the salty shore and breeze and brine!

FROM MONTAUK POINT

I stand as on some mighty eagle's beak
Eastward the sea absorbing, viewing, (nothing but sea and sky,)
The tossing waves, the foam, the ships in the distance
The wild unrest, the snowy, curling caps—that inbound urge and urge of
waves
Seeking the shores forever.

TO THOSE WHO'VE FAIL'D

To those who've fail'd, in aspiration vast
To unnam'd soldiers fallen in front on the lead
To calm, devoted engineers—to over-ardent travelers—to pilots on their
ships
To many a lofty song and picture without recognition—I'd rear laurel-
cover'd monument
High, high above the rest—To all cut off before their time
Possess'd by some strange spirit of fire
Quench'd by an early death.

A CAROL CLOSING SIXTY-NINE

A carol closing sixty-nine—a resume—a repetition
My lines in joy and hope continuing on the same
Of ye, O God, Life, Nature, Freedom, Poetry;
Of you, my Land—your rivers, prairies, States—you, mottled Flag I love
Your aggregate retain'd entire—Of north, south, east and west, your items
all;
Of me myself—the jocund heart yet beating in my breast
The body wreck'd, old, poor and paralyzed—the strange inertia falling
pall-like round me
The burning fires down in my sluggish blood not yet extinct
The undiminish'd faith—the groups of loving friends.

THE BRAVEST SOLDIERS

Brave, brave were the soldiers (high named to-day) who lived through
the fight;
But the bravest press'd to the front and fell, unnamed, unknown.

A FONT OF TYPE

This latent mine—these unlaunch'd voices—passionate powers
Wrath, argument, or praise, or comic leer, or prayer devout
(Not nonpareil, brevier, bourgeois, long primer merely,
These ocean waves arousable to fury and to death
Or sooth'd to ease and sheeny sun and sleep
Within the pallid slivers slumbering.

AS I SIT WRITING HERE

As I sit writing here, sick and grown old
Not my least burden is that dulness of the years, querilities
Ungracious glooms, aches, lethargy, constipation, whimpering ennui
May filter in my dally songs.

MY CANARY BIRD

Did we count great, O soul, to penetrate the themes of mighty books
Absorbing deep and full from thoughts, plays, speculations?
But now from thee to me, caged bird, to feel thy joyous warble
Filling the air, the lonesome room, the long forenoon
Is it not just as great, O soul?

QUERIES TO MY SEVENTIETH YEAR

Approaching, nearing, curious
Thou dim, uncertain spectre—bringest thou life or death?
Strength, weakness, blindness, more paralysis and heavier?
Or placid skies and sun? Wilt stir the waters yet?
Or haply cut me short for good? Or leave me here as now
Dull, parrot-like and old, with crack'd voice harping, screeching?

THE WALLABOUT MARTYRS

Greater than memory of Achilles or Ulysses
More, more by far to thee than tomb of Alexander
Those cart loads of old charnel ashes, scales and splints of mouldy bones
Once living men—once resolute courage, aspiration, strength
The stepping stones to thee to-day and here, America.

THE FIRST DANDELION

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd grass—innocent, golden, calm as
the dawn
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

AMERICA

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons
All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old
Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich
Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love
A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother
Chair'd in the adamant of Time.

MEMORIES

How sweet the silent backward tracings!
The wanderings as in dreams—the meditation of old times resumed
—their loves, joys, persons, voyages.

TO-DAY AND THEE

The appointed winners in a long-stretch'd game;
The course of Time and nations—Egypt, India, Greece and Rome;
The past entire, with all its heroes, histories, arts, experiments
Its store of songs, inventions, voyages, teachers, books
Garner'd for now and thee—To think of it!
The heirdom all converged in thee!

AFTER THE DAZZLE OF DAY

After the dazzle of day is gone
Only the dark, dark night shows to my eyes the stars;
After the clangor of organ majestic, or chorus, or perfect band
Silent, athwart my soul, moves the symphony true.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, BORN FEB. 12, 1809

To-day, from each and all, a breath of prayer—a pulse of thought
To memory of Him—to birth of Him.

OUT OF MAY'S SHOWS SELECTED

Apple orchards, the trees all cover'd with blossoms;
Wheat fields carpeted far and near in vital emerald green;
The eternal, exhaustless freshness of each early morning;
The yellow, golden, transparent haze of the warm afternoon sun;
The aspiring lilac bushes with profuse purple or white flowers.

HALCYON DAYS

Not from successful love alone
Nor wealth, nor honor'd middle age, nor victories of politics or war;
But as life wanes, and all the turbulent passions calm
As gorgeous, vapory, silent hues cover the evening sky
As softness, fulness, rest, suffuse the frame, like freshier, balmier air
As the days take on a mellower light, and the apple at last hangs
really finish'd and indolent-ripe on the tree
Then for the teeming quietest, happiest days of all!
The brooding and blissful halcyon days!

FANCIES AT NAVESINK

(I) The Pilot in the Mist

Steaming the northern rapids—(an old St. Lawrence reminiscence
A sudden memory-flash comes back, I know not why
Here waiting for the sunrise, gazing from this hill;)
Again 'tis just at morning—a heavy haze contends with daybreak
Again the trembling, laboring vessel veers me—I press through
foam-dash'd rocks that almost touch me
Again I mark where aft the small thin Indian helmsman
Looms in the mist, with brow elate and governing hand.

(II) Had I the Choice

Had I the choice to tally greatest bards
To limn their portraits, stately, beautiful, and emulate at will
Homer with all his wars and warriors—Hector, Achilles, Ajax
Or Shakspeare's woe-entangled Hamlet, Lear, Othello—Tennyson's fair
ladies
Metre or wit the best, or choice conceit to wield in perfect rhyme
delight of singers;
These, these, O sea, all these I'd gladly barter
Would you the undulation of one wave, its trick to me transfer
Or breathe one breath of yours upon my verse
And leave its odor there.

(III) You Tides with Ceaseless Swell

You tides with ceaseless swell! you power that does this work!
You unseen force, centripetal, centrifugal, through space's spread
Rapport of sun, moon, earth, and all the constellations
What are the messages by you from distant stars to us? what Sirius'?
what Capella's?
What central heart—and you the pulse—vivifies all? what boundless ag-
gregate of all?
What subtle indirection and significance in you? what clue to all in you?
what fluid, vast identity
Holding the universe with all its parts as one—as sailing in a ship?

(IV) Last of Ebb, and Daylight Waning

Last of ebb, and daylight waning

Scented sea-cool landward making, smells of sedge and salt incoming
With many a half-caught voice sent up from the eddies
Many a muffled confession—many a sob and whisper'd word
As of speakers far or hid.

How they sweep down and out! how they mutter!

Poets unnamed—artists greatest of any, with cherish'd lost designs
Love's unresponse—a chorus of age's complaints—hope's last words
Some suicide's despairing cry, Away to the boundless waste, and never
again return.

On to oblivion then!

On, on, and do your part, ye burying, ebbing tide!

On for your time, ye furious debouche!

(V) And Yet Not You Alone

And yet not you alone, twilight and burying ebb
Nor you, ye lost designs alone—nor failures, aspirations;
I know, divine deceitful ones, your glamour's seeming;
Duly by you, from you, the tide and light again—duly the hinges turning
Duly the needed discord-parts offsetting, blending
Weaving from you, from Sleep, Night, Death itself
The rhythmus of Birth eternal.

(VI) Proudly the Flood Comes In

Proudly the flood comes in, shouting, foaming, advancing
Long it holds at the high, with bosom broad outswelling
All throbs, dilates—the farms, woods, streets of cities—workmen at work
Mainsails, topsails, jibs, appear in the offing—steamers' pennants
of smoke—and under the forenoon sun
Freighted with human lives, gaily the outward bound, gaily the inward
bound

Flaunting from many a spar the flag I love.

(VII) By That Long Scan of Waves

By that long scan of waves, myself call'd back, resumed upon myself
In every crest some undulating light or shade—some retrospect
Joys, travels, studies, silent panoramas—scenes ephemeral
The long past war, the battles, hospital sights, the wounded and the dead
Myself through every by-gone phase—my idle youth—old age at hand
My three-score years of life summ'd up, and more, and past
By any grand ideal tried, intentionless, the whole a nothing
And haply yet some drop within God's scheme's ensemble—some wave,
or part of wave

Like one of yours, ye multitudinous ocean.

(VIII) Then Last Of All

Then last of all, caught from these shores, this hill
Of you O tides, the mystic human meaning:
Only by law of you, your swell and ebb, enclosing me the same
The brain that shapes, the voice that chants this song.

ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER, 1884

If I should need to name, O Western World, your powerfulest scene and
show
'Twould not be you, Niagara—nor you, ye limitless prairies—nor your
huge rifts of canyons, Colorado
Nor you, Yosemite—nor Yellowstone, with all its spasmic geyser-loops
ascending to the skies, appearing and disappearing
Nor Oregon's white cones—nor Huron's belt of mighty lakes—nor
Mississippi's stream:
—This seething hemisphere's humanity, as now, I'd name—the still small
voice vibrating—America's choosing day
(The heart of it not in the chosen—the act itself the main, the
quadriennial choosing,)
The stretch of North and South arous'd—sea-board and inland—
Texas to Maine—the Prairie States—Vermont, Virginia, California
The final ballot—shower from East to West—the paradox and conflict
The countless snow—flakes falling—(a swordless conflict
Yet more than all Rome's wars of old, or modern Napoleon's:) the peace-
ful choice of all
Or good or ill humanity—welcoming the darker odds, the dross:
—Foams and ferments the wine? it serves to purify—while the heart pants,
life glows:
These stormy gusts and winds waft precious ships
Swell'd Washington's, Jefferson's, Lincoln's sails.

WITH HUSKY-HAUGHTY LIPS, O SEA!

With husky-haughty lips, O sea!

Where day and night I wend thy surf-beat shore
Imaging to my sense thy varied strange suggestions
(I see and plainly list thy talk and conference here,
Thy troops of white-maned racers racing to the goal
Thy ample, smiling face, dash'd with the sparkling dimples of the sun
Thy brooding scowl and murk—thy unloos'd hurricanes
Thy unsubduedness, caprices, wilfulness;
Great as thou art above the rest, thy many tears—a lack from all eternity
in thy content
(Naught but the greatest struggles, wrongs, defeats, could make thee
greatest—no less could make thee.)
Thy lonely state—something thou ever seek'st and seek'st, yet never
gain'st
Surely some right withheld—some voice, in huge monotonous rage, of
freedom-lover pent
Some vast heart, like a planet's, chain'd and chafing in those breakers
By lengthen'd swell, and spasm, and panting breath
And rhythmic rasping of thy sands and waves
And serpent hiss, and savage peals of laughter
And undertones of distant lion roar
(Sounding, appealing to the sky's deaf ear—but now, rapport for once
A phantom in the night thy confidant for once,
The first and last confession of the globe
Outsurging, muttering from thy soul's abysms
The tale of cosmic elemental passion
Thou tellest to a kindred soul.

DEATH OF GENERAL GRANT

As one by one withdraw the lofty actors
From that great play on history's stage eterne
That lurid, partial act of war and peace—of old and new contending
Fought out through wrath, fears, dark dismays, and many a long sus-
pense;
All past—and since, in countless graves receding, mellowing
Victor's and vanquish'd—Lincoln's and Lee's—now thou with them
Man of the mighty days—and equal to the days!
Thou from the prairies!—tangled and many-vein'd and hard has been thy
part
To admiration has it been enacted!

RED JACKET (FROM ALOFT)

Upon this scene, this show
 Yielded to-day by fashion, learning, wealth
 (Nor in caprice alone—some grains of deepest meaning,
 Haply, aloft, (who knows?) from distant sky-clouds' blended shapes
 As some old tree, or rock or cliff, thrill'd with its soul
 Product of Nature's sun, stars, earth direct—a towering human form
 In hunting-shirt of film, arm'd with the rifle, a half-ironical
 smile curving its phantom lips
 Like one of Ossian's ghosts looks down.

WASHINGTON'S MONUMENT FEBRUARY, 1885

Ah, not this marble, dead and cold:
 Far from its base and shaft expanding—the round zones circling compre-
 hending
 Thou, Washington, art all the world's, the continents' entire—not yours
 alone, America
 Europe's as well, in every part, castle of lord or laborer's cot
 Or frozen North, or sultry South—the African's—the Arab's in his tent
 Old Asia's there with venerable smile, seated amid her ruins;
 (Greets the antique the hero new? 'tis but the same—the heir legitimate,
 continued ever
 The indomitable heart and arm—proofs of the never-broken line
 Courage, alertness, patience, faith, the same—e'en in defeat defeated not,
 the same:)
 Wherever sails a ship, or house is built on land, or day or night
 Through teeming cities' streets, indoors or out, factories or farms
 Now, or to come, or past—where patriot wills existed or exist
 Wherever Freedom, pois'd by Toleration, sway'd by Law
 Stands or is rising thy true monument.

OF THAT BLITHE THROAT OF THINE

Of that blithe throat of thine from arctic bleak and blank
I'll mind the lesson, solitary bird—let me too welcome chilling drifts
E'en the profoundest chill, as now—a torpid pulse, a brain unnerv'd
Old age land-lock'd within its winter bay—(cold, cold, O cold!)
These snowy hairs, my feeble arm, my frozen feet
For them thy faith, thy rule I take, and grave it to the last;
Not summer's zones alone—not chants of youth, or south's warm tides
alone
But held by sluggish floes, pack'd in the northern ice, the cumulus of
years
These with gay heart I also sing.

BROADWAY

What hurrying human tides, or day or night!
What passions, winnings, losses, ardors, swim thy waters!
What whirls of evil, bliss and sorrow, stem thee!
What curious questioning glances—glints of love!
Leer, envy, scorn, contempt, hope, aspiration!
Thou portal—thou arena—thou of the myriad long-drawn lines and
groups!
(Could but thy flagstones, curbs, facades, tell their inimitable tales;
Thy windows rich, and huge hotels—thy side-walks wide;)
Thou of the endless sliding, mincing, shuffling feet!
Thou, like the parti-colored world itself—like infinite, teeming mocking
life!
Thou visor'd, vast, unspeakable show and lesson!

TO GET THE FINAL LILT OF SONGS

To get the final lilt of songs
To penetrate the inmost lore of poets—to know the mighty ones
Job, Homer, Eschylus, Dante, Shakespere, Tennyson, Emerson;
To diagnose the shifting-delicate tints of love and pride and doubt—to
truly understand
To encompass these, the last keen faculty and entrance-price
Old age, and what it brings from all its past experiences.

OLD SALT KOSSABONE

Far back, related on my mother's side
Old Salt Kossabone, I'll tell you how he died:
(Had been a sailor all his life—was nearly 90—lived with his married
grandchild, Jenny;
House on a hill, with view of bay at hand, and distant cape, and stretch
to open sea;)
The last of afternoons, the evening hours, for many a year his regular
custom
In his great arm chair by the window seated
(Sometimes, indeed, through half the day,)
Watching the coming, going of the vessels, he mutters to himself—
And now the close of all:
One struggling outbound brig, one day, baffled for long—cross-tides and
much wrong going
At last at nightfall strikes the breeze aright, her whole luck veering
And swiftly bending round the cape, the darkness proudly entering
cleaving, as he watches
"She's free—she's on her destination"—these the last words—when
Jenny came, he sat there dead
Dutch Kossabone, Old Salt, related on my mother's side, far back.

THE DEAD TENOR

As down the stage again
With Spanish hat and plumes, and gait inimitable
Back from the fading lessons of the past, I'd call, I'd tell and own
How much from thee! the revelation of the singing voice from thee!
(So firm—so liquid—soft—again that tremulous, manly timbre!
The perfect singing voice—deepest of all to me the lesson—trial and test of
all:)
How through those strains distill'd—how the rapt ears, the soul of me,
absorbing
Fernando's heart, Manrico's passionate call, Ernani's, sweet Gennaro's
I fold thenceforth, or seek to fold, within my chants transmuting
Freedom's and Love's and Faith's unloos'd cantabile
(As perfume's, color's, sunlight's correlation:)
From these, for these, with these, a hurried line, dead tenor
A wafted autumn leaf, dropt in the closing grave, the shovel'd earth
To memory of thee.

CONTINUITIES

Nothing is ever really lost, or can be lost
No birth, identity, form—no object of the world.
Nor life, nor force, nor any visible thing;
Appearance must not foil, nor shifted sphere confuse thy brain.
Ample are time and space—ample the fields of Nature.
The body, sluggish, aged, cold—the embers left from earlier fires
The light in the eye grown dim, shall duly flame again;
The sun now low in the west rises for mornings and for noons continual;
To frozen clods ever the spring's invisible law returns
With grass and flowers and summer fruits and corn.

YONNONDIO

A song, a poem of itself—the word itself a dirge
 Amid the wilds, the rocks, the storm and wintry night
 To me such misty, strange tableaux the syllables calling up;
 Yonnondio—I see, far in the west or north, a limitless ravine, with plains
 and mountains dark
 I see swarms of stalwart chieftains, medicine-men, and warriors
 As flitting by like clouds of ghosts, they pass and are gone in the twilight
 (Race of the woods, the landscapes free, and the falls!
 No picture, poem, statement, passing them to the future:)
 Yonnondio! Yonnondio!—unlimn'd they disappear;
 To-day gives place, and fades—the cities, farms, factories fade;
 A muffled sonorous sound, a wailing word is borne through the air for a
 moment
 Then blank and gone and still, and utterly lost.

LIFE

Ever the undiscouraged, resolute, struggling soul of man;
 (Have former armies fail'd? then we send fresh armies—and fresh again;)
 Ever the grappled mystery of all earth's ages old or new;
 Ever the eager eyes, hurrahs, the welcome-clapping hands, the loud ap-
 plause;
 Ever the soul dissatisfied, curious, unconvinced at last;
 Struggling to-day the same—battling the same.

"GOING SOMEWHERE"

My science-friend, my noblest woman-friend
 (Now buried in an English grave—and this a memory-leaf for her dear
 sake,)
 Ended our talk—"The sum, concluding all we know of old or modern-
 learning, intuitions deep
 "Of all Geologies—Histories—of all Astronomy—of Evolution Metaphysics
 all
 "Is, that we all are onward, onward, speeding slowly, surely bettering
 "Life, life an endless march, an endless army, (no halt, but it is duly over,)
 "The world, the race, the soul—in space and time the universes
 "All bound as is befitting each—all surely going somewhere."

SMALL THE THEME OF MY CHANT

Small the theme of my Chant, yet the greatest—namely, One's-Self—
a simple, separate person. That, for the use of the New World, I sing.

Man's physiology complete, from top to toe, I sing. Not physiognomy
alone nor brain alone, is worthy for the Muse;—I say the Form com-
plete is worthier far. The Female equally with the Male, I sing.

Nor cease at the theme of One's-Self. I speak the word of the modern, the
word En-Masse.

My Days I sing, and the Lands—with interstice I knew of hapless War.

(O friend, whoe'er you are, at last arriving hither to commence, I
feel through every leaf the pressure of your hand, which I return.

And thus upon our journey, footing the road, and more than once, and
link'd together let us go.)

TRUE CONQUERORS

Old farmers, travelers, workmen (no matter how crippled or bent,)

Old sailors, out of many a perilous voyage, storm and wreck

Old soldiers from campaigns, with all their wounds, defeats and scars;
Enough that they've survived at all—long life's unflinching ones!

Forth from their struggles, trials, fights, to have emerged at all—in that
alone

True conquerors o'er all the rest.

THE UNITED STATES TO OLD WORLD CRITICS

Here first the duties of to-day, the lessons of the concrete

Wealth, order, travel, shelter, products, plenty;

As of the building of some varied, vast, perpetual edifice

Whence to arise inevitable in time, the towering roofs, the lamps

The solid-planted spires tall shooting to the stars.

THE CALMING THOUGHT OF ALL

That coursing on, whate'er men's speculations
Amid the changing schools, theologies, philosophies
Amid the bawling presentations new and old
The round earth's silent vital laws, facts, modes continue.

THANKS IN OLD AGE

Thanks in old age—thanks ere I go
For health, the midday sun, the impalpable air—for life, mere life
For precious ever-lingering memories, (of you my mother dear—you
father—you, brothers, sisters, friends,)
For all my days—not those of peace alone—the days of war the same
For gentle words, caresses, gifts from foreign lands
For shelter, wine and meat—for sweet appreciation
(You distant, dim unknown—or young or old—countless,
unspecified readers belov'd
We never met, and neer shall meet—and yet our souls embrace, long close
and long;)
For beings, groups, love, deeds, words, books—for colors, forms
For all the brave strong men—devoted, hardy men—who've forward
sprung in freedom's help, all years, all lands
For braver, stronger, more devoted men—(a special laurel ere I go to life's
war's chosen ones
The cannoneers of song and thought—the great artillerists—the foremost
leaders, captains of the soul:)
As soldier from an ended war return'd—As traveler out of myriads to the
long procession retrospective
Thanks—joyful thanks!—a soldier's, traveler's thanks.

LIFE AND DEATH

The two old, simple problems ever intertwined
Close home, elusive, present, baffled, grappled.
By each successive age insoluble, pass'd on
To ours to-day—and we pass on the same.

THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea
Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet
the same
I descend to lave the drouths, atomies, dust-layers of the globe
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;
And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin and
make pure and beautify it;
(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering
Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

SOON SHALL THE WINTER'S FOIL BE HERE

Soon shall the winter's foil be here;
Soon shall these icy ligatures unbind and melt—A little while
And air, soil, wave, suffused shall be in softness, bloom and
growth—a thousand forms shall rise
From these dead clods and chills as from low burial graves.
Thine eyes, ears—all thy best attributes—all that takes cognizance of natu-
ral beauty
Shall wake and fill. Thou shalt perceive the simple shows, the delicate
miracles of earth
Dandelions, clover, the emerald grass, the early scents and flowers
The arbutus under foot, the willow's yellow-green, the blossoming plum
and cherry;
With these the robin, lark and thrush, singing their songs—the flitting
bluebird;
For such the scenes the annual play brings on.

WHILE NOT THE PAST FORGETTING

While not the past forgetting
To-day, at least, contention sunk entire—peace, brotherhood uprisen;
For sign reciprocal our Northern, Southern hands
Lay on the graves of all dead soldiers, North or South
(Nor for the past alone—for meanings to the future,)
Wreaths of roses and branches of palm.

THE DYING VETERAN

Amid these days of order, ease, prosperity
Amid the current songs of beauty, peace, decorum
I cast a reminiscence—(likely 'twill offend you
I heard it in my boyhood;—)More than a generation since
A queer old savage man, a fighter under Washington himself
(Large, brave, cleanly, hot-blooded, no talker, rather spiritualistic
Had fought in the ranks—fought well—had been all through the Revolu-
tionary war,)
Lay dying—sons, daughters, church-deacons, lovingly tending him
Sharpening their sense, their ears, towards his murmuring, half-caught
words:
"Let me return again to my war-days
To the sights and scenes—to forming the line of battle
To the scouts ahead reconnoitering
To the cannons, the grim artillery
To the galloping aides, carrying orders
To the wounded, the fallen, the heat, the suspense
The perfume strong, the smoke, the deafening noise;
Away with your life of peace!—your joys of peace!
Give me my old wild battle-life again!"

STRONGER LESSONS

Have you learn'd lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you?
Have you not learn'd great lessons from those who reject you, and brace themselves against you? or who treat you with contempt or dispute the passage with you?

A PRAIRIE SUNSET

Shot gold, maroon and violet, dazzling silver, emerald, fawn
The earth's whole amplitude and Nature's multiform power consign'd
for once to colors;
The light, the general air possess'd by them—colors till now unknown
No limit, confine—not the Western sky alone—the high meridian—
North, South, all
Pure luminous color fighting the silent shadows to the last.

TWENTY YEARS

Down on the ancient wharf, the sand, I sit, with a new-comer chatting:
He shipp'd as green-hand boy, and sail'd away, (took some sudden vehement notion;)
Since, twenty years and more have circled round and round
While he the globe was circling round and round, —and now returns:
How changed the place—all the old land-marks gone—the parents dead;
(Yes, he comes back to lay in port for good—to settle—has a well-fill'd purse—no spot will do but this;)
The little boat that scull'd him from the sloop, now held in leash I see
I hear the slapping waves, the restless keel, the rocking in the sand
I see the sailor kit, the canvas bag, the great box bound with brass
I scan the face all berry-brown and bearded—the stout-strong frame
Dress'd in its russet suit of good Scotch cloth:
(Then what the told-out story of those twenty years? What of the future?)

ORANGE BUDS BY MAIL FROM FLORIDA

A lesser proof than old Voltaire's, yet greater
Proof of this present time, and thee, thy broad expanse, America
To my plain Northern hut, in outside clouds and snow
Brought safely for a thousand miles o'er land and tide
Some three days since on their own soil live-sprouting
Now here their sweetness through my room unfolding
A bunch of orange buds by mall from Florida.

TWILIGHT

The soft voluptuous opiate shades
The sun just gone, the eager light dispell'd—(I too will soon be gone, dis-
pell'd,
A haze—nirwana—rest and night—oblivion.

YOU LINGERING SPARSE LEAVES OF ME

You lingering sparse leaves of me on winter-nearing boughs
And I some well-shorn tree of field or orchard-row;
You tokens diminute and lorn—(not now the flush of May, or July clover-
bloom—no grain of August now;)
You pallid banner-staves—you pennants valueless—you overstay'd of time
Yet my soul-dearest leaves confirming all the rest
The faithfulest—hardiest—last.

NOT MEAGRE, LATENT BOUGHS ALONE

Not meagre, latent boughs alone, O songs! (scaly and bare, like eagles'
talons,
But haply for some sunny day (who knows?) some future spring, some
summer—bursting forth
To verdant leaves, or sheltering shade—to nourishing fruit
Apples and grapes—the stalwart limbs of trees emerging—the fresh
free, open air
And love and faith, like scented roses blooming.

THE DEAD EMPEROR

To-day, with bending head and eyes, thou, too, Columbia
Less for the mighty crown laid low in sorrow—less for the Emperor
Thy true condolence breathest, sendest out o'er many a salt sea mile
Mourning a good old man—a faithful shepherd, patriot.

AS THE GREEK'S SIGNAL FLAME

As the Greek's signal flame, by antique records told
Rose from the hill-top, like applause and glory
Welcoming in fame some special veteran, hero
With rosy tinge reddening the land he'd served
So I aloft from Mannahatta's ship-fringed shore
Lift high a kindled brand for thee, Old Poet.

THE DISMANTLED SHIP

In some unused lagoon, some nameless bay
On sluggish, lonesome waters, anchor'd near the shore
An old, dismasted, gray and batter'd ship, disabled, done
After free voyages to all the seas of earth, haul'd up at last and
hawser'd tight
Lies rusting, mouldering.

NOW PRECEDENT SONGS, FAREWELL

Now precedent songs, farewell—by every name farewell
 (Trains of a staggering line in many a strange procession, waggons
 From ups and downs—with intervals—from elder years, mid-age, or
 youth,)
 "In Cabin'd Ships, or Thee Old Cause or Poets to Come
 Or Paumanok, Song of Myself, Calamus, or Adam
 Or Beat! Beat! Drums! or To the Leaven'd Soil they Trod
 Or Captain! My Captain! Kosmos, Quicksand Years, or Thoughts
 Thou Mother with thy Equal Brood," and many, many more unspecified
 From fibre heart of mine—from throat and tongue—(My life's hot pulsing
 blood
 The personal urge and form for me—not merely paper, automatic type
 and ink,)
 Each song of mine—each utterance in the past—having its long, long
 history
 Of life or death, or soldier's wound, of country's loss or safety
 (O heaven! what flash and started endless train of all! compared indeed
 to that!
 What wretched shred e'en at the best of all!)

AN EVENING LULL

After a week of physical anguish
 Unrest and pain, and feverish heat
 Toward the ending day a calm and lull comes on
 Three hours of peace and soothing rest of brain.

OLD AGE'S LAMBENT PEAKS

The touch of flame—the illuminating fire—the loftiest look at last
 O'er city, passion, sea—o'er prairie, mountain, wood—the earth itself
 The airy, different, changing hues of all, in failing twilight
 Objects and groups, bearings, faces, reminiscences;
 The calmer sight—the golden setting, clear and broad:
 So much i' the atmosphere, the points of view, the situations whence we
 scan
 Bro't out by them alone—so much (perhaps the best) unreck'd before;
 The lights indeed from them—old age's lambent peaks.

AFTER THE SUPPER AND TALK

After the supper and talk—after the day is done
As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging
Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating
(So hard for his hand to release those hands—no more will they meet
No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young
A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more,)
Shunning, postponing severance—seeking to ward off the last word ever
so little
E'en at the exit-door turning—charges superfluous calling back—e'en as he
descends the steps
Something to eke out a minute additional—shadows of nightfall deepen-
ing
Farewells, messages lessening—dimmer the forthgoer's visage and form
Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, O so loth to depart!
Garrulous to the very last.

BOOKXXXV. GOOD-BYE MY FANCY

SAIL OUT FOR GOOD, EIDOLON YACHT!

Heave the anchor short!

Raise main-sail and jib—steer forth

O little white-hull'd sloop, now speed on really deep waters

(I will not call it our concluding voyage

But outset and sure entrance to the truest, best, maturest;)

Depart, depart from solid earth—no more returning to these shores

Now on for aye our infinite free venture wending

Spurning all yet tried ports, seas, hawsers, densities, gravitation

Sail out for good, eidolon yacht of me!

LINGERING LAST DROPS

And whence and why come you?

We know not whence, (was the answer)

We only know that we drift here with the rest

That we linger'd and lagg'd—but were wafted at last, and are now here

To make the passing shower's concluding drops.

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY

Good-bye my fancy—(I had a word to say

But 'tis not quite the time—The best of any man's word or say

Is when its proper place arrives—and for its meaning

I keep mine till the last.)

ON, ON THE SAME, YE JOCUND TWAIN!

On, on the same, ye jocund twain!

My life and recitative, containing birth, youth, mid-age years
Fitful as motley-tongues of flame, inseparably twined and merged in
one—combining all

My single soul—aims, confirmations, failures, joys—Nor single soul alone
I chant my nation's crucial stage, (America's, haply humanity's)—
the trial great, the victory great

A strange eclaircissement of all the masses past, the eastern world
the ancient, medieval

Here, here from wanderings, strayings, lessons, wars, defeats—here at the
west a voice triumphant—justifying all

A gladsome pealing cry—a song for once of utmost pride and satisfaction;
I chant from it the common bulk, the general average horde, (the
best sooner than the worst)—And now I chant old age
(My verses, written first for forenoon life, and for the summer's autumn's
spread

I pass to snow-white hairs the same, and give to pulses winter-cool'd the
same;)

As here in careless trill, I and my recitatives, with faith and love wafting
to other work, to unknown songs, conditions

On, on ye jocund twain! continue on the same!

MY 71ST YEAR

After surmounting three-score and ten

With all their chances, changes, losses, sorrows

My parents' deaths, the vagaries of my life, the many tearing passions of
me, the war of '63 and '4

As some old broken soldier, after a long, hot, wearying march, or haply
after battle

To-day at twilight, hobbling, answering company roll-call, Here with vi-
tal voice

Reporting yet, saluting yet the Officer over all.

APPARITIONS

A vague mist hanging 'round half the pages:
 (Sometimes how strange and clear to the soul
 That all these solid things are indeed but apparitions, concepts
 non-realities.)

THE PALLID WREATH

Somehow I cannot let it go yet, funeral though it is
 Let it remain back there on its nail suspended
 With pink, blue, yellow, all blanch'd, and the white now gray and ashy
 One wither'd rose put years ago for thee, dear friend;
 But I do not forget thee. Hast thou then faded?
 Is the odor exhaled? Are the colors, vitalities, dead?
 No, while memories subtly play—the past vivid as ever;
 For but last night I woke, and in that spectral ring saw thee
 Thy smile, eyes, face, calm, silent, loving as ever:
 So let the wreath hang still awhile within my eye-reach
 It is not yet dead to me, nor even pallid.

AN ENDED DAY

The soothing sanity and blitheness of completion
 The pomp and hurried contest-glare and rush are done;
 Now triumph! transformation! jubilate!

OLD AGE'S SHIP & CRAFTY DEATH'S

From east and west across the horizon's edge
 Two mighty masterful vessels sailers steal upon us:
 But we'll make race a-time upon the seas—a battle-contest yet! bear lively
 there!

(Our joys of strife and derring-do to the last!)
 Put on the old ship all her power to-day!

Crowd top-sail, top-gallant and royal studding-sails
 Out challenge and defiance—flags and flaunting pennants added
 As we take to the open—take to the deepest, freest waters.

TO THE PENDING YEAR

Have I no weapon-word for thee—some message brief and fierce?
(Have I fought out and done indeed the battle?) Is there no shot left
For all thy affectations, lisps, scorns, manifold silliness?
Nor for myself—my own rebellious self in thee?
Down, down, proud gorge!—though choking thee;
Thy bearded throat and high-borne forehead to the gutter;
Crouch low thy neck to eleemosynary gifts.

SHAKSPERE-BACON'S CIPHER

I doubt it not—then more, far more;
In each old song bequeath'd—in every noble page or text
(Different—something unreck'd before—some unsuspected author,)
In every object, mountain, tree, and star—in every birth and life
As part of each—evolv'd from each—meaning, behind the ostent
A mystic cipher waits infolded.

LONG, LONG HENCE

After a long, long course, hundreds of years, denials
Accumulations, rous'd love and joy and thought
Hopes, wishes, aspirations, ponderings, victories, myriads of readers
Coating, compassing, covering—after ages' and ages' encrustations
Then only may these songs reach fruition.

BRAVO, PARIS EXPOSITION!

Add to your show, before you close it, France
With all the rest, visible, concrete, temples, towers, goods machines and
ores
Our sentiment wafted from many million heart-throbs, ethereal but solid
(We grand-sons and great-grandsons do not forget your grandsires,)
From fifty Nations and nebulous Nations, compacted, sent oversea to-
day
America's applause, love, memories and good-will.

INTERPOLATION SOUNDS

Over and through the burial chant
Organ and solemn service, sermon, bending priests
To me come interpolation sounds not in the show—plainly to me crowd-
ing up the aisle and from the window
Of sudden battle's hurry and harsh noises—war's grim game to sight and
ear in earnest;
The scout call'd up and forward—the general mounted and his aides
around him—the new-brought word—the instantaneous order issued;
The rifle crack—the cannon thud—the rushing forth of men from their
tents;
The clank of cavalry—the strange celerity of forming ranks—the slender
bugle note;
The sound of horses' hoofs departing—saddles, arms, accoutrements.

TO THE SUN-SET BREEZE

Ah, whispering, something again, unseen
 Where late this heated day thou enterest at my window, door
 Thou, laving, tempering all, cool-freshing, gently vitalizing
 Me, old, alone, sick, weak-down, melted-worn with sweat;
 Thou, nestling, folding close and firm yet soft, companion better than
 talk, book, art
 (Thou hast, O Nature! elements! utterance to my heart beyond the rest—
 and this is of them,)
 So sweet thy primitive taste to breathe within—thy soothing fingers my
 face and hands
 Thou, messenger—magical strange bringer to body and spirit of me
 (Distances balk'd—occult medicines penetrating me from head to foot,)
 I feel the sky, the prairies vast—I feel the mighty northern lakes
 I feel the ocean and the forest—somehow I feel the globe itself swift-
 swimming in space;
 Thou blown from lips so loved, now gone—haply from endless store God-
 sent
 (For thou art spiritual, Godly, most of all known to my sense,)
 Minister to speak to me, here and now, what word has never told, and
 cannot tell
 Art thou not universal concrete's distillation? Law's, all
 Astronomy's last refinement?
 Hast thou no soul? Can I not know, identify thee?

OLD CHANTS

An ancient song, reciting, ending
 Once gazing toward thee, Mother of All
 Musing, seeking themes fitted for thee
 Accept me, thou saidst, the elder ballads
 And name for me before thou goest each ancient poet.
 (Of many debts incalculable
 Haply our New World's chieftest debt is to old poems.)
 Ever so far back, precluding thee, America
 Old chants, Egyptian priests, and those of Ethiopia
 The Hindu epics, the Grecian, Chinese, Persian
 The Biblic books and prophets, and deep idyls of the Nazarene
 The Iliad, Odyssey, plots, doings, wanderings of Eneas
 Hesiod, Eschylus, Sophocles, Merlin, Arthur
 The Cid, Roland at Roncesvalles, the Nibelungen
 The troubadours, minstrels, minnesingers, skalds
 Chaucer, Dante, flocks of singing birds
 The Border Minstrelsy, the bye-gone ballads, feudal tales, essays, plays
 Shakespere, Schiller, Walter Scott, Tennyson
 As some vast wondrous weird dream-presences
 The great shadowy groups gathering around
 Darting their mighty masterful eyes forward at thee
 Thou! with as now thy bending neck and head, with courteous hand and
 word, ascending
 Thou! pausing a moment, drooping thine eyes upon them, blent with
 their music
 Well pleased, accepting all, curiously prepared for by them
 Thou interest at thy entrance porch.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

Welcome, Brazilian brother—thy ample place is ready;
A loving hand—a smile from the north—a sunny instant hall!

(Let the future care for itself, where it reveals its troubles impedimentas
Ours, ours the present throe, the democratic aim, the acceptance and the
faith;)

To thee to-day our reaching arm, our turning neck—to thee from us the
expectant eye

Thou cluster free! thou brilliant lustrous one! thou, learning well

The true lesson of a nation's light in the sky

(More shining than the Cross, more than the Crown,)

The height to be superb humanity.

SOUNDS OF THE WINTER

Sounds of the winter too

Sunshine upon the mountains—many a distant strain

From cheery railroad train—from nearer field, barn, house

The whispering air—even the mute crops, garner'd apples, corn

Children's and women's tones—rhythm of many a farmer and of flail

An old man's garrulous lips among the rest, Think not we give out yet

Forth from these snowy hairs we keep up yet the lilt.

A TWILIGHT SONG

As I sit in twilight late alone by the flickering oak-flame
Musing on long-pass'd war-scenes—of the countless buried unknown sol-
diers
Of the vacant names, as unindented air's and sea's—the unreturn'd
The brief truce after battle, with grim burial-squads, and the deep-fill'd
trenches
Of gather'd from dead all America, North, South, East, West, whence
they came up
From wooded Maine, New-England's farms, from fertile Pennsylvania
Illinois, Ohio
From the measureless West, Virginia, the South, the Carolinas, Texas
(Even here in my room-shadows and half-lights in the noiseless flickering
flames
Again I see the stalwart ranks on-filing, rising—I hear the rhythmic tramp
of the armies;)
You million unwrit names all, all—you dark bequest from all the war
A special verse for you—a flash of duty long neglected—your mystic roll
strangely gather'd here
Each name recall'd by me from out the darkness and death's ashes
Henceforth to be, deep, deep within my heart recording, for many future
year
Your mystic roll entire of unknown names, or North or South
Embalm'd with love in this twilight song.

WHEN THE FULL-GROWN POET CAME

When the full-grown poet came
Out spake pleased Nature (the round impassive globe, with all its shows
of day and night,) saying, He is mine;
But out spake too the Soul of man, proud, jealous and unreconciled
Nay he is mine alone;
—Then the full-grown poet stood between the two, and took each by the
hand;
And to-day and ever so stands, as blender, uniter, tightly holding hands
Which he will never release until he reconciles the two
And wholly and joyously blends them.

OSCEOLA

When his hour for death had come
He slowly rais'd himself from the bed on the floor
Drew on his war-dress, shirt, leggings, and girdled the belt around his
waist
Call'd for vermilion paint (his looking-glass was held before him,
Painted half his face and neck, his wrists, and back-hands.
Put the scalp-knife carefully in his belt—then lying down, resting moment
Rose again, half sitting, smiled, gave in silence his extended hand to each
and all
Sank faintly low to the floor (tightly grasping the tomahawk handle,
Fix'd his look on wife and little children—the last:
(And here a line in memory of his name and death.)

A VOICE FROM DEATH

A voice from Death, solemn and strange, in all his sweep and power
 With sudden, indescribable blow—towns drown'd—humanity by thou-
 sands slain

The vaunted work of thrift, goods, dwellings, forge, street, iron bridge

Dash'd pell-mell by the blow—yet usher'd life continuing on

(Amid the rest, amid the rushing, whirling, wild debris

A suffering woman saved—a baby safely born!)

Although I come and unannounc'd, in horror and in pang

In pouring flood and fire, and wholesale elemental crash, (this voice so
 solemn, strange,)

I too a minister of Deity.

Yea, Death, we bow our faces, veil our eyes to thee

We mourn the old, the young untimely drawn to thee

The fair, the strong, the good, the capable

The household wreck'd, the husband and the wife, the engulfed forger in
 his forge

The corpses in the whelming waters and the mud

The gather'd thousands to their funeral mounds, and thousands never
 found or gather'd.

Then after burying, mourning the dead

(Faithful to them found or unfound, forgetting not, bearing the past, here
 new musing,)

A day—a passing moment or an hour—America itself bends low

Silent, resign'd, submissive.

War, death, cataclysm like this, America

Take deep to thy proud prosperous heart.

E'en as I chant, lo! out of death, and out of ooze and slime

The blossoms rapidly blooming, sympathy, help, love

From West and East, from South and North and over sea

Its hot-spurr'd hearts and hands humanity to human aid moves on;

And from within a thought and lesson yet.

Thou ever-darting Globe! through Space and Air!

Thou waters that encompass us!

Thou that in all the life and death of us, in action or in sleep!

Thou laws invisible that permeate them and all

Thou that in all, and over all, and through and under all, incessant!

Thou! thou! the vital, universal, giant force resistless, sleepless, calm

Holding Humanity as in thy open hand, as some ephemeral toy

How ill to e'er forget thee!

For I too have forgotten

(Wrapt in these little potencies of progress, politics, culture wealth, in-
 ventions, civilization,)

Have lost my recognition of your silent ever-swaying power, ye mighty,
elemental throes
In which and upon which we float, and every one of us is buoy'd.

A PERSIAN LESSON

For his o'erarching and last lesson the greybeard sufi
In the fresh scent of the morning in the open air
On the slope of a teeming Persian rose-garden
Under an ancient chestnut-tree wide spreading its branches
Spoke to the young priests and students.

"Finally my children, to envelop each word, each part of the rest
Allah is all, all, all-immanent in every life and object
May-be at many and many-a-more removes-yet Allah, Allah, Allah is
there.

"Has the estray wander'd far? Is the reason-why strangely hidden?
Would you sound below the restless ocean of the entire world?
Would you know the dissatisfaction? the urge and spur of every life;
The something never still'd-never entirely gone? the invisible need of
every seed?

"It is the central urge in every atom
(Often unconscious, often evil, downfallen,
To return to its divine source and origin, however distant
Latent the same in subject and in object, without one exception."

THE COMMONPLACE

The commonplace I sing;
How cheap is health! how cheap nobility!
Abstinence, no falsehood, no gluttony, lust;
The open air I sing, freedom, toleration
(Take here the mainest lesson-less from books-less from the schools,)
The common day and night-the common earth and waters
Your farm-your work, trade, occupation
The democratic wisdom underneath, like solid ground for all.

"THE ROUNDED CATALOGUE DIVINE COMPLETE"

The devilish and the dark, the dying and diseases'd
The countless (nineteen-twentieths) low and evil, crude and savage
The crazed, prisoners in jail, the horrible, rank, malignant
Venom and filth, serpents, the ravenous sharks, liars, the dissolute;
(What is the part the wicked and the loathesome bear within earth's orbic
scheme?)
Newts, crawling things in slime and mud, poisons
The barren soil, the evil men, the slag and hideous rot.

MIRAGES

More experiences and sights, stranger, than you'd think for;
Times again, now mostly just after sunrise or before sunset
Sometimes in spring, oftener in autumn, perfectly clear weather, in plain
sight
Camps far or near, the crowded streets of cities and the shopfronts
(Account for it or not—credit or not—it is all true
And my mate there could tell you the like—we have often confab'd about
it.)
People and scenes, animals, trees, colors and lines, plain as could be
Farms and dooryards of home, paths border'd with box, lilacs in corners
Weddings in churches, thanksgiving dinners, returns of long-absent sons
Glum funerals, the crape-veil'd mother and the daughters
Trials in courts, jury and judge, the accused in the box
Contestants, battles, crowds, bridges, wharves
Now and then mark'd faces of sorrow or joy
(I could pick them out this moment if I saw them again.)
Show'd to me—just to the right in the sky-edge
Or plainly there to the left on the hill-tops.

L. OF G.'S PURPORT

Not to exclude or demarcate, or pick out evils from their formidable masses (even to expose them,)

But add, fuse, complete, extend—and celebrate the immortal and the good.

Haughty this song, its words and scope
To span vast realms of space and time
Evolution—the cumulative—growths and generations.

Begun in ripen'd youth and steadily pursued
Wandering, peering, dallying with all—war, peace, day and night absorb-
ing

Never even for one brief hour abandoning my task
I end it here in sickness, poverty, and old age.

I sing of life, yet mind me well of death:
To-day shadowy Death dogs my steps, my seated shape, and has for
years—

Draws sometimes close to me, as face to face.

THE UNEXPRESS'D

How dare one say it?

After the cycles, poems, singers, plays

Vaunted Ionia's, India's—Homer, Shakspeare—the long, long times' thick
dotted roads, areas

The shining clusters and the Milky Ways of stars—Nature's pulses reap'd

All retrospective passions, heroes, war, love, adoration

All ages' plummets dropt to their utmost depths

All human lives, throats, wishes, brains—all experiences' utterance;

After the countless songs, or long or short, all tongues, all lands

Still something not yet told in poesy's voice or print—something lacking

(Who knows? the best yet unexpress'd and lacking.)

GRAND IS THE SEEN

Grand is the seen, the light, to me—grand are the sky and stars
Grand is the earth, and grand are lasting time and space
And grand their laws, so multiform, puzzling, evolutionary;
But grander far the unseen soul of me, comprehending, endowing all
those
Lighting the light, the sky and stars, delving the earth, sailing the sea
(What were all those, indeed, without thee, unseen soul? of what amount
without thee?)
More evolutionary, vast, puzzling, O my soul!
More multiform far—more lasting thou than they.

UNSEEN BUDS

Unseen buds, infinite, hidden well
Under the snow and ice, under the darkness, in every square or cubic
inch
Germinal, exquisite, in delicate lace, microscopic, unborn
Like babes in wombs, latent, folded, compact, sleeping;
Billions of billions, and trillions of trillions of them waiting
(On earth and in the sea—the universe—the stars there in the heavens,)
Urging slowly, surely forward, forming endless
And waiting ever more, forever more behind.

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

Good-bye my Fancy!

Farewell dear mate, dear love!

I'm going away, I know not where

Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again

So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;

The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me

Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;

Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty

Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into
one;

Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)

If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens

May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something

May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who
knows?)

May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.