

# *Boundless Voices*



## *Selected Readings in Transcendentalist Poetry*

Wendy Gorham, Editor

*Boundless  
Voices*

First Edition

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# Table of contents

## Poetry by Walt Whitman:

### --Poems about Lincoln--

When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd.....	6
Oh Captain! My Captain!.....	16
Hush'd be the Camps Today.....	17
This Dust was Once the Man.....	18

### --Poems about the Poet and the Art of Poetry--

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry.....	19
Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.....	27
A Noiseless Patient Spider.....	34
When I Heard the Learned Astronomer.....	35

### --Poems about the Civil War--

The Wound-Dresser.....	36
How Solemn as One by One.....	39
Drum-Taps.....	40
A March in the Ranks Hard Prest.....	44
A Sight in the Camp in the Daybreak Dark and Dim.....	46

## Poetry by Emily Dickinson:

### --Poems about Love and Loss--

23.....	47
47.....	49
49.....	50
249.....	51

### --Poems about Mortality and Death--

712.....	52
465.....	53

280.....54  
216.....55

*--Poems about the Poet and her Craft--*

613.....57  
657.....58  
67.....59  
1659.....60  
883.....61  
1138.....62  
1212.....63

*--Poems about God and Nature--*

214.....64  
1755.....65  
1487.....66  
338.....67  
621.....68  
632.....69

# When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd

--by Walt Whitman

1

When lilacs last in the door-yard 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.

O 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 door-yard fronting an old farm-house, near the white-wash'd  
palings,  
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 door-yard,  
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The hermit, withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,  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 gifted to sing, thou would'st  
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 uprising;  
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,  
standing,  
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 carol 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 we walk'd,  
As we walk'd up and down in the dark blue so mystic,  
As we 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, ere you

went, how full you were of woe;  
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze, in the cold  
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 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!  
Mighty 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 farmer preparing his 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.

15

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 what seem'd 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.

16

DEATH CAROL.

*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  
unfalteringly.*

*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 sky, are  
fitting,*

*And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night. 155*

*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!*

17

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.

18

I saw askant the armies;  
And 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 dead 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.

19

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  
bursting 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.

20

Yet each I keep, and all, retrievments 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 lilac tall, and its blossoms of mastering odor;  
With the holders holding my hand, nearing the call of the bird,  
Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory ever I  
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!

--by Walt Whitman

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 Today

--by Walt Whitman

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**

**--by Walt Whitman**

This dust was one the man,  
Gentle, plain, just and resolute, under whose cautious hand,  
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land of age,  
Was saved the Union of these States.

# Crossing Brooklyn Ferry

--by Walt Whitman

1

Flood-tide below me! I watch 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, neither time or place—distance avails not;  
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so  
many generations hence;  
I project myself—also I return—I am with you, and know how  
it is.

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-  
stem'd  
pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river, the sun half an hour  
high;  
I watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls—I saw them high in the air,  
floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,  
I saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies, and left the  
rest  
in strong shadow,  
I saw the slow-wheeling circles, and the gradual edging toward the  
south.

I too 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 around the shape of my head

in the sun-lit water,

Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and southwestward,

Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,

Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the arriving ships,

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 pilot-houses,

The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,

The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sun-set,

The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests

and glistening,

The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite

store-houses 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 project myself a moment to tell you—also I return.

I loved well those cities;  
I 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.

6

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.

7

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,  
The dark threw 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?

would not people laugh at me?

It is not 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  
wanting.

8

But I was Manhattanese, friendly and proud!  
I 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,  
sleeping,  
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.

9

Closer yet I approach you;  
What thought you have of me, 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 but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot  
see me?

It is not you alone, nor I alone;  
Not a few races, nor a few generations, nor a few centuries;  
It is that each came, or comes, or shall come, from its due emission,  
From the general centre of all, and forming a part of all:  
Everything indicates—the smallest does, and the largest does;  
A necessary film envelopes all, and envelopes the Soul for a proper  
time.

10

Now I am curious what sight can ever be more stately and admirable  
to me than my mast-hemm'd Manhattan,  
My river and sun-set, and my scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide,  
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and  
the  
belated lighter;  
Curious 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  
I approach;  
Curious 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  
accomplish, is accomplish'd, is it not?  
What the push of reading could not start, is started by me personally,  
is it not?

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 sun-set! 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  
 highest 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 sun-lit 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.

12

We descend upon you and all things—we arrest you all;  
We realize the soul only by you, you faithful solids and fluids;  
Through you color, form, location, sublimity, ideality;  
Through you every proof, comparison, and all the suggestions  
and determinations of ourselves.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers! you  
novices!  
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.

# Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

--by Walt Whitman

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 atmosphere 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 hissing,

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 clew! (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.

# A Noiseless Patient Spider

--by Walt Whitman

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.

# When I Heard the Learned Astronomer

--by Walt Whitman

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.

# The Wound-Dresser

--by Walt Whitman

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  
remains?

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  
content.)

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  
examine,  
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.)

# How Solemn As One by One

--by Walt Whitman

(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.

# Drum-Taps

--by Walt Whitman

1

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 indifferent 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 pre-  
lude, songs of soldiers,)  
How Manhattan drum-taps led.

2

Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading;  
Forty years as a pageant -- till unawares, the Lady of  
this teeming and turbulent 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 clench'd hand the pavement.

3

A shock electric -- the night sustain'd it;  
Till with ominous hum, our hive at day-break, pour'd  
out its myriads.

4

From the houses then, and the workshops, and  
through all the doorways,  
Leapt they tumultuous -- and lo! Manhattan arming.

5

To the drum-taps prompt,  
The young men falling in and arming;  
The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the  
blacksmith's hammer, tost aside with precipi-  
tation;)  
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 gathering everywhere by common consent, and  
arming;  
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 cov-  
er'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 preced-  
ing, 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 medi-  
cines;  
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 welcome it.

6

Mannahatta a-march! -- and it's O to sing it well!  
It's O for a manly life in the camp!

7

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 else now besides powder and wadding.

8

And you, Lady of Ships! you Mannahatta!  
Old matron of the city! 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!

# A March in the Ranks Hard Prest

--by Walt Whitman

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

--by Walt Whitman

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.

## 23

--by Emily Dickinson

I had a guinea golden --  
I lost it in the sand --  
And tho' the sum was simple  
And pounds were in the land --  
Still, had it such a value  
Unto my frugal eye --  
That when I could not find it --  
I sat me down to sigh.

I had a crimson Robin --  
Who sang full many a day  
But when the woods were painted,  
He, too, did fly away --

Time brought me other Robins --  
Their ballads were the same --  
Still, for my missing Troubador  
I kept the "house at hame."

I had a star in heaven --  
One "Pleiad" was its name --  
And when I was not heeding,  
It wandered from the same.  
And tho' the skies are crowded --  
And all the night ashine --  
I do not care about it --  
Since none of them are mine.

My story has a moral --  
I have a missing friend --  
"Pleiad" its name, and Robin,  
And guinea in the sand.  
And when this mournful ditty  
Accompanied with tear --  
Shall meet the eye of traitor  
In country far from here --

Grant that repentance solemn  
May seize upon his mind --  
And he no consolation  
Beneath the sun may find.

47

--by Emily Dickinson

Heart! We will forget him!  
You and I -- tonight!  
You may forget the warmth he gave --  
I will forget the light!

When you have done, pray tell me  
That I may straight begin!  
Haste! lest while you're lagging  
I remember him!

# 49

--by Emily Dickinson

I never lost as much but twice,  
And that was in the sod.  
Twice have I stood a beggar  
Before the door of God!

Angels -- twice descending  
Reimbursed my store --  
Burglar! Banker -- Father!  
I am poor once more!

249

--by Emily Dickinson

Wild Nights -- Wild Nights!  
Were I with thee  
Wild Nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile -- the Winds --  
To a Heart in port --  
Done with the Compass --  
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden --  
Ah, the Sea!  
Might I but moor -- Tonight --  
In Thee!

--by Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed us –  
The Dews drew quivering and chill –  
For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground –  
The Roof was scarcely visible –  
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –

465

--by Emily Dickinson

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –  
The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air –  
Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –  
And Breaths were gathering firm  
For that last Onset – when the King  
Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away  
What portions of me be  
Assignable – and then it was  
There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain stumbling Buzz –  
Between the light – and me –  
And then the Windows failed – and then  
I could not see to see –

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,  
And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading – treading – till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,  
A Service, like a Drum –  
Kept beating – beating – till I thought  
My Mind was going numb –

And then I heard them lift a Box  
And creak across my Soul  
With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
Then Space – began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
And Being, but an Ear,  
And I, and Silence, some strange Race  
Wrecked, solitary, here –

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,  
And I dropped down, and down –  
And hit a World, at every plunge,  
And Finished knowing – then –

## 216 (3 versions)

--by Emily Dickinson

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—  
Untouched by Morning  
And untouched by Noon—  
Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection—  
Rafters of satin,  
And Roof of stone.

Light laughs the breeze  
In her Castle above them—  
Babbles the Bee in a stolid Ear,  
Pipe the Sweet Birds in ignorant cadence—  
Ah, what sagacity perished here!

*Version of 1859, as published in Springfield Daily  
Republican, 1 March 1862*

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Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—  
Untouched by Morning  
And untouched by Noon—  
Lie the meek members of the Resurrection—  
Rafters of Satin—and Roof of Stone!

Grand go the Years—in the Crescent—above them—  
Worlds scoop their Arcs—  
And Firmaments—row—  
Diadems—drop—and Doges—surrender—  
Soundless as dots—on a Disc of Snow—

*Version of 1861*

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Safe in their alabaster chambers,

Untouched by morning and untouched by noon,  
Sleep the meek members of the resurrection,  
Rafter of satin, and roof of stone.

Light laughs the breeze in her castle of sunshine;  
Babbles the bee in a stolid ear;  
Pipe the sweet birds in ignorant cadence,—  
Ah, what sagacity perished here!

Grand go the years in the crescent above them;  
Worlds scoop their arcs, and firmaments row,  
Diadems drop and Doges surrender,  
Soundless as dots on a disk of snow.

*Version as edited by Higginson and published in 1891*

# 613

--by Emily Dickinson

They shut me up in Prose-  
As when a little Girl  
They put me in the Closet-  
Because they like me "still" -

Still! Could themself have peeped-  
And seen my Brain-go round-  
They might as wise have lodged a Bird!  
For Treason-in the Pound-

Himself has but to will  
And easy as a Star  
Abolish his-Captivity-  
And laugh-No more have I-

657

--by Emily Dickinson

I dwell in Possibility--  
A fairer House than Prose--  
More numerous of Windows--  
Superior--for Doors--

Of Chambers as the Cedars--  
Impregnable of Eye--  
And for an Everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels of the Sky--

Of Visitors--the fairest--  
For Occupation--This--  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise—

67

--by Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host  
Who took the Flag today  
Can tell the definition  
So clear of Victory

As he defeated – dying -  
On whose forbidden ear  
The distant strains of triumph  
Burst agonized and clear!

# 1659

--by Emily Dickinson

Fame is a fickle food  
Upon a shifting plate  
Whose table once a  
Guest but not  
The second time is set.

Whose crumbs the crows inspect  
And with ironic caw  
Flap past it to the Farmer's Corn –  
Men eat of it and die.

**883**

**--by Emily Dickinson**

The Poets light but Lamps –  
Themselves – go out –  
The Wicks they stimulate –  
If vital Light

Inhere as do the Suns –  
Each Age a Lens  
Disseminating their  
Circumference –

**1138**

**--by Emily Dickinson**

A Spider sewed at Night  
Without a Light  
Upon an Arc of White.

If Ruff it was of Dame  
Or Shroud of Gnome  
Himself himself inform.

Of Immortality  
His Strategy  
Was Physiognomy.

**1212**

**--by Emily Dickinson**

A word is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.  
I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.

--by Emily Dickinson

I taste a liquor never brewed –  
From Tankards scooped in Pearl –  
Not all the Frankfort Berries  
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of air – am I –  
And Debauchee of Dew –  
Reeling – thro' endless summer days –  
From inns of molten Blue –

When "Landlords" turn the drunken Bee  
Out of the Foxglove's door –  
When Butterflies – renounce their "drams" –  
I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats –  
And Saints – to windows run –  
To see the Tippler  
Leaning against the – Sun!

**1755**

**--by Emily Dickinson**

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,  
One clover, and a bee.  
And revery.  
The revery alone will do,  
If bees are few.

**1487**

**--by Emily Dickinson**

The Savior must have been  
A docile Gentleman—  
To come so far so cold a Day  
For little Fellowmen—

The Road to Bethlehem  
Since He and I were Boys  
Was leveled, but for that 'twould be  
A rugged Billion Miles—

## 338

--by Emily Dickinson

I know that He exists.  
Somewhere – in Silence –  
He has hid his rare life  
From our gross eyes.

'Tis an instant's play.  
'Tis a fond Ambush –  
Just to make Bliss  
Earn her own surprise!

But – should the play  
Prove piercing earnest –  
Should the glee – glaze –  
In Death's – stiff – stare –

Would not the fun  
Look too expensive!  
Would not the jest –  
Have crawled too far!

621

--by Emily Dickinson

I asked no other thing –  
No other – was denied –  
I offered Being – for it –  
The Mighty Merchant sneered –

Brazil? He twirled a Button –  
Without a glance my way –  
“But – Madam – is there nothing else –  
That We can show – Today?”

632

--by Emily Dickinson

The Brain – is wider than the Sky –  
For – put them side by side –  
The one the other will contain  
With ease – and You – beside –

The Brain is deeper than the sea –  
For – hold them – Blue to Blue –  
The one the other will absorb –  
As Sponges – Buckets – do –

The Brain is just the weight of God –  
For – Heft them – Pound for Pound –  
And they will differ – if they do –  
As Syllable from Sound -