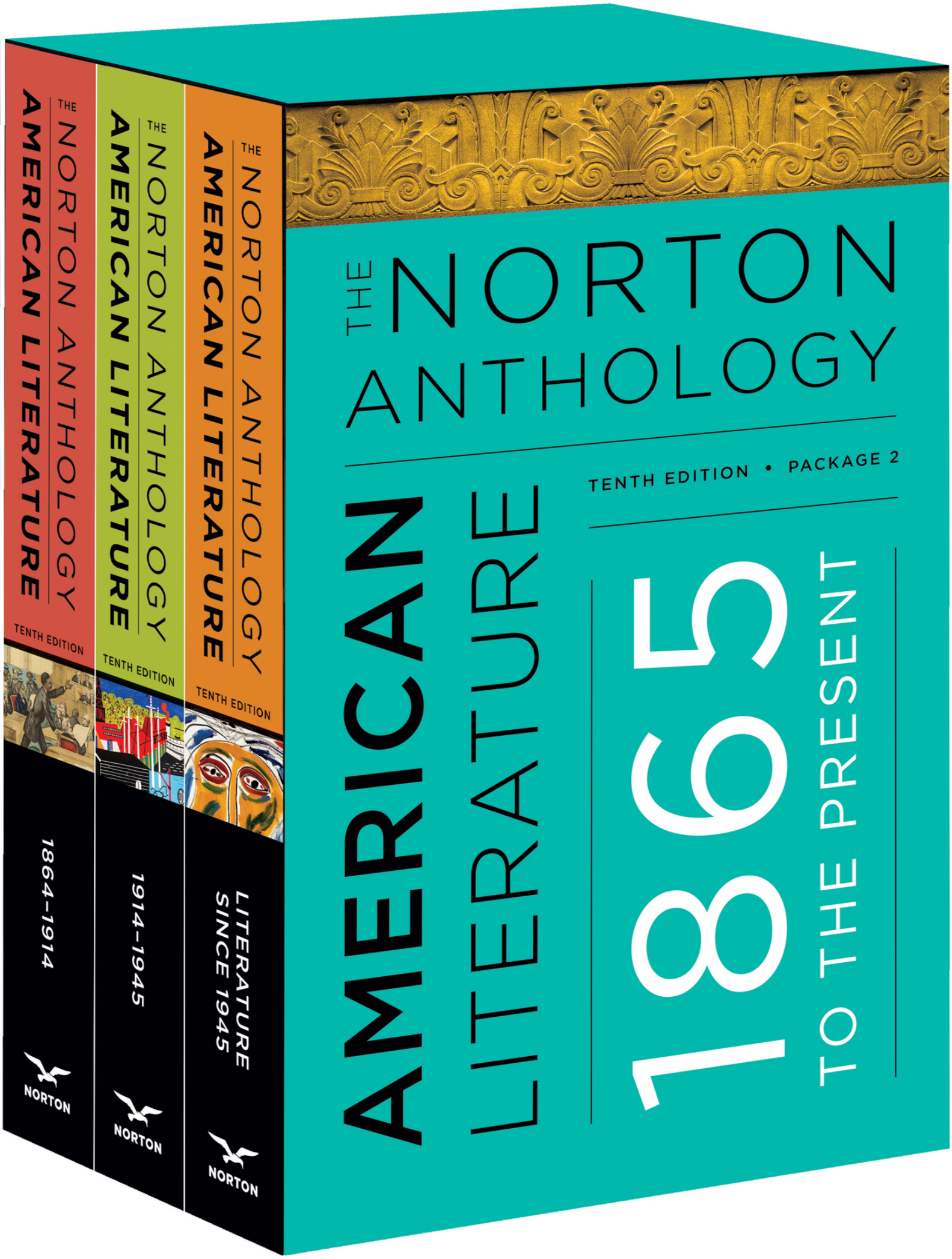
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AMERICAN LITERATURE

TENTH EDITION

1865 TO THE PRESENT

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American Literature, Beginnings to 1820 • GUSTAFSON

VOLUME B

American Literature, 1820–1865 • LEVINE

VOLUME C

American Literature, 1865–1914 • ELLIOTT

VOLUME D

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TENTH EDITION

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1865 TO THE PRESENT

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Preface to the Tenth Edition

The Tenth Edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* is the second for me as general editor; for the Eighth Edition, I served as associate general editor under longstanding general editor Nina Baym. Over the past two editions, we have undertaken some of the most extensive revisions of the anthology in our long publishing history. For this edition, two new editors have joined the team: Lisa Siraganian, J. R. Herbert Boone Chair in Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, who succeeds Mary Loeffelholz as editor of American Literature, 1914–1945; and GerShun Avilez, Professor of English at the University of Maryland, who joins Amy Hungerford in editing American Literature, 1945 to the Present. Sandra M. Gustafson continues as editor of Beginnings to 1820; Robert S. Levine, as editor of American Literature, 1820–1865; and Michael A. Elliott as editor of American Literature, 1865–1914. Each editor, new or continuing, is a well-known expert in the relevant field or period and has ultimate responsibility for his or her section of the anthology, but we have worked closely together to rethink many aspects of this new edition. Volume introductions, author headnotes, thematic clusters, annotations, illustrations, and bibliographies have been updated and revised as necessary. We have also added new authors, selections, and thematic clusters. We are excited about the outcome of our collaborations and anticipate that, like the previous nine editions, this edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* will be the anthology of choice for those teaching American literature.

From the anthology's inception in 1979, the editors have had three main aims: first, to present a rich and substantial enough variety of works to enable teachers to build courses according to their own vision of American literary history; second, to make the anthology self-sufficient by featuring many works in their entirety along with extensive selections for individual authors; third, to balance traditional interests with a commitment to diversity in a way that allows for the complex, rigorous, and capacious study of American literary traditions. As early as 1979, we anthologized work by Anne Bradstreet, Mary Rowlandson, Sarah Kemble Knight, Phillis Wheatley, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Booker T. Washington, Charles W. Chesnutt, Edith Wharton, W. E. B. Du Bois, and other writers who were not yet part of a standard canon. Yet we never shortchanged writers—such as Franklin, Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner—whose work many students expected to read in their American literature courses, and whom most teachers then and now would not think of doing without.

The so-called canon wars of the 1980s and 1990s initiated a review of our understanding of American literature, a review that has enlarged the number and diversity of authors now recognized as contributors to the totality of American literature. The traditional writers look different in this expanded context, and they also appear different according to which of their works are selected. Teachers and students remain committed to the idea of the literary—that writers strive to produce artifacts that are both intellectually serious and formally skillful—but

believe more than ever that writers should be understood in relation to their cultural and historical situations. We address the complex interrelationships between literature and history in the volume introductions, author headnotes, thematic clusters, chronologies, and some of the footnotes. As in previous editions, we have worked with detailed suggestions from many teachers on how best to present the authors and selections. We have gained insights as well from the students who use the anthology. Thanks to questionnaires, discussions face-to-face and over the phone, letters, and email, we have been able to listen to those for whom this book is intended. For the Tenth Edition, we have drawn on the careful commentary of over two hundred reviewers and reworked aspects of the anthology accordingly.

Our new materials continue the work of broadening the canon by representing 17 new writers, without sacrificing widely assigned authors, many of whose selections have been reconsidered, reselected, and expanded. Our aim is always to provide extensive enough selections to do the writers justice, including complete works wherever possible. The Tenth Edition offers complete longer works, including Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, and such new and recently added works as Margaret Fuller's *The Great Lawsuit*, Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, Abraham Cahan's *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Nella Larsen's *Passing*, Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and August Wilson's *Fences*. John Rollin Ridge, Constance Fenimore Woolson, George Saunders, and Natasha Tretheway are among the writers added to the prior edition, and to this edition we have introduced Edward Everett Hale, Dorothy Parker, Ann Petry, Lorraine Hansberry, Carmen Maria Machado, N. K. Jemisin, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Claudia Rankine, among others. We have also increased coverage of such important figures as Olaudah Equiano, Harriet Jacobs, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The Tenth Edition further expands its selections of women writers and writers from diverse ethnic, racial, and regional backgrounds—always with attention to the critical acclaim that recognizes their contributions to the American literary record. Recently added writers such as Samson Occom, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, John Rollin Ridge, and Sarah Winnemucca, along with the figures represented in "Native American Oral Literature" and "Native American Eloquence," enable teachers to bring early Native American writing and oratory into their syllabi.

We are pleased to continue the popular topical or thematic gatherings of short texts that illuminate the cultural, historical, intellectual, and literary concerns of their periods. Designed to be taught in a class period or two, or used as background, each of the clusters consists of an introduction and brief primary and, occasionally, secondary texts, about five to eight per cluster. Diverse voices—many new to the anthology—highlight a range of views current when writers of a particular time period were active, and thus allow students to gain insight into some of the larger issues that were being debated at specific historical moments. For example, in "Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature," texts by Thomas Jefferson, David Walker, William Lloyd Garrison, Sarah Louisa Forten Purvis, Angelina Grimké, James M. Whitfield, and Martin R. Delany speak to the great paradox of pre–Civil War America: the contradictory rupture between the realities of slavery and the nation's ideals of freedom.

The Tenth Edition strengthens this feature with eight new and revised clusters. To help students address the controversy over race and aesthetics in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we have revised a cluster in Volume C that shows what some of the leading critics of the past few decades thought was at stake in reading and interpreting slavery and race in Twain's canonical novel. New to Volume A is "Captivity and Gender in Mary Rowlandson's

Narrative," while Volume B offers "Women's Rights and Women Writing" and "Stories, Songs, and Poems from the Civil War." Volume C newly features "Reconstruction," while Volume D's new clusters are "Popular Genre Fiction," "Debating Black Art," and "The 1930s: The Great Depression and Social Upheaval." To Volume E we have added "Bodies as Technology: Science Fiction."

The Tenth Edition features a rich illustration program, consisting of both the black-and-white images placed throughout the volumes and the color plates so popular in the last several editions. In selecting color plates—from Juan de la Cosa's sixteenth-century world map to Jeff Wall's "After 'Invisible Man' " at the beginning of the twenty-first century—the editors aim to provide images relevant to works in the anthology while depicting art and artifacts representative of each era. In addition, graphic works—a page from the colonial children's classic *The New-England Primer*, selections from Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, and a facsimile page of Emily Dickinson's manuscript—open possibilities for teaching visual texts.

Period-by-Period Revisions

Volume A, Beginnings to 1820. Sandra M. Gustafson, the editor of Volume A, has trimmed some selections and rearranged others to create an even more streamlined and cohesive volume. Newly enlarged offerings include the full text of Christopher Columbus's "Letter of Discovery," as well as additional chapters from Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative,* which expand the presentation of his post-enslavement life. Keeping the selections in line with those of previous editions, we are now including David Frye's authoritative recent translation of Cabeza de Vaca's *Chronicle*, which better captures the texture of the original work. A new cluster on "Captivity and Gender in Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*" includes selections from critical works by Annette Kolodny, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, Susan Howe, and Lisa Brooks, as well as the poem "Captivity" by Louise Erdrich. The fiction of Charles Brockden Brown is now represented by a short story titled "Somnambulism. A Fragment." This psychological thriller anticipates themes that are prominent in the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

Once again Volume A features narratives by early European explorers of the North American continent as they encountered and attempted to make sense of the diverse cultures they met, and as they sought to justify claiming the territory for Europeans. Central to the volume are the voices of Native Americans, which are amply represented in "Native American Oral Literature" and "Native American Eloquence," as well as with the inclusion of Samson Occom's "A Short Narrative of My life," three of his hymns, and his "Account of the Montauk Indians on Long Island." We continue to offer the complete texts of Rowlandson's *Narrative*, Royall Tyler's popular play *The Contrast*, and Hannah Foster's novel *The Coquette*, which uses a real-life tragedy to meditate on the proper role of well-bred women in the new republic and testifies to the existence of a female audience for popular novels of the period. As in the Ninth Edition, we close with Washington Irving, a writer who looks back to colonial history and forward to Jacksonian America. The inclusion of Irving in both Volumes A and B, with one key overlapping selection, points to continuities and changes between the two volumes.

Volume B, American Literature, 1820–1865. Under the editorship of Robert S. Levine, this volume over the past several editions has become more diverse, even as it continues to offer complete works from the period, such as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Douglass's *Narrative*. Aware of the importance of African American writers to this period, and the omnipresence of race and slavery as literary and political themes, we added William Wells Brown and Frances E. W. Harper to recent editions, and new to this edition are poems by Sarah Louisa Forten Purvis. Also new is a chapter from Douglass's *Life and Times* focusing on his meeting with Lincoln in the White House, and eight additional chapters from Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Thoreau's "Plea for Captain John Brown," a generous selection from Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the cluster "Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature" add to the perspectives on slavery. "Native Americans: Resistance and Removal" gathers oratory and writings—by Native Americans such as Black Hawk and Whites such as Ralph Waldo Emerson—protesting Andrew Jackson's ruthless national policy of Indian removal. Recently added is a selection from *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, by the Native American writer John Rollin Ridge. This potboiler of a novel, set in the new state of California, emerged from debates that began during the Indian removal period.

Perhaps the most significant additions to Volume B are two new clusters: "Women's Rights and Women Writing" and "Stories, Songs, and Poems from the Civil War." The cluster on women's rights and women's writing includes works by Purvis, Catharine Beecher, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Caroline Kirkland, Harriet Farley, and Fanny Fern, just about all of whom are new to this edition. This cluster helps to situate women's writing in relation to the women's rights movement (which crystallized with the Seneca Falls convention of 1848) and increasing opportunities for women as columnists, poets, and fiction writers. In addition to offering fascinating new texts, the cluster provides a contextual backdrop for reading the other women writers in the volume, such as Lydia Sigourney, whose searing feminist poem "The Suttee" has been restored to this edition. The new cluster on Civil War writings takes the volume through and beyond the war, and includes such writers as Louisa May Alcott, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Frances Harper, along with Ethelinda Beers, Julia Ward Howe, George Moses Horton, and Sarah Piatt, all new to this volume. The Civil War poetry selections complement the Civil War poetry of Melville, Dickinson, and Whitman already included, while showing how central poetry was to nineteenth-century readers.

Two other highlights: For the first time, we include a "born digital" text of *Billy Budd*, which we hope encourages students to do their own textual editing of this complex work. And for the first time we include a selection from the untitled first 1855 printing of Whitman's *Song of Myself*. This selection will help students better understand how Whitman revised his great poem over the multiple editions of *Leaves of Grass*.

Volume C, American Literature, 1865–1914. Edited by Michael A. Elliott, the volume includes new works that illustrate the range of literary styles throughout the period, as well as the way that the historical challenges of this time prefigure our own. In addition to complete longer works that have appeared in previous editions, such as Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Henry James's *Daisy Miller*, Abraham Cahan's *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto*, and Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, we have added two new works: James's gripping psychological masterpiece, *The Turn of the Screw*, and Edith Wharton's surprising tale of the supernatural, "The Lady's Maid's Bell."

The period immediately following the Civil War, known as Reconstruction, left a lasting legacy in the United States that is still being felt in the national reckoning with racism and inequality. The Tenth Edition offers an introduction to Reconstruction and invaluable contexts

for the literature of this period by including a cluster of key voices from the political struggles of the time, among them Frederick Douglass, Frances E. W. Harper, and Robert Elliott, one of sixteen African American men to serve in the U.S. Congress during this period. We also include a new selection from the Chinese North American writer Sui Sin Far, "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian," an autobiographical essay about the obstacles faced by Asian Americans in the early twentieth century. A revised cluster on the Ghost Dance songs and Wounded Knee brings together critical Native American voices from the period.

Finally, we have added three new selections from well-known authors of the period. We include a selection from Ambrose Bierce's wickedly funny *Devil's Dictionary*—the kind of book that defines a year as "a period of three hundred and sixty-five disappointments." Frank Norris is now represented by the first two chapters of his bitter and bizarre novel *McTeague*.And we include Jack London's "South of the Slot," in which an academic is caught up in the working-class fight for fair wages.

Volume D, American Literature, 1914–1945. Edited by Lisa Siraganian, Volume D offers a number of complete longer works—William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Willa Cather's *My Ántonia,* Nella Larsen's *Passing,* and, new to this edition, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. New authors Djuna Barnes ("A Night in the Woods"), Ann Petry ("Like a Winding Sheet"), Anzia Yezierska ("Wings"), George Schuyler (from *Black Empire*), and James Agee and Walker Evans (from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*) further contribute to the volume's exploration of issues connected with racial and social geographies. New selections by Amy Lowell, Gertrude Stein, H.D., Marianne Moore, Jean Toomer, and Langston Hughes encourage students and teachers to contemplate the interrelation of modernist aesthetics with current explorations of gender, sexuality, and race. Volume D also introduces several new clusters. "Popular Genre Fiction" includes works, such as Dorothy Parker's "Big Blonde," that were first published in popular magazines; it focuses on genres, including sentimental and science fiction, not usually associated with modernism. Other illuminating clusters address controversies and central events of the modern period. In "Debating Black Art," writings by George Schuyler, Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright wrestle with new terms to appraise the value of African American literature. "The 1930s: The Great Depression and Social Upheaval" depicts a tumultuous decade in American history by showcasing a diverse group of authors ranging from avant-garde creative writers like Muriel Rukeyser and Américo Paredes Manzano to popular journalists Meridel Le Sueur and Studs Terkel. Also added to this edition are stories from Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time*, including "Indian Camp" and "Soldier's Home." Other recent and new additions to Volume D include Gertrude Stein's poetic portraits "Matisse" and "Picasso," new selections in the "Modernist Manifestos" cluster, a selection from Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, and typescript pages of the manuscript of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which reveal the detailed revisions suggested by Vivienne Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Volume E, American Literature, 1945 to the Present. Amy Hungerford and GerShun Avilez, the editors of Volume E, have revised the volume to present a range of poetry, prose, drama, and nonfiction that speaks to today's diverse students and showcases the riches of contemporary writing. The editors have added Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* to the plays that return in this edition: Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, and August Wilson's *Fences*. Adding to the coverage of graphic narratives, Volume E now includes an excerpt from Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, which joins a chapter from Art Spiegelman's *Maus* to expand the possibilities of teaching with images. Adored by students, these works have won critical acclaim and a durable place in the literary classroom. Stand-alone segments from novels by Saul Bellow (*The Adventures of Augie*

March), Kurt Vonnegut (*Slaughterhouse-Five*), Jack Kerouac (*On the Road*), and Don DeLillo (*White Noise*), as well as the full text of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, give students access to these influential writers. A new cluster gathers science fiction, a key genre in the period that has attracted both writers of talent and topics that feel immediately germane, including enslavement, environmental degradation, and the impacts of technology. The cluster includes stories by Philip K. Dick and Ursula K. LeGuin (from the Ninth Edition) and adds works by Octavia E. Butler and N. K. Jemisin. Also appearing for the first time is the story "Spanish in the Morning," by Edward P. Jones, and works by a new generation of writers, including the Native American poet Layli Long Soldier and the fiction writers Viet Thanh Nguyen and Carmen Maria Machado. Filling out coverage of the late twentieth century—especially of the war in Vietnam—we include for the first time Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell a True War Story" from *The Things They Carried*. O'Brien's piece pairs well with Viet Thanh Nguyen's newly included "War Years," which reflects on the legacy of the Vietnam War from the perspective of the refugees of that war who eventually remade their lives in America.

One of the most distinctive features of twentieth- and twenty-first-century American literature is a powerful vein of African American poetry. This edition includes for the first time a selection from Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, arguably the most important work to emerge from the renewed reckoning with anti-Black racism that began in 2014, arising from shootings of young Black men—particularly of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and Michael Brown in 2014. Rankine's work extends the political and poetic tradition of the African American poets whose work has long helped define the anthology—among them, Rita Dove, Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert Hayden, and Audre Lorde—and joins a distinct voice and formal orientation to the twenty-first-century poetry added in the Ninth Edition, which includes work by Tracy K. Smith and Natasha Trethewey.

"Postmodern Manifestos" (which pairs with "Modernist Manifestos" in Volume D) and the popular "Creative Nonfiction" cluster return to fill out the volume's survey of radical change in the forms, and social uses, of literary art. Also returning are two powerful selections that appeared last in the Eighth Edition: Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and a selection from Julia Alvarez's *¡Yo!* Alvarez is joined by the newly included poet Juan Felipe Herrera and fiction writer Carmen Maria Machado. The work of these writers—in addition to long-standing entries from Sandra Cisneros and Gloria Anzaldúa, among others—deepens the anthology's engagement with Latinx literature. Teachers and students will also find fresh selections for standing authors, including two spectacular—and accessible—late poems by James Merrill and "Tobacco Origin Story," from Joy Harjo's 2021 collection.

We are delighted to offer this Tenth Edition to teachers and students, and we welcome your comments.

Additional Resources from the Publisher

The Tenth Edition retains the paperback splits format, popular for its flexibility and portability. This format accommodates instructors who use the anthology in a two-semester survey but allows for mixing and matching the five volumes in courses organized by period or topic, at levels from introductory to advanced. We are also pleased to offer the Tenth Edition as an

ebook. The Digital Anthology includes the content of the print volumes, with print-corresponding page and line numbers to help keep the whole class on the same page. Footnotes are accessible with a click or a tap, encouraging students to use them with minimal interruption to their reading. Norton's ebook reader facilitates active reading with a powerful annotation tool and allows students to do a full-text search of the anthology and read online or off. The ebook can be accessed from any computer or device with an Internet browser and is available to students at a fraction of the print price at digital.wwnorton.com/americanlit10. For exam copy access to the ebook and for information on making it available through the campus bookstore or packaging it with the print anthology, instructors should contact their Norton representative.

To give instructors even more flexibility, Norton offers a special discount when pairing a Norton Critical Edition or Norton Library title with the print anthology. Each Norton Critical Edition gives students an authoritative, carefully annotated text accompanied by rich contextual and critical materials prepared by an expert in the subject. Edited and produced with the same care that Norton devotes to its literary anthologies and other texts, volumes in the Norton Library include enticing introductions and helpful but unobtrusive annotations by leading scholars and writers. They are among the most affordable editions available.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Access to the following student resources is included with all new copies of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Tenth Edition, and is available as an affordable standalone purchase option for students with used copies:

- **InQuizitive** New to the Tenth Edition is InQuizitive, Norton's auto-graded, easy-to-use learning tool that motivates students to read with increased focus and confidence. A variety of interactive question types that go beyond basic multiple choice keep students engaged, and answer-specific feedback models close reading and promotes scaffolded learning from comprehension to analysis. Page references, included with each question, direct students back into the anthology. Modules are available for each of the period introductions, a selection of frequently taught works, the challenging genre of poetry, and writing about American literature. New videos featuring the anthology editors are embedded in InQuizitive to bring the key insights of their respective period introductions to life. InQuizitive is easily integrated with any learning management system so that grades flow back to your LMS gradebook.
- **Close Reading Workshops** Each of the more than twenty workshops focuses on a passage from an often-taught work in the anthology and includes a series of guided writing prompts. Auto-graded at 100 percent for completion (with the ability for instructors to change students' scores if they so choose), the workshops give students valuable low-stakes writing practice. LMS integration also allows grades for the workshops to report directly to an LMS gradebook.
- ***Writing about American Literature* ebook** This ebook by Karen Gocsik (University of California–San Diego) and Coleman Hutchison (University of Texas–Austin) is an accessible, step-by-step guide to writing about literature, from active reading to final

revision. Sections devoted to reading analytically and interrogating sources provide students with an essential foundation. Tips on reading critically and creatively, generating ideas, narrowing a topic, constructing a thesis, structuring an argument, and revising lead students through the entire arc of the writing process.

- **MLA Citation Booklet** This mini ebook includes the latest MLA guidelines for easy reference.

Visit digital.wwnorton.com/americanlit10 or contact your Norton representative for more information about these student resources.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

Norton also provides extensive instructor-support materials to help with course prep and more:

- **Norton Teaching Tools** Rich with dynamic resources created by experienced instructors, the Norton Teaching Tools site for *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* is your first stop for creative and engaging materials to refresh your syllabus or design a new one. The contents are organized by period and type, making them easily sortable. Content includes teaching notes and discussion questions from the popular instructor's guide as well as images, videos, and lecture PowerPoint slides. Additionally, the site features sample syllabi and tips for assigning InQuizitive, including how to get the most out of its powerful analytics on class and student performance.
- ***Teaching with* The Norton Anthology of American Literature: *A Guide for Instructors*** The much-praised instructor's guide by Edward Whitley (Lehigh University) is available for download as a PDF at wwnorton.com/instructors. Each author/work entry offers teaching suggestions, discussion questions, activities and assignments, and suggestions for incorporating multimedia.
- **Reading Comprehension Quizzes** Norton Testmaker brings Norton's high-quality testing and quizzing materials online. Teachers can create assessments for their course from anywhere with an Internet connection, without downloading files or installing specialized software. The reading comprehension quizzes include multiple-choice questions on often-taught works. Easily export ready-to-use quizzes to Microsoft Word as Common Cartridge files for your LMS.

Editorial Procedures

As in past editions, editorial features—period introductions, headnotes, annotations, and bibliographies—are designed to be concise yet full and to give students necessary information without imposing interpretation. The editors have updated all apparatus in response to new scholarship. All selected bibliographies and each period's general-resources bibliography have been thoroughly updated. The Tenth Edition retains three editorial features that help students

place their reading in historical and cultural context—a Texts/Contexts timeline following each period introduction, a map on the front endpaper of each volume, and a chronological chart, on the back endpaper, showing the lifespans of many of the writers anthologized.

Whenever possible, we reprint texts as they appeared in their historical moment. There is one exception: we have modernized most spellings and (sparingly) the punctuation in Volume A on the principle that archaic spellings and typography pose unnecessary problems for beginning students. We have used square brackets to indicate titles supplied by the editors for the convenience of students. Whenever a portion of a text has been omitted, we have indicated that omission with three asterisks. If the omitted portion is important for following the plot or argument, we give a brief summary within the text or in a footnote. After each work, we cite the date of first publication on the right; in some instances, the latter is accompanied by the date of a revised edition for which the author was responsible. When the date of composition is known and differs from the date of publication, we cite it on the left.

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ROBERT S. LEVINE, General Editor

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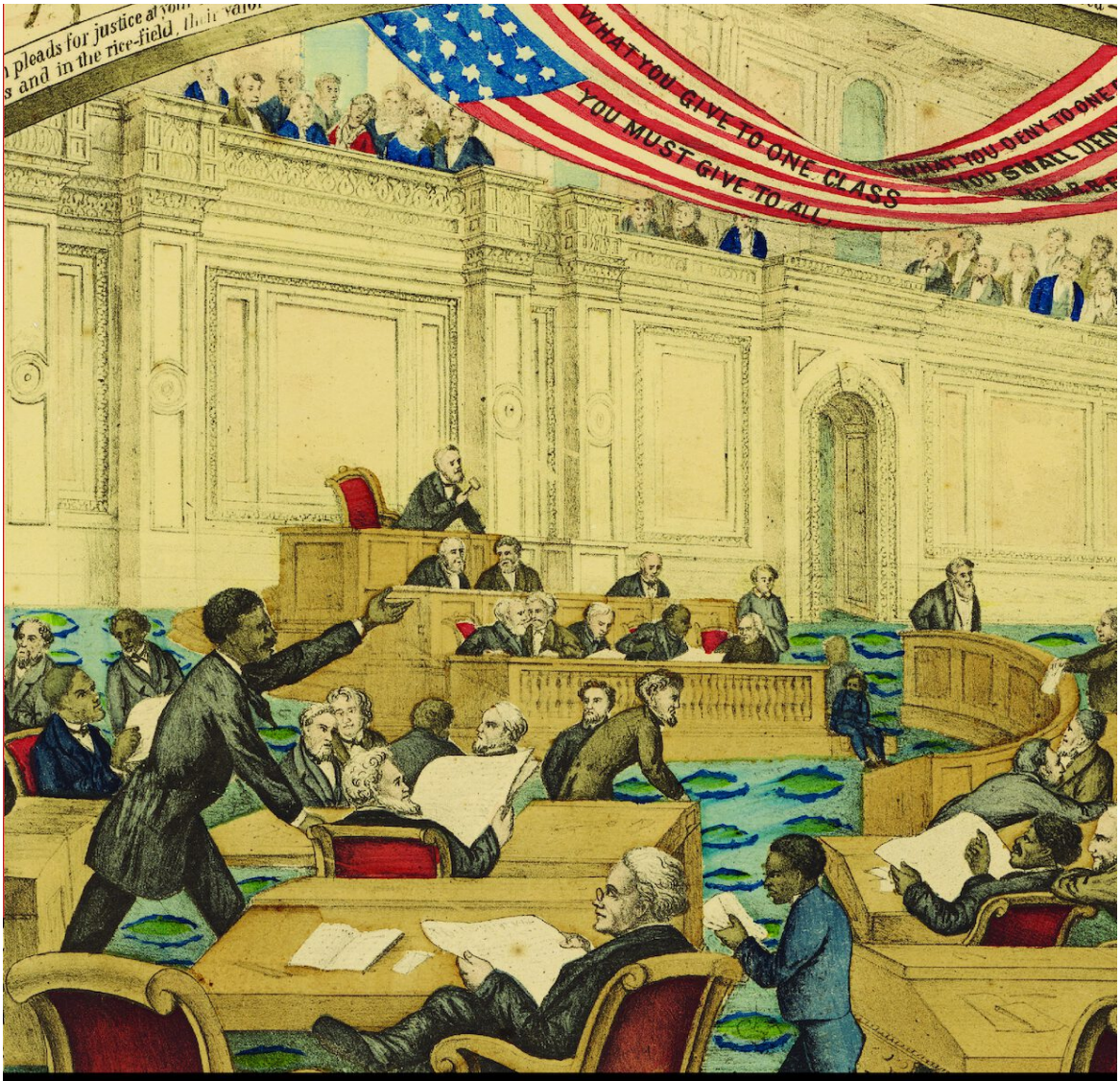
American Literature 1865–1914



THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY | 1865–1914

TENTH EDITION

AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Shackle Broken—By the Genius of Freedom (detail), 1874. The central vignette in this hand-colored lithograph by E. Sachse & Company celebrates a powerful speech on civil rights delivered by Congressman Robert B. Elliott of South Carolina on January 6, 1874. Elliott served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1871 to 1874 and was one of the few men of color elected to Congress from the former Confederate states. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited racial discrimination in transportation, juries, and public accommodations. The flag above the House chamber contains words from Elliott's speech: "What you give to one class, you must give to all. What you deny to one class, you must deny to all." The gains toward equality won by African Americans during Reconstruction generated a fierce, often violent backlash, and the Civil Rights Act supported by Elliott would be ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1883.

Introduction

Children Sleeping in Mulberry Street, 1890, Jacob Riis. For more information about this image, see the Image Gallery in this volume.

THE GILDED AGE

In 1873, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner published *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-day*. The novel, Twain's first, portrays a nation consumed by greed and corruption, a land of get-rich-quick schemes, rampant speculation, and bribery. Twain and Warner filled their pages with Americans—from country villagers to big-city dwellers—who were caught up in the fantasy of making an easy fortune, willing to sacrifice their scruples for the sake of material success. The book revealed an age that too easily mistook gilding for gold.

Commercially and critically, *The Gilded Age* enjoyed only modest success. Some readers were put off by the "pungent" satire; others thought the book was "confused and inartistic." One reviewer compared the novel to "a salad dressing badly mixed." But Twain and Warner's contemporaries agreed that *The Gilded Age* had accurately captured something important, if unsettling, about the time in which they lived, and the book shaped the way that we think about this period of American life. Even today, many historians follow Twain and Warner in referring to the late nineteenth century in America as "the Gilded Age."

Just as important, Twain and Warner's novel reveals significant trends that were emerging in the literature of the United States in the decades following the Civil War. Rather than being concerned with introspection or the perfection of literary forms, American literature in the late nineteenth century privileged the description and documentation of a rapidly changing society—a nation undergoing tremendous changes in terms of the composition of its population, the structure of its economy, and the customs of its people. American writers scrutinized the world around them, and their observations on the page were frequently accompanied by social commentary and sometimes, as in the case of Twain, comic wit. Instead of the romantic idealism of antebellum authors like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Gilded Age America fostered a more measured and pragmatic way of looking at the world. The role of literature, in the words of Twain's contemporary Ambrose Bierce, was to "cultivate a taste for the distasteful," to "endeavor to see things as they are, not as they ought to be."

Labels for literary and cultural periods offer a convenient shorthand for characterizing the complicated reality of any cultural moment. We use them, usually with the benefit of hindsight, to reduce the chaos of the past to some kind of narrative order. For most of the twentieth century, literary histories of the Gilded Age celebrated American authors for their willingness to present a series of increasingly distasteful truths, particularly through novels depicting the excesses and foibles of the urban environments where new fortunes were being won and lost. Mark Twain, Henry James, Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton, and Theodore Dreiser—all authors included in this volume—were recognized as writers who advanced an aesthetic of "realism." The editor and author William Dean Howells was identified as the leading proponent of this movement, and literary historians carefully analyzed his advocacy in the pages of magazines like the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*.

During the past three decades, however, scholars of American literature have been concerned that this period in American literature has been too narrowly defined. They have noted that how one decides what is "real" depends on where one sits in society—and that the authors named above were largely located in the nation's urban centers, where they focused primarily on the lives of native-born Whites. Scholars have also observed that editors like Howells were in fact interested in cultivating a wider variety of perspectives, including authors from regions across the United States, immigrant writers, and African American authors. If one

of the roles of literature is to "see things as they are," then our definition of literature could also expand beyond fiction and poetry to include other forms of writing—such as autobiography, sketches, and folktales—that proliferated during this period. This volume, like every other volume of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature,* employs this broader definition of literature. In addition to fiction and poetry, the texts here include oratory, social commentary, and even a few works that were originally published in languages other than English.

Literature, though, does not merely show how things are. It amuses, provokes, cajoles, and inspires. Twain was one of the fiercest critics of his time, yet he was also one of its finest entertainers. His writing not only reflected the world that surrounded him but also played a significant role in shaping how his readers (including us) understand that world. The realism that flourished between the Civil War and World War I raises as many questions about the purpose of literature as it answers. How should literature respond to the social problems of its time? How can language capture what is real? Who gets to decide what counts as realism and what counts as fantasy? How can literature help us understand competing perspectives on reality?

These questions remain as pertinent in our time as they were in Twain's. Many of the changes sweeping through Twain's world seem to foreshadow the struggles of our own. The period encompassing the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth witnessed questions about racial equality and racial violence, debates over the role of immigrants in America, anxiety about shifting gender roles, and concerns about the accumulation and concentration of wealth. The distance between the late nineteenth century and the present is substantial and the differences between that period and ours are significant, but there are good reasons that some have called the early twenty-first century a "second Gilded Age."

RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA

The Civil War transformed the lives of the four million African Americans who obtained their freedom from slavery, but its costs were staggering. The combined death toll from the Union and Confederate armies equaled more than 620,000 soldiers—or about 2 percent of the total U.S. population. Historians have offered a conservative estimate of an additional 50,000 civilian casualties, mostly in areas that declared secession from the Union. Of those who survived battle, hundreds of thousands sustained injuries, and the fighting obliterated fields, factories, and homes in the war's path. In the face of so much destruction and suffering, the rebuilding of the United States required more than simply repairing railroads and clearing away the debris of war. The reconstruction of America also demanded a reimagination of what it meant to be an American.

In their quest to rebuild the United States, Americans in the post–Civil War era looked in a variety of directions for the resources needed for renewal: abroad, for immigrant populations that would provide the labor necessary for economic growth; to the west, where land, minerals, and other natural resources seemed to be abundant; and to the south, where the destruction left by the war created opportunities for entrepreneurial investors. Finally, by the turn of the twentieth century, Americans were looking to foreign lands in a new way, as the United States sought to claim its place on the world stage as an imperial power. What united these disparate energies was a drive for material prosperity—an unquestioned belief in economic progress. Signs of this creed were visible in the New York mansions constructed on Fifth Avenue, in the thrumming activity of the stockyards and market exchanges of Chicago, and in the new forms of leisure activities—amusement parks, dance halls, nickelodeons—that catered to working-class people who found they had some extra time and money to spend on pleasure.

But that prosperity came at a price. Though wages for blue- and white-collar workers rose during the late nineteenth century, the gains for laborers were far smaller than the fortunes being made and lost by the industrial capitalists who seemed to control a larger and larger share of the American economy every year. The laissez-faire capitalism that generated such spectacular opportunities was also fraught with risk—and the nation endured the consequences of a series of financial panics and market crashes. The Homestead Act of 1862 promised free or cheap acreage to every individual or family who would settle and "improve" land according to a set formula, but much of the available land was donated to railroads to encourage their growth. The expansion of the railroad network was critical to the larger economic development of the United States, yet it meant that farmers found themselves at the mercy of the large corporations that transported their goods—an economic order that the writer Frank Norris characterized as a giant "octopus," wielding its power across the land. In the end, large-scale farming took over from the family farm, increasing agricultural yields and forcing many farmers to join the swelling populations of American cities.

The rapid urbanization of the United States in the late nineteenth century permanently changed the cultural landscape of the nation. Between 1865 and the turn of the twentieth century, New York grew from a population of 500,000 to nearly 3.5 million. Chicago, with a population of only 29,000 in 1850, had more than 2 million inhabitants by 1910. Upton Sinclair titled his great novel of Chicago life *The Jungle* (1906) for good reason. Urban workers often faced brutal, even dangerous, conditions, and the late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of industrial labor movements. Americans were shocked when strikes turned

violent in cities such as Pittsburgh and Chicago, though ultimately neither blue-collar laborers nor small farmers were fully successful in opposing the forces of capital. Until the regulations of the early twentieth century, legislators and other elected officials believed that the welfare of the nation required that the forces of capitalism remain unchecked. Kickbacks, bribes, and other forms of corruption further ensured that corporate and industrial interests were well represented by politicians.

Golden Spike Ceremony. Joining the tracks for the first transcontinental railroad, Promontory, Utah Territory, 1869.

The growth of industry and the urbanization of the United States were fueled by unprecedented levels of immigration. In 1870, the U.S. population was 38.5 million; by 1910, 92 million; by 1920, 123 million. A large percentage of this increase came from the arrival of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe: Russia, Poland, Italy, and the Balkan nations. Though these new Americans were crucial to the prosperity of the nation, they were also a source of anxiety to some, and the question of what it means to acquire an American identity is at the center of the final section of this volume, "Becoming American in the Gilded Age." Throughout this period, native-born Americans, particularly Whites, worried that the surge of immigrants would change the racial and religious character of the nation. From a very different perspective, immigrant writers like Abraham Cahan—a Jew fleeing the oppression of his native Belarus—told stories about newcomers to America grappling with the demands of a new language and new customs, including in his novel *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1896), reprinted in full in this volume. After the turn of the twentieth century, Americans found a new metaphor to describe the experience of immigrants. The hero of Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting-Pot*—first staged in the United States in 1909—proclaims: "America is

God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming!"

Not everyone, of course, wanted to melt or reform. For American Indians living in the western half of the continent, the expansion of the United States threatened their political and cultural autonomy. From the time of the earliest treaties with the United States, Native nations had agreed to cede large tracts of land with some territory specifically "reserved" for themselves. What we currently think of as Indian reservations came about as a result of President Ulysses S. Grant's policies of the late 1860s, which sought—and mostly forced—the agreement of various Native nations to limit themselves to lands designated by the federal government. In the 1880s, an organization of eastern philanthropists calling themselves "Friends of the Indian" began to implement an agenda for assimilating Native Americans into the White mainstream. Members of this organization may have considered themselves friendly, but their methods inevitably devalued Native ways of life in favor of White schooling, White patterns of town settlement and agriculture, and above all White religion. Native writers such as Zitkala-Ša (Yankton Sioux) wrote extensively about the effects of such efforts on their people. At the same time that government and missionary boarding schools were attempting to strip American Indians of their tribal cultures, the government was working to separate them from their land. In 1887, the U.S. Congress approved the Dawes Severalty Act, which set in motion a process for dissolving the communal landholdings of tribal reservations and assigning smaller parcels of land to individual Indians. The Dawes Act fragmented the collectively held tribal lands and reduced the total Native land base by some ninety million acres before the policy was abandoned in 1934.

Ellis Island. The immigration station, shown here around 1900, opened in 1892. It served as the port of entry for millions of migrants from Europe before the federal government restricted immigration in 1924. In its busiest year, 1907, more than 1 million immigrants entered the United States through Ellis Island.

For most White Americans, the melting pot also excluded African Americans. Of all the social conflicts that animate the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, none matches the force or complexity of the continued subjugation of Black Americans during this period. After the surrender of the Confederacy, U.S. federal troops occupied its former states and attempted to make good on the promise of equality. The term *Reconstruction* refers both to the period following the Civil War and to the specific question of how the states that seceded would be reincorporated into the Union. In this volume, we have included a new selection of texts from this critical period of American history to introduce a few of the voices advocating for African American equality during this time, including former abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Frances E. W. Harper and new voices on the political scene, like Robert Brown Elliott, one of the sixteen African American men who served in Congress.

For a time during Reconstruction, African Americans in the South gained political representation at the local and federal levels, obtained increased access to education, and built institutions that served their communities. However, they were fiercely resisted through the

political terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan (founded in 1866) and similar organizations dedicated to their subjugation. By the late 1870s, the United States had withdrawn nearly all of its troops from the former states of the Confederacy, and the commitment to fighting for racial equality had dramatically diminished at the level of national partisan politics.

Instead, reconciliation between North and South became of paramount importance, and White Americans avoided reopening sectional wounds by ignoring the growing political and economic disempowerment of African Americans in the former states of the Confederacy. In spite of the genuine progress that had occurred since the Civil War, African Americans often found themselves returning to the questions that had underlain that terrible conflict. Speaking on the "race problem" in America at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, the famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass faced down a crowd of hecklers. "Men talk of the Negro problem," he declaimed. "There is no Negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have honesty enough, loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough to live up to their own Constitution."

THE LITERARY MARKETPLACE

Douglass's words remind us that for all that was new about post–Civil War America, there were also substantial continuities with what had come before. Writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Walt Whitman remained active and influential figures into the 1880s and the 1890s. Emily Dickinson's most productive years as a poet occurred during the Civil War, but she would not become widely known as a poet until the 1890s, when her verses were published in heavily edited versions. Herman Melville published three books of poetry in the 1870s and 1880s, and then composed the masterful novella *Billy Budd*, which remained unpublished until long after his death in 1891.

In spite of the influence of such writers in the years following the Civil War, many American writers of this era began to understand themselves as belonging to a distinct generation. Indeed, the late nineteenth century was when scholars and critics began dividing the literature of the United States into separate historical periods, seeking to create a coherent history of American writing. The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the publication of several influential anthologies of American literature—and even the first college courses on the subject. By that time, the realm of literature had undergone substantial changes. The post–Civil War decades saw the United States create and import many features of the literary marketplace that we now take for granted: the standardization and proliferation of book reviewing, the circulation of best-seller lists, and the growth, simultaneously, of several classes of readers, including well-educated white-collar readers, middle-class readers who attended book clubs, and increasingly literate working classes who might encounter literature through newspapers or dime novels. The commercial realm governing both author and text changed in significant ways, most crucially with the ratification of the International Copyright Act of 1891, a law supported by literary figures such as Mark Twain and William Dean Howells. The act extended copyright protection to foreign writers in the United States and enabled American authors to receive the same protection abroad.

During this period, the center of the growing publishing industry migrated from Boston to New York, and commercial publishing became a more professional and specialized enterprise. As the American reading public grew, publishing houses increasingly focused on different segments of the literary marketplace and devised new methods to excite publicity and increase sales. The turn of the twentieth century fostered the rise of literary celebrity in the United States, most obviously epitomized by Mark Twain. Like later authors such as Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, and Gertrude Stein, Twain became a public figure whose actions and words were reported regularly in newspapers and periodicals, and he was arguably the most recognizable American in the world for several decades.

The development of the railroads and the growth of urban markets both contributed to the rise of mass cultural expression in the post–Civil War United States. Readers of literature could purchase new works by subscribing to them, as one might subscribe to a magazine, or find them in the increasing number of lending libraries—or they might encounter poems, short stories, and serialized novels in periodicals. Middle- and professional-class readers were the target audience of magazines such as the *Atlantic*, *Century*, and *Harper's*—where they could find writers such as Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Sarah Orne Jewett. In San Francisco, the *Overland Monthly* emerged as the leading western literary periodical with a regional focus; it published Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Sui Sin Far, and Mark Twain, among

others. Abraham Cahan founded the Yiddish newspaper the *Jewish Daily Forward* in 1897, and Pauline E. Hopkins serialized her sensational novels in the *Colored American Magazine*, founded in 1900. As these examples suggest, new forms of cultural expression did not translate into a single, unified reading public. For White nativists—who were worried about the increasing number of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, as well as the influence of African Americans and Asian Americans—the visible diversity of American literature exacerbated their fears about the future of their country.

FORMS OF REALISM

Nowhere was the anxiety about the state of American literature and its relationship to the American populace more on display than in the debates about literary realism that arose in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. *Realism* was (and is) a slippery term, one that could be applied to a variety of literary projects; most commonly, it was used to refer to literary fiction that was rooted in the observation and documentation of the details of everyday life. American realists saw themselves as influenced by the development of realist fiction in Britain and continental Europe; they looked to writers as diverse as George Eliot (England), Ivan Turgenev (Russia), and Henrik Ibsen (Norway). However, the author and editor William Dean Howells contended that literary realism had a particular function in the democratic society of the United States. Howells held that by documenting the speech and manners of a wide variety of people—representing a diversity of social classes—literary realism could foster a shared democratic culture. "Democracy in literature . . . wishes to know and to tell the truth," he wrote. At a time when American society seemed on the verge of fracturing into divisions of class, race, and ethnicity, literature could help cultivate empathetic bonds that would hold it together. Howells continued, "Men are more alike than unlike one another: let us make them know one another better, that they may be all humbled and strengthened with a sense of their fraternity."

A section of this volume presents several key arguments about realism and how it might be defined. Some critics believed that realism abandoned the moral purpose of art in favor of the vulgar and commonplace; others believed that realist fiction relied too much on dull observation instead of dramatic storytelling. In spite of this opposition, Howells's ideas set the agenda for the American literary establishment in his time. Indeed, this volume is filled with writers whom Howells encouraged, published, or reviewed favorably during his career. He was an early champion of his contemporaries Henry James and Mark Twain—maintaining close ties with both writers for decades—and later promoted younger writers such as Stephen Crane, Abraham Cahan, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Charles Chesnutt (all represented in this anthology). These writers, he believed, would usher in an age in which the United States could stand on the international stage as an equal to other nations in contributing to world letters.

The interest in forms of literary realism was especially welcoming of regional writing from throughout the United States. On a practical level, regional writing flourished with the proliferation of mass magazines, for which short stories and sketches were ideal, and which catered to urban audiences curious about distant peoples and their cultures. By the end of the nineteenth century, virtually every region of the country had one or more "local colorists" dedicated to capturing its natural, social, and linguistic features. These works, such as Joel Chandler Harris's plantation tales, could be suffused with nostalgia. In other cases, such as in the writing of Constance Fenimore Woolson and Charles Chesnutt about the South, or the Maine fiction of Sarah Orne Jewett, regional writers portrayed the stresses and complexities of particular locales under the pressure of tremendous change. Hamlin Garland, a visible advocate of regional writing, depicted midwestern farmers coming to terms with harsh economic truths, and Mary Wilkins Freeman explored the effects of tradition on the lives of New England women. The appetite for regional writing played a large role in launching the careers of writers from the American West. First published in 1865, Mark Twain's tall tale from the California frontier, "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," remained his best-known work

for many years, and Bret Harte became a national figure in 1868 with "The Luck of Roaring Camp," a story that explores and exploits colorful myths of the West.

Literary realism and regionalism also influenced the way that writers portrayed the lives of racial and ethnic "others"—non-Whites seen as different from the majority of American readers. Both White and African American writers, for instance, depicted Black characters as speaking in a distinct vernacular, and they often took advantage of White interest in African American folk beliefs. Joel Chandler Harris's "Wonderful Tar Baby Story" (1881), told by Uncle Remus, was immensely popular, and the superstitions voiced by Jim in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) contributed to its success. Charles Chesnutt's conjure tales offered a new take on the practice of presenting African American traditions to White readers, one that allows them to see an African American storyteller as much less naïve in his engagement with White audiences. The interest in vernacular speech extended to poetry as well, as Paul Laurence Dunbar manipulated the rhythms of African American speech into some of the best-known verse of his time.

In their representations of African Americans, these authors sought to depict ways of speaking that were notably different in vocabulary and pronunciation from the English spoken by White readers or characters. To capture that difference, they represented African American voices in the form of a *dialect*—a variation of a language that is particular to a group or region. For writers, putting dialect on the page involved changing the spelling and punctuation of characters' dialogue to purportedly capture the spoken patterns of a particular race, class, or ethnicity. This practice of writing dialogue in the form of a dialect, which became common in the late nineteenth century, extended to the representation of all those thought to be outside the mainstream society of middle- to upper-class Anglo-America. African Americans, recent immigrants, and the urban poor were all presented in literature as speaking a nonstandard English. This vogue for dialect literature—found across genres, from newspaper sketches to literary novels—can make the writing of this period challenging for the twenty-first-century reader. But the difficulty serves a purpose. For writers such as Twain and Chesnutt, as well as Abraham Cahan and Stephen Crane, transcribing dialogue as nonstandard dialect was a means of representing the social distances that existed between their characters—distances that could have results that were comic, tragic, or both—as well as the distance these writers presumed between their characters and their middle-class readers. Indeed, the author of a work of literature might deliberately intend that readers must struggle to understand speakers from racial or ethnic backgrounds different from their own.

***A Feast Day at Acoma*,** Edward S. Curtis, 1904. In 1892 Curtis (1868–1952) opened a studio in Washington Territory and began to photograph local Indians. Curtis traveled widely, portraying Native people and scenes in an elegiac manner, attempting to document what he understood to be the last days of the "vanishing Indian." Whatever his intentions, *A Feast Day at Acoma* shows a bustling scene of Pueblo people in the Southwest.

By the turn of the twentieth century, literary interest in the traditions of "the folk" was visible everywhere in American literature. When Kate Chopin sought an audience for her tales of rural Louisiana, she titled her volume *Bayou Folk* (1894). When W. E. B. Du Bois published his groundbreaking collection of essays about race and racism in the United States, he called the book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). During the final decades of the nineteenth century, the publication of dialect literature, folktales, and local-color sketches coincided with the rise and professionalization of social sciences that were oriented toward the same materials. For Native Americans, the development of anthropology in the United States had particular significance. Even as American Indians were a target of assimilation campaigns to erase their languages, cultures, and religions, anthropologists were traveling the continent attempting to document those very things. Sponsored both by the federal government and by universities, the anthropologists transcribed songs, stories, and ceremonials—collecting them on the page just

as they collected physical artifacts for natural history museums. Native American authors such as Zitkala-Ša and Charles Eastman could find their way into print by producing their own versions of tribal stories, a practice that continues to this day. Just as important, these Native writers reminded Americans that Indians would continue to persist *outside* of museums.

In expanding the diversity of American writing, realism did not cure any of the social ills of the Gilded Age. However, the interest in realism encouraged a more socially engaged literature, one in which the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction could become blurred. Looking back to the Civil War, Ambrose Bierce's dark, violent tales of the conflict were published alongside the more celebratory accounts of battles and generals; Constance Fenimore Woolson and Charles W. Chesnutt both wrote searing stories of Reconstruction at a time when the economic future of the South was a frequent topic of national discussion; and Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, published in 1901, offered a blueprint for African American uplift and was instantly recognized as a masterpiece of autobiography, only to meet with a sharp rejoinder two years later by W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*—a mix of memoir, polemic, social science, and fiction. The turn of the twentieth century was a time of lively, even heated, argument about the future of the nation, and literary realism was an invitation for authors to dive into those debates rather than turn away.

THE "WOMAN QUESTION"

One such debate was about how the role of women in American life would be defined—or even whether it should be defined at all. In the post–Civil War era, females raised in middle- and professional-class homes had increasing access to secondary and even higher education. They had access to new forms of mass entertainment, and urbanization offered new forms of cultural and political activity. The consumer culture of the late nineteenth century allowed women greater opportunity to assert their own wants and desires, and the decreasing price of magazines was coupled by an increase in the number of periodicals that sought a female readership.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, women increasingly participated in social clubs of all kinds, a movement that facilitated the discussion among women of the cultural and political issues of the moment. Women's clubs might invite speakers or select books for discussion, and a "clubwoman" could exert significant influence in a community. While women's clubs were often identified, in the popular press, with liberal attitudes about gender roles, they could also act as conservative forces—organized along traditional lines of class, religion, and race. Indeed, in the 1890s women formed separate national organizations for White and African American women's clubs. For immigrant and working-class communities, women's clubs were an opportunity to discuss the challenges of urban environments. For African American women, clubs allowed members to share in an agenda of racial advancement and to achieve the middle-class respectability often denied them in their daily lives.

The "Woman Question," to use a common phrase from this period, was actually more than a single question: it was a host of issues related to education, participation in the workforce, and the social influence of women on issues such as temperance. Although marriage and motherhood defined the conventional roles for women in the popular imagination, changes in the divorce laws during the 1890s fueled debates about female autonomy and the institution of marriage. The chief political issue identified with women during this period was suffrage. Proponents of female suffrage were bitterly disappointed by the 1870 ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which—at least in theory—extended the voting franchise to African American men but not to women of any race. Membership in the National Woman Suffrage Association, founded in 1869, grew dramatically in the late nineteenth century. However, the question of voting rights also fostered racial and ethnic division throughout the period, as White, native-born women often raised their claims to the ballot by deriding the fact that others they deemed less worthy, including new immigrant and African American men, could vote. Black suffragists were often excluded from national events, and many formed their own suffrage organizations.

The quest for female suffrage would not be complete until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920; but throughout the decades between the Civil War and World War I, Americans had a sense that women were claiming new forms of autonomy. At such a time, even something as ordinary as a bicycle, increasingly popular in the late nineteenth century, could become a symbol of female emancipation. ("It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance," Susan B. Anthony famously said.) The questions and anxieties about the changing place of women in American culture reverberate throughout the texts in this volume of *The Norton Anthology*. By portraying an "American girl" attempting to navigate the world

of leisure and desire, Henry James struck a nerve with the publication of *Daisy Miller* in 1879, and he returned to these themes throughout his long career as a novelist. In a different vein, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper"—a story that was widely read and admired when it was first published in 1892—depicts how the medical regime of the late nineteenth century attempted to contain the creative energies of American women. Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), published within a year of one another, both feature protagonists who attempt to achieve autonomy and fulfill their desires, with very different outcomes. Edith Wharton's short stories, such as "The Other Two" (1904), find comedy and pathos in an upper-class world in which divorce is increasingly common.

Female writers of color wrote about many of these same issues, but they also addressed the ways in which racism created a social landscape even more challenging than that faced by their White counterparts. Ida B. Wells-Barnett's accounts of lynching and other forms of anti-Black violence revealed the cruelties that threatened the safety and well-being of all African Americans, male and female; in her autobiographical essays, Zitkala-Ša wrote about the pressures of assimilation brought to bear on Native Americans who sought an education; and Pauline Hopkins published sensational tales, like "Talma Gordon" (1900), that called into question the social fictions that upheld racial inequality. Taken together, these works reveal that categories like "race" and "gender" could mean quite distinct things to different writers at the turn of the twentieth century. What all these authors share, though, is a sense that writing had a vital function to play in helping Americans to understand the complex problems of their time.

UNSEEN FORCES

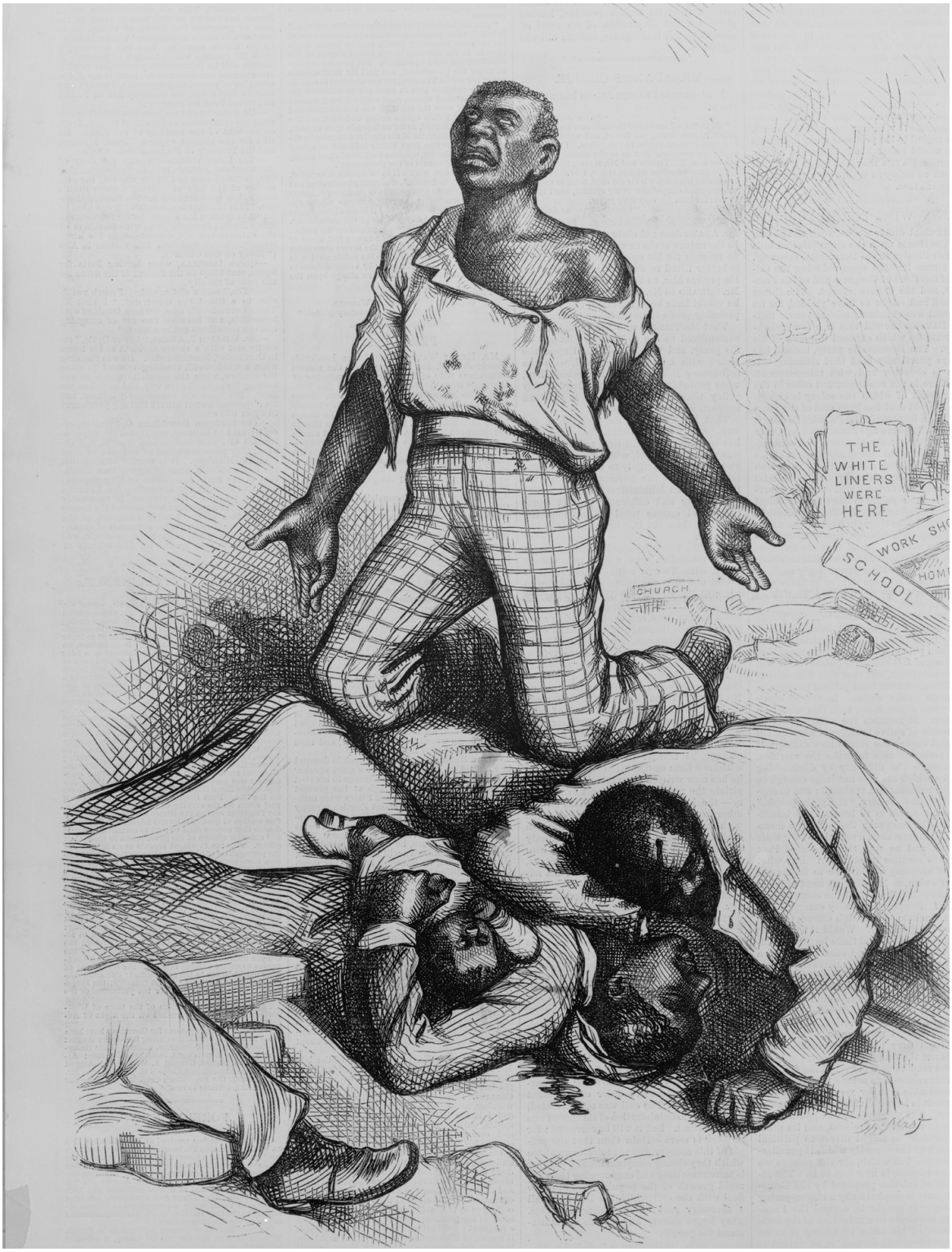
As the century neared its close, Americans increasingly felt that their society was being shaped by unseen forces beyond their control. The industrialization of the United States created large corporations that seemed to obey their own laws; engineers were harnessing the power of electricity, bringing energy to cities that were growing faster than Americans had ever previously seen; in 1895, scientists discovered how to harness X-rays to penetrate the secrets of the body; and a communications network that included telephones and telegraphs spread across the nation and the globe, delivering news at unprecedented speed. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, an American could drive an automobile, see the flickering image of a moving picture, and hear voices recorded on a phonograph—all wonders of a new age. Surrounded by the machinery and scientific advances on display at the Great Exposition in Paris in 1900, Henry Adams described himself as having "his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of forces totally new." For the sixty-two-year-old historian, the grandson and great-grandson of U.S. presidents, the turn of the twentieth century was a time of promise and peril, unleashing "occult, supersensual, irrational" forces that exerted the same power in the modern world that the Christian cross had wielded in the Middle Ages.

One force that changed how many Americans understood the physical and social world was the emerging theory of evolution. In *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), Charles Darwin explained that human beings had developed over the ages from nonhuman forms of life, successfully adapting to changing environmental conditions. Darwin, a naturalist, was not interested in the competition that took place among human societies, but in the 1860s the English philosopher Herbert Spencer began using the theory of natural selection as a lens for understanding competition among people. Spencer coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" to describe this process, and Darwin even included it in later editions of *The Origin of Species*. Though relatively few Americans read Spencer himself—and even fewer actually read Darwin—these ideas about evolution, natural selection, and competition would shape American thought over the next half century. As it was most often invoked, evolution could describe a social world in which progress was achieved only through ruthless competition. Given the collateral damage caused by the dramatic booms and busts of the business cycle during the late nineteenth century, it is small wonder that some of the leading American businessmen happily adopted this rhetoric to describe the value of capitalism. Andrew Carnegie, for example, argued that unrestrained competition was the equivalent of a law of nature designed to eliminate those unfit for the new economic order.

Darwinism could justify other forms of violence as well. Fear that the racial character of the United States would be contaminated by Asian "blood"—and therefore rendered "unfit"—was one rationale offered for the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited immigration from China. White Americans believed that the forces of evolution destined American Indians to be relegated to the margins of history, and this belief drove both the final nineteenth-century campaigns to eradicate Native military resistance to the United States and the Americanization efforts of self-described "Friends of the Indian." In the South, the language of social evolution and racial competition contributed to the violent suppression of African Americans, particularly African American men. White supremacists claimed that they were protecting the purity of White women and ensuring the future of the White race as they terrorized their Black neighbors through the spectacle of lynching. In this distortion of Darwinian evolution, it was

all too easy to understand any form of group violence as nothing more than the expression of natural law.

In the realm of literature, American authors at the end of the nineteenth century began to grapple more explicitly with the meaning of evolution and other social forces as literary *naturalism* developed in the United States. Naturalism grew from, and overlapped with, literary realism, but there were key differences. Like Howells and his fellow realists, literary naturalists felt that they had an obligation to bring social conflict to the page, but they found Howells and his followers too mild and too focused on the manners of the professional and upper classes. Naturalists thought that realism had left literature bloodless by failing to depict the genuine violence that they saw everywhere in the ruthless, modern world: they sought to explore how biology, environment, and other material forces shaped lives—focusing particularly on lower-class people, who had less control over their lives than those who were better off. Naturalism introduces characters from the fringes and depths of society, far from the middle class, whose lives really do spin out of control; their fates are seen to be the outcome of degenerate heredity, a sordid environment, and the bad luck that can often seem to control the lives of people without money or influence. The protagonist of Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) cannot escape the seamy violence of Manhattan's Lower East Side; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) compares the working-class immigrants of Chicago's meatpacking district to the pigs that they slaughter.



Race and Reconstruction. This 1876 cartoon by Thomas Nast (1840–1902) comments on the failure of the federal government to protect African Americans in the South. The caption reads, "Is this a republican form of government? Is this protecting life, liberty, or property? Is this equal protection of the laws?" *Harper's Weekly*, September 2, 1876.

Literary naturalists emphasized plot to a greater degree than did the realists of previous decades. Their works engaged more deliberately with romance and myth, even when the result was to deflate conventional notions of heroism, as in Crane's Civil War novel *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). In the twentieth century, Jack London would take this romantic turn further with his adventure novels and stories—works that often returned to the theme of the bestial instincts that lay beneath civilization. In London's highly popular *The Call of the Wild* (1903), the canine protagonist Buck is stolen from a California ranch and transported to Alaska, where he awakens to his primal memories of wild life and becomes transformed into the "Ghost Dog" of the wilderness. We include in this volume an example of London's social fiction, "South of the Slot" (1909), in which a staid university professor releases his own untapped passions when he begins immersing himself among the working classes of San Francisco. Throughout London's writing, the power of social environment and the primal force of instinct drive the dramatic action.

With their emphasis on men of action—whether in the gold fields of Alaska or the stock exchanges of Chicago—the naturalist fictions of London, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and Upton Sinclair portrayed a world of masculine violence. (Even Jack London's canine protagonists are male.) For decades, some commentators in the United States had expressed concerns that "overcivilization," thanks to the growth of professional and white-collar occupations, was leading to a kind of softness among American men. This anxiety was shaped by the growing material prosperity of the upper and professional classes, who increasingly worked in occupations that did not require physical strength, and it was also a response to the efforts by women to increase their own cultural, economic, and political power. Throughout this period, cultural commentators spent considerable time and effort wringing their hands about what the fluctuating roles of men and women would mean for the future of American civilization.

THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

The increasing assertiveness of American women—or the "New Woman," to use a phrase made popular in the 1890s—made it all the more imperative to shape American manhood properly. One late nineteenth-century movement, "muscular Christianity," attempted to merge physical and moral development through institutions like the Young Men's Christian Association. Indeed, a central premise of the age was that White men could best prepare themselves for the Darwinian struggle by becoming both mentally *and* physically fit. Theodore Roosevelt urged men to engage in the "strenuous life," and he looked back on "the winning of the West"—the title of his four-volume history of American expansion (1889–96)—as a grand drama of heroism and sacrifice. However, in the eyes of most White Americans, the West had already been "won" by the 1890s. The historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared in 1893 that the western frontier, which he regarded as crucial to the formation of America's democratic character, no longer existed.

Having completed the work of building a U.S. empire on the North American continent, Americans looked abroad. "Idleness and luxury have made men flabby," a contributor to the *North American Review* observed in 1894, "and the man at the head of affairs [U.S. president Grover Cleveland] is beginning to ask seriously if a great war might not help them to pull themselves together." When the United States went to war with Spain in 1898, Americans quickly embraced what Secretary of State John Hay called the "splendid little war" in Cuba, and Roosevelt organized a volunteer regiment of "rough riders" that he could lead into combat. For those advocating imperial expansion, the Spanish-American War addressed several problems simultaneously. It gave U.S. industry access to new markets, easing fears of "overproduction"; it gave the United States the chance to establish itself as a legitimate rival to European imperial powers; and it created a new proving ground for American men. At the resolution of the conflict in 1898, the nation had acquired new territories in Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and it would acquire the territory of Hawaii that same year. One ostensible cause of the conflict was the American desire to secure Cuban independence, yet after Spain's defeat the United States did not hurry to withdraw its troops. In effect, Cuba remained a U.S. protectorate for decades. In 1892, the Cuban patriot José Martí had written a manifesto, "Our America" (included in this volume), warning Latin America of the "giant" to their north. Martí lived in New York for more than a decade, and he understood the imperial aspirations of his temporary home all too well.

In 1899, the Filipino independence movement began to revolt against the U.S. military forces occupying the islands, and the armed conflict lasted for three years. Increasingly vocal critics founded the American Anti-Imperialist League. The anti-imperialists included figures as diverse as the industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the social worker Jane Addams, and the philosopher William James (Henry's brother). As in any movement, participants' motives varied. For some, the prospect of empire seemed in conflict with the principle of self-determination that they believed to be a core American value; others were, less nobly, anxious about any territorial grab that could increase the number of non-Whites living under the American flag. William Dean Howells and Mark Twain were members of the Anti-Imperialist League, and both distrusted the exercise of military power and the rhetoric of patriotism that accompanied it. In his story "Editha" (1905), Howells depicts a young woman so captivated by the romance of war that she sends her fiancé off to die in it—and suffers no regret, even after

she encounters the scornful mother of the dead soldier. Twain, whose celebrity made his views especially newsworthy, penned several works opposing military ventures abroad but left some of his most harshly critical writing unpublished in his own lifetime. Twain explained this decision in a letter to a friend: "None but the dead are permitted to tell the truth."

Twain's death in 1910 was a sign of a larger change as the generation of men and women who lived through the U.S. Civil War passed away. By the early 1900s, the first stirrings of modernism were visible: Henry James's deep explorations of consciousness in novels like *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and subsequent works anticipated the prose experiments of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce; in 1912 James Weldon Johnson would publish his *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, a novel that presages the fiction of the Harlem Renaissance in its fascination with alienation and the boundaries of racial identity; and for many readers, the tight, elliptical verses of Emily Dickinson, first published in the 1890s, seem now to have more in common with the twentieth-century verse of poets like H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) or William Carlos Williams than with anything written in her own time. Indeed, many of the authors considered today to be significant influences on American modernism—such as Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein—were already writing and publishing by the year of Twain's death. Realism and naturalism, in other words, overlapped considerably with the artistic movements that would dominate the decades following World War I. When the United States entered the Great War in 1917, its transformation into a global power became complete; as Europe imploded, the United States began exerting political and cultural power far beyond what anyone might have imagined a half century earlier, when America was coming to terms with the aftermath of its own terrible war.

AMERICAN LITERATURE 1865–1914*

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1855 Walt Whitman, ***Leaves of Grass***	
1860–65 Emily Dickinson writes several hundred **poems**	**1860** Short-lived Pony Express runs from Missouri to California
	1861 South Carolina batteries fire on Fort Sumter, initiating the Civil War • southern states secede from the Union and found the Confederate States of America
1865 Walt Whitman, ***Drum-Taps***	**1865** Civil War ends • Reconstruction begins • Lincoln assassinated • Thirteenth Amendment ratified, prohibiting slavery
1867 Mark Twain, ***The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*** *and Other Sketches* • Horatio Alger, ***Ragged Dick***	**1867** United States purchases Alaska from Russia • Jesse Chisholm maps out the Chisholm Trail, connecting Texas cattle ranches to railheads in Kansas City, Cheyenne, Dodge City, and Abilene
1868 Louisa May Alcott, ***Little Women***	**1868** Fourteenth Amendment passed, guaranteeing citizenship to all peoples born in the United States (exclusive of Native peoples) • Congress institutes eight-hour workday for federal employees • sweatshops, using mostly immigrant labor, begin to proliferate in cities
	1869 First transcontinental railroad completed by construction crews composed largely of Chinese laborers • Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott lead the formation of the National Woman Suffrage Association
1870 Bret Harte, ***The Luck of Roaring Camp*** *and Other Sketches*	**1870** Fifteenth Amendment, giving African American men the right to vote, ratified
	1871 Indian Appropriation Act ends the practice of negotiating treaties with the tribes as sovereign nations

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1872 Mark Twain, *Roughing It*	**1872** Yellowstone, first U.S. national park, established
	1873 Economic panic; financial depression lasts until 1879
1874 Robert Brown Elliott, **Speech in Favor of the Civil Rights Bill**	**1874** Women's Christian Temperance Union founded in Cleveland • invention of barbed wire effectively ends the open range
1876 Herman Melville, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*	**1876** Custer's regiment defeated by the Sioux and Cheyenne at Little Bighorn River, Montana • Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone
	1877 Reconstruction ends • segregationist Jim Crow laws begin
1878 Henry James, ***Daisy Miller***	
	1879 Thomas Edison invents the electric lightbulb • female lawyers permitted to argue before Supreme Court
1880 Joel Chandler Harris, ***Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*** • Constance Fenimore Woolson, ***Rodman the Keeper****: Southern Sketches*	**1880–1910** Massive immigration from Europe
1881 James, *Portrait of a Lady*	**1881** Tuskegee Institute founded
	1882 J. D. Rockefeller organizes Standard Oil Trust • Chinese Exclusion Act instituted
1883 Emma Lazarus, "**The New Colossus**"	
1884 Twain, ***Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***	**1884** Tailors' strike in New York City brings national attention to sweatshops
	1886 Statue of Liberty dedicated • Haymarket Square labor riot leaves eleven dead • American Federation of Labor organized

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
	1887 General Allotment Act or Dawes Act permits the president to divide tribally owned lands into individual allotments to be held in trust for twenty-five years, with "surplus" lands to be sold to non-Indians. This led the Indians to lose some 90 million acres of land by the time Dawes was repealed in 1934.
1889 Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* • Hamlin Garland, "**Under the Lion's Paw**" • Andrew Carnegie, **"The Gospel of Wealth"**	
1890 Ambrose Bierce, "**An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge**" • Emily Dickinson, ***Poems***	**1890** U.S. Bureau of the Census declares the "frontier" "to be closed." There is no more "free" or "unoccupied" land • Sitting Bull killed. Massacre of Big Foot's Miniconjou band by federal troops at Wounded Knee Creek ends the Ghost Dance among the Sioux • Ellis Island Immigration Station opens
1891 José Martí, "**Our America**" • Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, **A New England Nun and Other Stories**	
1892 Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* • Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "**The Yellow Wall-paper**"	
1893 Stephen Crane, ***Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*** • Frederick Jackson Turner, ***The Significance of the Frontier***	**1893** World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago • economic panic and depression, set off by the collapse of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroads
1895 Crane, ***The Black Riders*** and *The Red Badge of Courage*	
1896 Paul Laurence Dunbar, ***Lyrics of a Lowly Life*** • James Mooney publishes ***Ghost Dance Songs*** • Abraham Cahan, ***Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto*** • Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*	**1896** *Plessy v. Ferguson* upholds segregated transportation

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1897 Crane, ***The Open Boat*** *and Other Tales of Adventure*	**1897–98** Klondike Gold Rush
1898 James, ***The Turn of the Screw***	**1898** United States annexes Hawaii
	1898–99 Spanish-American War
1899 Charles Chesnutt, ***The Conjure Woman*** and ***The Wife of His Youth*** *and Other Stories of the Color Line* • Kate Chopin, ***The Awakening*** • Frank Norris, ***McTeague***	
1900 Theodore Dreiser, ***Sister Carrie*** • Ida B. Wells-Barnett, ***Mob-Rule in New Orleans*** • Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces* • Francis LaFlesche, *The Middle Five*	**1900** U.S. population exceeds seventy-five million
1901 Zitkala-Ša, ***Impressions of an Indian Childhood*** *and* ***The School Days of an Indian Girl*** • Norris, *The Octopus* • Booker T. Washington, ***Up from Slavery***	**1901** J. P. Morgan founds U.S. Steel Corporation • first transatlantic radio • oil discovered in Spindletop, Texas
1903 W. E. B. Du Bois, ***The Souls of Black Folk*** • Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*	**1903** Henry Ford founds Ford Motor Co. • Wright brothers make the first successful airplane flight • *The Great Train Robbery* is first U.S. cinematic narrative
1904 Edith Wharton, "**The Other Two**"	**1904** National Child Labor Committee formed
1905 William Dean Howells, "**Editha**" • Wharton, *The House of Mirth*	**1905** Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) founded
1906 Upton Sinclair, ***The Jungle***	**1906** April 18: San Francisco earthquake and fire • dozens of African Americans killed in Atlanta race riots
1907 Henry Adams, ***The Education of Henry Adams***, privately printed	
	1908 Israel Zangwill's *The Melting-Pot* first performed
1909 London, **"South of the Slot"**	**1909** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1910 Jane Addams, ***Twenty Years at Hull-House*** • Sui Sin Far, "**Mrs. Spring Fragrance**"	**1910** Mexican Revolution
1912 James Weldon Johnson, ***The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man***	
	1913 Sixteenth Amendment, permitting the federal government to impose an income tax, ratified
	1914 U.S. Marines invade and occupy Vera Cruz, Mexico • Panama Canal opens

Endnotes

1. Note *: Boldface titles indicate works in the anthology.

WALT WHITMAN
1819–1892

Walt Whitman revolutionized American poetry. Responding to Emerson's call in "The Poet" (1842) for an American bard who would address all "the facts of the animal economy, sex, nutriment, gestation, birth," he put the living, breathing, sexual body at the center of much of his poetry, challenging conventions of the day. Responding to Emerson's call for a "metre-making argument," he rejected traditions of poetic scansion and elevated diction, improvising the form that has come to be known as free verse, while adopting a wide-ranging vocabulary opening new possibilities for poetic expression. A poet of democracy, Whitman celebrated the mystical, divine potential of the individual; a poet of the urban, he wrote about the sights, sounds, and energy of the modern metropolis. In his 1855 preface to *Leaves of Grass*, he declared that "the proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it." On the evidence of his enormous influence on later poets—Hart Crane, Langston Hughes, Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Cherrie Moraga, Adrienne Rich, and countless others, including Spain's Federico García Lorca and Chile's Pablo Neruda—Whitman not only was affectionately absorbed by his own country but remains a persistent presence in poetry throughout the world.

Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, in West Hills, Long Island (New York), the second of eight surviving children of the Quakers Louisa Van Velsor and Walter Whitman. In 1823, Whitman's father, a farmer turned carpenter, sought to take advantage of a building boom by moving the family to Brooklyn—then a town at the western and most urbanized part of Long Island. Whitman left school when he was eleven, and was soon employed in the printing office of a newspaper; when his family moved east on Long Island in 1833, he remained in Brooklyn on his own. He began contributing pieces to newspapers in his midteens and spent five years teaching at country and small-town schools on Long Island, interrupting his teaching to start a newspaper of his own in 1838 and to work briefly on another Long Island paper. By early 1840 he had started the series "Sun-Down Papers from the Desk of a School-Master" for the Jamaica, New York, *Democrat* and was writing poems and fiction. One of his stories prophetically culminated with the dream of writing "a wonderful and ponderous book."

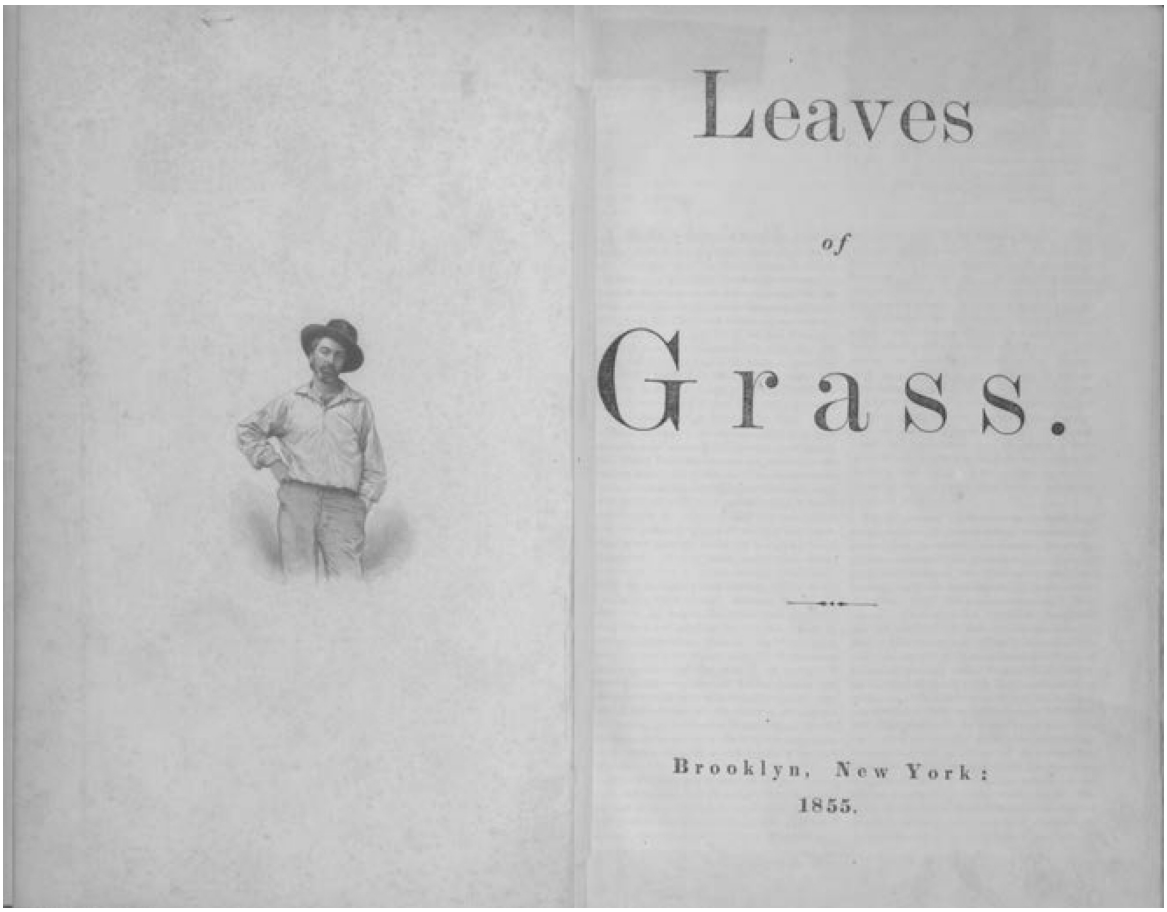
Just before he turned twenty-one Whitman stopped teaching, moved to Manhattan, began work at the literary weekly *New World*, and soon became editor of a Manhattan daily, the *Aurora*. He also began a political career by speaking at Democratic rallies and writing for the *Democratic Review*, the foremost magazine of the Democratic Party. He exulted in the extremes of the city, where street-gang violence was countered by the lectures of Emerson and where even a young editor could get to know the poet William Cullen Bryant, editor of the *Evening Post*. Fired from the *Aurora*, which publicly charged him with laziness, he wrote a

temperance novel, *Franklin Evans, or the Inebriate*, for a one-issue extra of the *New World* late in 1842. After three years of various literary and political jobs, he returned to Brooklyn in 1845, becoming a special contributor to the Long Island *Star*, assigned to Manhattan events, included theatrical and musical performances. All through the 1840s he attended operas on his journalist's passes, and he would later say that without the "emotions, raptures, uplifts" of opera he could never have written *Leaves of Grass*. Just before he was twenty-seven he took over the editorship of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, writing most of the literary reviews, which included books by Carlyle, Emerson, Melville, Fuller, and Goethe, among others. Like most Democrats, he was able to justify the Mexican War (1846–48) by hailing the great American mission of "peopling the New World with a noble race." Yet at the beginning of 1848 he was fired from the *Eagle* because, like Bryant, he had become a Free-Soiler, opposed to the acquisition of more territory for slavery. Whitman served as a delegate to the Buffalo Free-Soil convention and helped to found the Free-Soil newspaper the *Brooklyn Freeman*. Around this time he began writing poetry in a serious way, experimenting with form and prosody; he published several topical poems in 1850, including "Europe," which would later appear in *Leaves of Grass*.

Whitman's notebook fragments suggest that he began to invent the overall shape of his first volume of poetry during 1853–54. On May 15, 1855, he took out a copyright for *Leaves of Grass*, and he spent the spring and early summer seeing his book through the press, probably setting some of the type himself. Published in Brooklyn, New York, during the first week of July, the volume, bound in dark green cloth with a sprig of grass in gilt on the cover, contained twelve untitled poems (including the initial version of "Song of Myself"), along with an exuberant preface declaring his ambition to be the American bard. In the image of Whitman on the book's frontispiece, which was based on an 1854 daguerreotype, the bearded Whitman—rejecting the conventional suit jacket, buttoned-up shirt, and high collar of the formal studio portrait—stands with one arm akimbo, one hand in a pocket, workingman's hat on slightly cocked head, shirt unbuttoned at the collar, looking directly at the reader. (See the image on the following page for a reproduction of the frontispiece.) The image, like the poetry itself, defied convention by aligning the poet with working people. The poems, with their absence of standard verse and stanza patterns (although strongly rhythmic and controlled by numerous poetic devices of repetition and variation), also introduced his use of "catalogs"—journalistic and encyclopedic listings—that were to become a hallmark of his style. Whitman sent out numerous presentation and review copies of his book, receiving an immediate response from Emerson, who greeted him "at the beginning of a great career." As weeks passed, Whitman chose to publish a few anonymous reviews himself, praising *Leaves of Grass* in the *American Phrenological Journal*, for instance, as one of "the most glorious triumphs, in the known history of literature." In October he let Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* print Emerson's private letter of praise, and he put clippings of the letter in presentation copies to Longfellow, among others. Emerson termed Whitman's appropriation of the letter "a strange, rude thing," but he remained interested in meeting the poet. While Whitman was angling for reviews in England and working on expanding his book, Emerson visited him in December of 1855. Thoreau, who admired *Leaves of Grass* but found several of its poems "simply sensual," visited him in 1856. That year also saw the appearance of the second edition of *Leaves of Grass*, now with thirty-three poems, including "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" under its initial title, "Sundown Poem."

Returning to miscellaneous journalism, Whitman edited the Brooklyn *Times* from 1857 to 1859 and published several pieces in the *Times* affirming his Free-Soiler hopes for a continued national expansion into the western territories that would not entail the expansion of slavery. In

the third (1860) edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman began to group his poems thematically. For a section called "Enfans d'Adam," later retitled "Children of Adam," he wrote fifteen poems focused on what he termed the "amative" love of man for woman, in contrast to the "adhesive" love of man for man. Adhesive love figured in forty-five poems in a section titled "Calamus." These two sections in the 1860 edition differ from the sections in the final 1891–92 edition, for in the intervening editions (1867, 1871, 1881) Whitman revised and regrouped some of the poems, as he would with numerous other poems in the expanded editions he would go on to publish.



***Leaves of Grass*.** Frontispiece and title page of the first edition.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Whitman began to visit the wounded and eventually offered his services as a nurse. He started at New-York Hospital; but in early 1863, after visiting with his wounded brother George in an army camp in Virginia, he moved to Washington, D.C., and began to work at the huge open-air military hospitals there. Nursing gave Whitman a profound sense of vocation. As he wrote a friend in 1863: "I am very happy . . . I was never so beloved. I am running over with health, fat, red & sunburnt in face. I tell thee I am just the one to go to our sick boys." But ministering to tens of thousands of maimed and dying young men took its toll. He succinctly voiced his anguish in a notebook entry of 1864: "the dead, the dead, the dead, our dead." During this time he worked on a series of poems that conveyed his evolving view of the war from heroic celebration to despair at the horrifying carnage. He later wrote a chapter in his prose work *Specimen Days* (1882) titled "The Real

War Will Never Get in the Books"; but incorporating the "real war" into a book of poetry became one of the dominant impulses of the *Drum-Taps* collection, which he published in 1865. After Lincoln's assassination, Whitman reissued the volume with a sequel including "O Captain! My Captain!" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," his famous elegy for the murdered president.

As he prepared *Drum-Taps and Sequel* for publication in late 1865, Whitman was also revising *Leaves of Grass* at his desk in the Department of the Interior, where he had obtained a position as clerk. The new secretary of the interior, James Harlan, read the annotated copy and fired Whitman for writing an obscene book, objecting to Whitman's frankness about bodily functions and heterosexual love. Whitman's friend, the poet William O'Connor, found him another clerical position in the attorney general's office; and in his rage at the firing O'Connor wrote *The Good Gray Poet* (1866), identifying Whitman with Jesus and Harlan with the forces of evil. Whitman continued to rework *Leaves of Grass*, incorporating *Drum-Taps* into it in 1867, and with his friends' help continued to propagandize for its recognition as a landmark in the history of poetry. He also published essays in a number of 1867 and 1868 issues of the New York periodical *Galaxy*, which he expanded into *Democratic Vistas* (1870), a book conveying his sometimes sharply condemnatory appraisal of postwar democratic culture.

The Washington years came to an abrupt end in 1873 when Whitman suffered a paralytic stroke. His mother died a few months later, and Whitman joined his brother George's household in Camden, New Jersey, to recuperate. During the second year of his illness, the government ceased to hold his clerk job open for him, and he became dependent for a living on occasional publication in newspapers and magazines. The 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass* had involved much reworking and rearrangement, and the fifth edition (1871) continued that process, adding a new section titled "Passage to India." In 1876 Whitman privately published a prose work, *Memoranda during the War*, and six years later he brought out *Specimen Days*, which has affinities with his early editorial accounts of strolls through the city but is even more intensely personal, the record of representative days in the life of a poet who had lived in the midst of great national events.

During the 1870s and early 1880s, Whitman was increasingly noticed by the leading writers of the time, especially in England. The English poet Algernon Swinburne sent him a poem; the poet laureate of Great Britain, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, sent him an admiring letter; and both Longfellow and Oscar Wilde visited him in Camden. In the United States, writers of a younger generation than Whitman's own began to recognize his importance as a poetic voice and organized events to support him. Despite his frail health, Whitman lectured on Thomas Paine in Philadelphia in 1877 and on Abraham Lincoln in New York in 1879. (He would continue to deliver public lectures on Lincoln until 1890.) Opposition to his poetry because of its supposed immorality began to dissipate, and readers, having become accustomed over time to Whitman's poetic devices, began to recognize the poet as an artist. Still, in 1881, when the reputable Boston firm of James R. Osgood & Company printed the sixth edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the Boston district attorney threatened to prosecute on the grounds of obscenity. Ironically, when the Philadelphia firm of Rees Welsh and Company reprinted this edition in 1882, the publicity contributed to Whitman's greatest sales in his lifetime: he earned nearly $1,500 in royalties from that edition (around $25,000 in today's value), compared to the $25 he had earned from the Osgood edition before the publisher withdrew it.

In 1884, the still infirm Whitman moved to a cottage at 328 Mickle Street in Camden, which he purchased for $1,750. A year later friends and admirers, including Mark Twain and John Greenleaf Whittier, presented him with a horse and buggy for local travel. He had another stroke in 1888 and in 1890 made preparations for his death by signing a $4,000 contract for the

construction in Camden's Harleigh Cemetery of a granite mausoleum, or what he termed a "burial house," suitable for a national bard. In 1891 he did the final editing of *Complete Prose Works* (1892) and oversaw the preparations of the "deathbed" edition of the now more than three hundred poems in *Leaves of Grass* (1891–92), which was in fact a reissue of the 1881 edition with the addition of two later groups of poems, "Sands at Seventy" and "Good-bye My Fancy." Whitman died at Camden on March 26, 1892, and was buried in Harleigh Cemetery in the mausoleum he had helped design.

All of the Whitman poems reprinted here, regardless of when they were first composed and printed, are given in their final form: that of the 1891–92 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

Song of Myself[1]

Endnotes

1. Note 1:In the 1855 first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the poem later called “Song of Myself” appeared without a title and without numbered subdivisions or stanzas. For the 1856 edition, Whitman titled it “Poem of Walt Whitman, an American,” and in the 1860 edition he titled it “Walt Whitman”; it retained that title in the 1867 and 1871 editions, and in the 1881 edition was named “Song of Myself.” Whitman made numerous other changes in the poem from the first 1855 printing to the 1881 final version. Return to reference 1

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,
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 increase,
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,[2] 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[3] and show me to a cent,

Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and which is ahead?

65

Endnotes

1. Note 2:Cross-braced; reinforced. Return to reference 2
2. Note 3:Calculate. Return to reference 3

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 unseen 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 valvèd 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[4] 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,[5] heap'd stones, elder, mullein and poke-weed.

Endnotes

1. Note 4:A basic structural unit; a reinforcing timber bolted to the keel (backbone) of a ship. Return to reference 4
2. Note 5:Fence built of interlocking rails in a zigzag pattern. Return to reference 5

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,[6] 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.

130

Endnotes

1. Note 6:From the African word *cuffee* (name for a Black male born on a Friday). “Kanuck”: French Canadian (now sometimes considered pejorative). “Tuckahoe”: Virginian, from eaters of the tuckahoe, an American Indian food plant. Return to reference 6

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 fathomless 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 not,
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 promenaders,
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 roused 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 passage 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 restrain'd by decorum,
Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, acceptances, rejections 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 feel its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,
I jump from the cross-beams and sieze 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 descended 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[7] and weak,
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assisted 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[8] of his neck and ankles;
He stay'd 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.

Endnotes

1. Note 7:Limping or swaying. Return to reference 7
2. Note 8:Sores from chafing. Return to reference 8

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 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.[9]

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.

Endnotes

1. Note 9:Dances familiar in popular entertainment and minstrelsy. The “shuffle” involves the sliding of feet across the floor, and the “break-down” is faster and noisier. Return to reference 9

13

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

The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady and tall he stands poised on one leg on the string-piece,[1]
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,[2]
To niches aside and junior[3] 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 jay in the woods never studied the gamut,[4] yet trills pretty well to me,
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

Endnotes

1. Note 1:Long, heavy timber used to keep a load in place. Return to reference 1
2. Note 2:Twisting. Return to reference 2
3. Note 3:Smaller. Return to reference 3
4. Note 4:Written notes of the scale. Return to reference 4

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 chickadee, 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 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.

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

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,[5] 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[6] 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[7] with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,

He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blur with the manuscript;
The malformed limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,
What is removed drops horribly in a pail;
The quadroon[8] 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[9] 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[1] 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 sidewise,
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[2] 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 pimpled 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 Secretaries,
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 tinners are tinning 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,[3] (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 Chattahooch or Altamaha[4]

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.

Endnotes

1. Note 5:The extended spoke of the pilot wheel, used to maintain leverage during storms. Return to reference 5
2. Note 6:Sunday. Whitman frequently uses the numerical Quaker designations for the names of days and months. "Bars": that is, of a rail fence. Return to reference 6
3. Note 7:That is, a journeyman printer, or one who has passed an apprenticeship and is fully qualified for all professional work. Return to reference 7
4. Note 8:Term used at the time (often in reference to enslaved persons) to refer to light-complected people thought to be one-fourth Black. Return to reference 8
5. Note 9:Enslaved Black laborers (with stereotypical emphasis on "woolly" hair). Return to reference 9
6. Note 1:Inhabitant of Michigan. Return to reference 1
7. Note 2:Man building or repairing streets. Return to reference 2
8. Note 3:The Fourth of July. Return to reference 3
9. Note 4:Georgia rivers. Return to reference 4

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[5] 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[6] in my deer-skin leggings, a Louisianian or Georgian,
A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye;[7]
At home on Kanadian[8] 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.)

Endnotes

1. Note 5:River in central Georgia. Return to reference 5
2. Note 6:River in Nebraska. Return to reference 6
3. Note 7:Inhabitants of Indiana, Wisconsin, and Ohio, respectively. Return to reference 7

4. Note 8:Canadian. Return to reference 8

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 unriddling 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[9] 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!

Endnotes

1. Note 9:Mouthpieces of musical instruments such as the cornet. Return to reference 9

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger,
It is for the wicked just the 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-lipped slave is invited, the venereal[1] 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 is 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.

Endnotes

1. Note 1:Someone afflicted with a venereal (sexually transmitted) disease. Return to reference 1

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-removed[2]
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 doctors and calculated close,
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn[3] 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[4] 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[5] in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,

And I know the amplitude of time.

Endnotes

1. Note 2:Those remote in relationship, such as "third cousin, fourth removed." "Fold with powders": a reference to the custom of wrapping a dose of medicine in a piece of paper. Return to reference 2
2. Note 3:The seed or grain of barley, but also a unit of measure equal to about one-third inch. Return to reference 3
3. Note 4:Or *curlicue*, a fancy flourish made with a writing implement, here made in the dark with a lighted stick. Return to reference 4
4. Note 5:Carpenter's terms for a particular way of joining two boards together. A mortise is a cavity in a piece of wood into which is placed the projection (tenon) from another piece of wood. Return to reference 5

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 a 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 inviting 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[6] 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[7] 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 antipodal 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,[8]
There is no better than it and now.

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

Endnotes

1. Note 6:Friends (French). Return to reference 6
2. Note 7:Form of tuberculosis characterized by swelling of the lymph glands. Return to reference 7
3. Note 8:The number 1 followed by thirty-three zeroes. Return to reference 8

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 stone-crop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac.
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of the old cartouches,[9]
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas,
This is the geologist, this works with the scalpel, 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.

Endnotes

1. Note 9:On tablets of Egyptian hieroglyphics, the ornamental area noting the name of a ruler or deity. “Stonecrop”: a fleshy-leafed plant. Return to reference 9

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[1] 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 fatherstuff,
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[2] 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 lounger 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[4] 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!

Endnotes

1. Note 1:Divine wind or spirit. Return to reference 1
2. Note 2:The blade at the front of a plow. Return to reference 2
3. Note 3:Cultivation or tillage of the soil. Return to reference 3
4. Note 4:Something being heaved or raised upward. Return to reference 4

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 day-break.

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 prophetical 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[5] of proof and every thing else in my face,
With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.

Endnotes

1. Note 5:Fullness. Return to reference 5

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 engines 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[6] 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[7] of death,
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being.

Endnotes

1. Note 6:Seventh planet from the sun, thought at that time to be the outermost limit of the solar system. Return to reference 6
2. Note 7:Coils of rope. Return to reference 7

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[8] 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.

Endnotes

1. Note 8:Edible clam of the Atlantic coast. Return to reference 8

28

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,

Treacherous 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 themselves 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[9] 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.[1]
And until one and all shall delight us, and we them.

Endnotes

1. Note 9:That is, a compendium, in which something is reduced to a short, essential summary. Return to reference 9
2. Note 1:All-encompassing. Return to reference 1

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire[2] is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chief-d'œuvre 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,[3] 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[4] 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-billed auk sails far north to Labrador,
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

Endnotes

1. Note 2:Ant. Return to reference 2
2. Note 3:Metamorphic rock in which minerals are arranged in layers. Return to reference 3
3. Note 4:Rock of igneous (fire created) or magmatic (molten) origin; from Pluto, ruler of infernal regions. Return to reference 4

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,[5] 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.

Endnotes

1. Note 5:Belonging to every form of life. Return to reference 5

33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,

What I guess'd when 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,[6]
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 hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas,[7] trailing in forests,
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,

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,[8]
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 gold-bug[9] 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 composedly down,)

Where the life-car[1] 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 below;
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 baseball,
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances,[2]
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,[3] huskings, house-raisings;

Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps,
Where the hay-rick[4] stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scatter'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[5] reed on the walnut-tree over the well,

Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves,[6]
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, flatting 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 Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,

Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars,[7]
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,[8]
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 plummets.

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.[9]

I ascend to the foretruck,[1]
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 steam-ship, 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.[2]

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,[3]

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.