

SELECTED POEMS OF WALT WHITMAN

A Noiseless Patient Spider **By Walt Whitman**

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

A Song of Joy **By Walt Whitman**

O to make the most jubilant song!
Full of music - full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!

O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!
O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!

O the joy of my spirit - it is uncaged - it darts like lightning!
It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time,
I will have thousands of globes and all time.

O the mother's joys!
The watching, the endurance, the precious love,
the anguish, the patiently yielded life.

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

By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame **By Walt Whitman**

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow - but first I note,
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim out-line,
The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence,
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving,
The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily watching me,)
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous thoughts,
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away;
A solemn and slow procession here as I sit on the ground,
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

How Solemn as One by One (Washington City, 1865)

By Walt Whitman

How solemn as one by one,
As the ranks returning worn and sweaty, as the men file by where I stand,
As the faces the masks appear, as I glance past the faces studying the masks,
(As I glance upward out of this page studying you, dear friend, whoever you are,)
How solemn the thought of my whispering should to each in the ranks, and to you,
I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul,
O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear friend,
Nor the bayonet stab what you really are;
The soul! yourself I see, great as any, good as the best,
Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could never kill,
Nor the bayonet stab O friend.

Adieu to a Soldier

By Walt Whitman

Adieu O soldier,
You of the red campaigning, (which we shared,)
The rapid march, the life of the camp,
The hot contention of opposing fronts, the long manoeuver,
Bed battles with their slaughter, the stimulus, the strong, terrific game,
Spell of all brave and manly hearts, the trains of time through you and like of you all fill'd
With war and war's expression.

Adieu dear comrade,
Your mission is fulfill'd - but I, more warlike,
Myself and this contentious soul of mind,
Still on our own campaigning bound,
Through untried roads with ambushes opponents lined,
Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis, often baffled,
Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out - aye here,
To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.

SELECTED POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

“Hope” is the thing with feathers By Emily Dickinson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

A Bird, came down the Walk By Emily Dickinson

A Bird, came down the Walk -
He did not know I saw -
He bit an Angle Worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass -
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass -

He glanced with rapid eyes,
That hurried all abroad -
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,
He stirred his Velvet Head. -

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers,
And rowed him softer Home -

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,
Leap, splashless as they swim.

I like to see it lap the Miles
By Emily Dickinson

I like to see it lap the Miles -
And lick the Valleys up -
And stop to feed itself at Tanks -
And then - prodigious step

Around a Pile of Mountains -
And supercilious peer
In Shanties - by the sides of Roads -
And then a Quarry pare

To fit its sides
And crawl between
Complaining all the while
In horrid - hooting stanza -
Then chase itself down Hill -

And neigh like Boanerges -
Then - prompter than a Star
Stop - docile and omnipotent
At it's own stable door -

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church
By Emily Dickinson

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –
I keep it, staying at Home –
With a Bobolink for a Chorister –
And an Orchard, for a Dome –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
I, just wear my Wings –
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
Our little Sexton – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –
I'm going, all along.

Success is counted sweetest
By Emily Dickinson

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

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

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

A light exists in Spring
by Emily Dickinson

A light exists in spring
Not present on the year
At any other period.
When March is scarcely here

A color stands abroad
On solitary hills
That science cannot overtake,
But human nature feels.

It waits upon the lawn;
It shows the furthest tree
Upon the furthest slope we know;
It almost speaks to me.

Then, as horizons step,
Or noons report away,
Without the formula of sound,
It passes, and we stay:

A quality of loss
Affecting our content,
As trade had suddenly encroached
Upon a sacrament.