

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

O Captain! My Captain!

1 O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
2 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
3 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
4 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
5 But O heart! heart! heart!
6 O the bleeding drops of red,
7 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
8 Fallen cold and dead.

9 O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
10 Rise up -- for you the flag is flung -- for you the bugle trills,
11 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths -- for you the shores a-crowding,
12 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
13 Here Captain! dear father!
14 This arm beneath your head!
15 It is some dream that on the deck,
16 You've fallen cold and dead.

17 My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
18 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
19 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
20 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
21 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
22 But I with mournful tread,

23 Walk the deck my Captain lies,

24 Fallen cold and dead.

Notes

1] President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated April 14, 1865, in the Ford Theatre, Washington, D.C.

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O Me! O Life!

BY WALT WHITMAN

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew'd,
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

Source: *Leaves of Grass* (1892)

When I Heard the Learned Astronomer

by Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,
and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with
much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

I Hear America Singing

by Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand
singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or
at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of
the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows,
robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.