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# *Leaves of Grass*

*Come, said my Soul,  
Such verses for my Body let us write (for we are one),  
That should I after death invisibly return,  
Or long, long hence, in other spheres,  
There to some group of mates the chants resuming  
(Tallying Earth's soil, trees, winds, tumultuous waves),  
Ever with pleased smiles I may keep on,  
Ever and ever yet the verses owning – as, first, I here and now,  
Signing for Soul and Body, set to them my name,*

*Walt-Whitman*



# Inscriptions

## One's Self I Sing

One's Self I sing, a simple separate person,  
Yet utter the word "democratic", the word "en masse".

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,  
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say  
    the Form complete is worthier far,  
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse and power,  
Cheerful, for freest action formed under the laws divine,  
The Modern Man I sing.

## As I Pondered in Silence

As I pondered in silence,  
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,  
A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,  
Terrible in beauty, age and power,  
The genius of poets of old lands,  
As to me directing like flame its eyes,  
With finger pointing to many immortal songs  
And menacing voice, *What singest thou?* it said,  
*Know'st thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring bards?*  
10 *And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,*  
*The making of perfect soldiers.*

*Be it so, then I answered,  
 I too haughty Shade also sing war, and a longer and greater one  
 than any,  
 Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight, advance and  
 retreat, victory deferred and wavering  
 (Yet methinks certain, or as good as certain, at the last), the field  
 the world,  
 For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul,  
 Lo, I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,  
 I above all promote brave soldiers.*

### In Cabined Ships at Sea

*In cabined ships at sea,  
 The boundless blue on every side expanding,  
 With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large imperious  
 waves,  
 Or some lone bark buoyed on the dense marine,  
 Where joyous full of faith, spreading white sails,  
 She cleaves the ether mid the sparkle and the foam of day, or under  
 many a star at night,  
 By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land,  
 be read,  
 In full rapport at last.*

*Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,  
 10 Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by them be  
 said,  
 The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet,  
 We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,  
 The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the  
 briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables,  
 The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy  
 rhythm,  
 The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all here,  
 And this is ocean's poem.*

Then falter not, O book, fulfil your destiny,  
 You not a reminiscence of the land alone,  
 You too as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purposed I know not whither,  
 yet ever full of faith,  
 20 Consort to every ship that sails, sail you!  
 Bear forth to them folded my love (dear mariners, for you I fold it  
 here in every leaf);  
 Speed on, my book! spread your white sails, my little bark, athwart  
 the imperious waves,  
 Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me to every sea,  
 This song for mariners and all their ships.

### To Foreign Lands

I heard that you asked for something to prove this puzzle, the New  
 World,  
 And to define America, her athletic Democracy,  
 Therefore I send you my poems that you behold in them what you  
 wanted.

### To a Historian

You who celebrate bygones,  
 Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the races, the life  
 that has exhibited itself,  
 Who have treated of man as the creature of politics, aggregates,  
 rulers and priests,  
 I, habitant of the Alleghenies, treating of him as he is in himself in  
 his own rights,  
 Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited itself (the  
 great pride of man in himself),  
 Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,  
 I project the history of the future.



## To Thee, Old Cause

To thee, old cause!\*  
Thou peerless, passionate, good cause,  
Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,  
Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands,  
After a strange sad war, great war for thee  
(I think all war through time was really fought and ever will be really  
fought for thee),  
These chants for thee, the eternal march of thee.

(A war, O soldiers, not for itself alone  
Far, far more stood silently waiting behind, now to advance in this  
book.)

10 Thou orb of many orbs!  
Thou seething principle! Thou well-kept, latent germ! Thou centre!  
Around the idea of thee the war revolving,  
With all its angry and vehement play of causes  
(With vast results to come for thrice a thousand years),  
These recitatives for thee – my book and the war are one,  
Merged in its spirit I and mine, as the contest hinged on thee,  
As a wheel on its axis turns, this book unwitting to itself,  
Around the idea of thee.

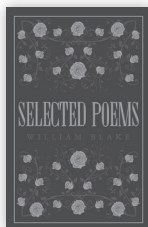
## Eidolons

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

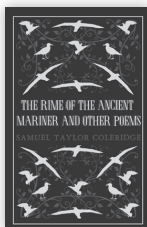
Put in thy chants, said he,  
No more the puzzling hour nor day, nor segments, parts, put in,  
Put first before the rest, as light for all and entrance song of all,  
That of eidolons.

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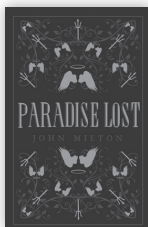
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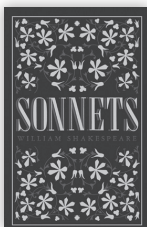
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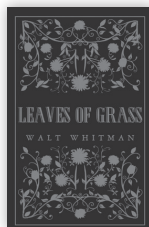
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