

BOOK XXXII. FROM NOON TO STARRY NIGHT

Thou Orb Aloft Full-Dazzling

Thou orb aloft full-dazzling! thou hot October noon!
Flooding with sheeny light the gray beach sand,
The sibilant near sea with vistas far and foam,
And tawny streaks and shades and spreading blue;
O sun of noon refulgent! my special word to thee.

Hear me illustrious!

Thy lover me, for always I have loved thee,
Even as basking babe, then happy boy alone by some wood edge, thy
touching-distant beams enough,
Or man matured, or young or old, as now to thee I launch my invocation.

(Thou canst not with thy dumbness me deceive,
I know before the fitting man all Nature yields,
Though answering not in words, the skies, trees, hear his voice--and
thou O sun,
As for thy throes, thy perturbations, sudden breaks and shafts of
flame gigantic,
I understand them, I know those flames, those perturbations well.)

Thou that with fructifying heat and light,

O'er myriad farms, o'er lands and waters North and South,
O'er Mississippi's endless course, o'er Texas' grassy plains,
 Kanada's woods,
O'er all the globe that turns its face to thee shining in space,
Thou that impartially enfoldest all, not only continents, seas,
Thou that to grapes and weeds and little wild flowers givest so liberally,
Shed, shed thyself on mine and me, with but a fleeting ray out of
 thy million millions,
Strike through these chants.

Nor only launch thy subtle dazzle and thy strength for these,
Prepare the later afternoon of me myself--prepare my lengthening shadows,
Prepare my starry nights.

Faces

1

Sauntering the pavement or riding the country by-road, faces!
Faces of friendship, precision, caution, suavity, ideality,
The spiritual-prescient face, the always welcome common benevolent face,
The face of the singing of music, the grand faces of natural lawyers
 and judges broad at the back-top,
The faces of hunters and fishers bulged at the brows, the shaved

blanch'd faces of orthodox citizens,
The pure, extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's face,
The ugly face of some beautiful soul, the handsome detested or
despised face,
The sacred faces of infants, the illuminated face of the mother of
many children,
The face of an amour, the face of veneration,
The face as of a dream, the face of an immobile rock,
The face withdrawn of its good and bad, a castrated face,
A wild hawk, his wings clipp'd by the clipper,
A stallion that yielded at last to the thongs and knife of the gelder.

Sauntering the pavement thus, or crossing the ceaseless ferry, faces
and faces and faces,
I see them and complain not, and am content with all.

2

Do you suppose I could be content with all if I thought them their
own finale?

This now is too lamentable a face for a man,
Some abject louse asking leave to be, cringing for it,
Some milk-nosed maggot blessing what lets it wrig to its hole.

This face is a dog's snout sniffing for garbage,
Snakes nest in that mouth, I hear the sibilant threat.

This face is a haze more chill than the arctic sea,
Its sleepy and wobbling icebergs crunch as they go.

This is a face of bitter herbs, this an emetic, they need no label,
And more of the drug-shelf, laudanum, caoutchouc, or hog's-lard.

This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out the unearthly cry,
Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they show
 nothing but their whites,
Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the turn'd-in nails,
The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground, while he
 speculates well.

This face is bitten by vermin and worms,
And this is some murderer's knife with a half-pull'd scabbard.

This face owes to the sexton his dismalest fee,
An unceasing death-bell tolls there.

3

Features of my equals would you trick me with your creas'd and
 cadaverous march?
Well, you cannot trick me.

I see your rounded never-erased flow,

I see 'neath the rims of your haggard and mean disguises.

Splay and twist as you like, poke with the tangling fores of fishes or rats,
You'll be unmuzzled, you certainly will.

I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering idiot they had at
the asylum,

And I knew for my consolation what they knew not,

I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother,

The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenement,

And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,

And I shall meet the real landlord perfect and unharm'd, every inch
as good as myself.

4

The Lord advances, and yet advances,

Always the shadow in front, always the reach'd hand bringing up the
laggards.

Out of this face emerge banners and horses--O superb! I see what is coming,

I see the high pioneer-caps, see staves of runners clearing the way,

I hear victorious drums.

This face is a life-boat,

This is the face commanding and bearded, it asks no odds of the rest,

This face is flavor'd fruit ready for eating,

This face of a healthy honest boy is the programme of all good.

These faces bear testimony slumbering or awake,
They show their descent from the Master himself.

Off the word I have spoken I except not one--red, white, black, are
all deific,
In each house is the ovum, it comes forth after a thousand years.

Spots or cracks at the windows do not disturb me,
Tall and sufficient stand behind and make signs to me,
I read the promise and patiently wait.

This is a full-grown lily's face,
She speaks to the limber-hipp'd man near the garden pickets,
Come here she blushingly cries, Come nigh to me limber-hipp'd man,
Stand at my side till I lean as high as I can upon you,
Fill me with albescent honey, bend down to me,
Rub to me with your chafing beard, rub to my breast and shoulders.

5

The old face of the mother of many children,
Whist! I am fully content.

Lull'd and late is the smoke of the First-day morning,
It hangs low over the rows of trees by the fences,

It hangs thin by the sassafras and wild-cherry and cat-brier under them.

I saw the rich ladies in full dress at the soiree,

I heard what the singers were singing so long,

Heard who sprang in crimson youth from the white froth and the water-blue.

Behold a woman!

She looks out from her quaker cap, her face is clearer and more
beautiful than the sky.

She sits in an armchair under the shaded porch of the farmhouse,
The sun just shines on her old white head.

Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen,

Her grandsons raised the flax, and her grand-daughters spun it with
the distaff and the wheel.

The melodious character of the earth,

The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go and does not wish to go,

The justified mother of men.

The Mystic Trumpeter

1

Hark, some wild trumpeter, some strange musician,
Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious tunes to-night.

I hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I catch thy notes,
Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me,
Now low, subdued, now in the distance lost.

2

Come nearer bodiless one, haply in thee resounds
Some dead composer, haply thy pensive life
Was fill'd with aspirations high, unform'd ideals,
Waves, oceans musical, chaotically surging,
That now ecstatic ghost, close to me bending, thy cornet echoing, pealing,
Gives out to no one's ears but mine, but freely gives to mine,
That I may thee translate.

3

Blow trumpeter free and clear, I follow thee,
While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,
The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of day withdraw,
A holy calm descends like dew upon me,
I walk in cool refreshing night the walks of Paradise,
I scent the grass, the moist air and the roses;
Thy song expands my numb'd imbonded spirit, thou freest, launchest me,
Floating and basking upon heaven's lake.

4

Blow again trumpeter! and for my sensuous eyes,
Bring the old pageants, show the feudal world.

What charm thy music works! thou makest pass before me,
Ladies and cavaliers long dead, barons are in their castle halls,
the troubadours are singing,
Arm'd knights go forth to redress wrongs, some in quest of the holy Graal;
I see the tournament, I see the contestants incased in heavy armor
seated on stately champing horses,
I hear the shouts, the sounds of blows and smiting steel;
I see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies--hark, how the cymbals clang,
Lo, where the monks walk in advance, bearing the cross on high.

5

Blow again trumpeter! and for thy theme,
Take now the enclosing theme of all, the solvent and the setting,
Love, that is pulse of all, the sustenance and the pang,
The heart of man and woman all for love,
No other theme but love--knitting, enclosing, all-diffusing love.

O how the immortal phantoms crowd around me!
I see the vast alembic ever working, I see and know the flames that
heat the world,
The glow, the blush, the beating hearts of lovers,

So blissful happy some, and some so silent, dark, and nigh to death;
Love, that is all the earth to lovers--love, that mocks time and space,
Love, that is day and night--love, that is sun and moon and stars,
Love, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with perfume,
No other words but words of love, no other thought but love.

6

Blow again trumpeter--conjure war's alarums.

Swift to thy spell a shuddering hum like distant thunder rolls,
Lo, where the arm'd men hasten--lo, mid the clouds of dust the glint
of bayonets,
I see the grime-faced cannoneers, I mark the rosy flash amid the
smoke, I hear the cracking of the guns;
Nor war alone--thy fearful music-song, wild player, brings every
sight of fear,
The deeds of ruthless brigands, rapine, murder--I hear the cries for help!
I see ships foundering at sea, I behold on deck and below deck the
terrible tableaux.

7

O trumpeter, methinks I am myself the instrument thou playest,
Thou melt'st my heart, my brain--thou movest, drawest, changest
them at will;
And now thy sullen notes send darkness through me,
Thou takest away all cheering light, all hope,

I see the enslaved, the overthrown, the hurt, the opprest of the
whole earth,
I feel the measureless shame and humiliation of my race, it becomes
all mine,
Mine too the revenges of humanity, the wrongs of ages, baffled feuds
and hatreds,
Utter defeat upon me weighs--all lost--the foe victorious,
(Yet 'mid the ruins Pride colossal stands unshaken to the last,
Endurance, resolution to the last.)

8

Now trumpeter for thy close,
Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet,
Sing to my soul, renew its languishing faith and hope,
Rouse up my slow belief, give me some vision of the future,
Give me for once its prophecy and joy.

O glad, exulting, culminating song!
A vigor more than earth's is in thy notes,
Marches of victory--man disenthral'd--the conqueror at last,
Hymns to the universal God from universal man--all joy!
A reborn race appears--a perfect world, all joy!
Women and men in wisdom innocence and health--all joy!
Riotous laughing bacchanals fill'd with joy!
War, sorrow, suffering gone--the rank earth purged--nothing but joy left!

The ocean fill'd with joy--the atmosphere all joy!
Joy! joy! in freedom, worship, love! joy in the ecstasy of life!
Enough to merely be! enough to breathe!
Joy! joy! all over joy!

To a Locomotive in Winter

Thee for my recitative,
Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter-day declining,
Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat convulsive,
Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel,
Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating,
 shuttling at thy sides,
Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the distance,
Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,
Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple,
The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack,
Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle of
 thy wheels,
Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,
Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
Type of the modern--emblem of motion and power--pulse of the continent,
For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I see thee,

With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow,
By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,
By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.

Fierce-throated beauty!

Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging lamps
at night,

Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake,
rousing all,

Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding,

(No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,)

Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd,

Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes,

To the free skies unpent and glad and strong.

O Magnet-South

O magnet-south! O glistening perfumed South! my South!

O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse and love! good and evil! O all
dear to me!

O dear to me my birth-things--all moving things and the trees where

I was born--the grains, plants, rivers,

Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they flow, distant,

over flats of slivery sands or through swamps,
Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw, the Pedee, the
Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa and the Sabine,
O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my soul to haunt their
banks again,
Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes, I float on the
Okeechobee, I cross the hummock-land or through pleasant openings
or dense forests,
I see the parrots in the woods, I see the papaw-tree and the
blossoming titi;
Again, sailing in my coaster on deck, I coast off Georgia, I coast
up the Carolinas,
I see where the live-oak is growing, I see where the yellow-pine,
the scented bay-tree, the lemon and orange, the cypress, the
graceful palmetto,
I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico sound through an inlet,
and dart my vision inland;
O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar, hemp!
The cactus guarded with thorns, the laurel-tree with large white flowers,
The range afar, the richness and barrenness, the old woods charged
with mistletoe and trailing moss,
The piney odor and the gloom, the awful natural stillness, (here in
these dense swamps the freebooter carries his gun, and the
fugitive has his conceal'd hut;)
O the strange fascination of these half-known half-impassable
swamps, infested by reptiles, resounding with the bellow of the

alligator, the sad noises of the night-owl and the wild-cat, and
the whirr of the rattlesnake,
The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the forenoon,
singing through the moon-lit night,
The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the opossum;
A Kentucky corn-field, the tall, graceful, long-leav'd corn,
slender, flapping, bright green, with tassels, with beautiful
ears each well-sheath'd in its husk;
O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs, I can stand them not, I will depart;
O to be a Virginian where I grew up! O to be a Carolinian!
O longings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Tennessee and
never wander more.

Mannahatta

I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city,
Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane, unruly,
musical, self-sufficient,
I see that the word of my city is that word from of old,
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays, superb,
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and steamships, an

island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,
Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender, strong,
light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies,
Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sundown,
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining
islands, the heights, the villas,
The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the
ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers well-model'd,
The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the houses
of business of the ship-merchants and money-brokers, the river-streets,
Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week,
The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses, the
brown-faced sailors,
The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft,
The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice in the river,
passing along up or down with the flood-tide or ebb-tide,
The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd,
beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes,
Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and shows,
A million people--manners free and superb--open voices--hospitality--
the most courageous and friendly young men,
City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!
City nested in bays! my city!

All Is Truth

O me, man of slack faith so long,
Standing aloof, denying portions so long,
Only aware to-day of compact all-diffused truth,
Discovering to-day there is no lie or form of lie, and can be none,
 but grows as inevitably upon itself as the truth does upon itself,
Or as any law of the earth or any natural production of the earth does.

(This is curious and may not be realized immediately, but it must be
 realized,
I feel in myself that I represent falsehoods equally with the rest,
And that the universe does.)

Where has fail'd a perfect return indifferent of lies or the truth?
Is it upon the ground, or in water or fire? or in the spirit of man?
 or in the meat and blood?

Meditating among liars and retreating sternly into myself, I see
 that there are really no liars or lies after all,
And that nothing fails its perfect return, and that what are called
 lies are perfect returns,
And that each thing exactly represents itself and what has preceded it,
And that the truth includes all, and is compact just as much as
 space is compact,

And that there is no flaw or vacuum in the amount of the truth--but
that all is truth without exception;
And henceforth I will go celebrate any thing I see or am,
And sing and laugh and deny nothing.

A Riddle Song

That which eludes this verse and any verse,
Unheard by sharpest ear, unform'd in clearest eye or cunningest mind,
Nor lore nor fame, nor happiness nor wealth,
And yet the pulse of every heart and life throughout the world incessantly,
Which you and I and all pursuing ever ever miss,
Open but still a secret, the real of the real, an illusion,
Costless, vouchsafed to each, yet never man the owner,
Which poets vainly seek to put in rhyme, historians in prose,
Which sculptor never chisel'd yet, nor painter painted,
Which vocalist never sung, nor orator nor actor ever utter'd,
Invoking here and now I challenge for my song.

Indifferently, 'mid public, private haunts, in solitude,
Behind the mountain and the wood,
Companion of the city's busiest streets, through the assemblage,
It and its radiations constantly glide.

In looks of fair unconscious babes,
Or strangely in the coffin'd dead,
Or show of breaking dawn or stars by night,
As some dissolving delicate film of dreams,
Hiding yet lingering.

Two little breaths of words comprising it,
Two words, yet all from first to last comprised in it.

How ardently for it!
How many ships have sail'd and sunk for it!

How many travelers started from their homes and neer return'd!
How much of genius boldly staked and lost for it!
What countless stores of beauty, love, ventur'd for it!
How all superbest deeds since Time began are traceable to it--and
shall be to the end!

How all heroic martyrdoms to it!
How, justified by it, the horrors, evils, battles of the earth!
How the bright fascinating lambent flames of it, in every age and
land, have drawn men's eyes,
Rich as a sunset on the Norway coast, the sky, the islands, and the cliffs,
Or midnight's silent glowing northern lights unreachable.

Haply God's riddle it, so vague and yet so certain,

The soul for it, and all the visible universe for it,
And heaven at last for it.

Excelsior

Who has gone farthest? for I would go farther,
And who has been just? for I would be the most just person of the earth,
And who most cautious? for I would be more cautious,
And who has been happiest? O I think it is I--I think no one was
 ever happier than I,
And who has lavish'd all? for I lavish constantly the best I have,
And who proudest? for I think I have reason to be the proudest son
 alive--for I am the son of the brawny and tall-topt city,
And who has been bold and true? for I would be the boldest and
 truest being of the universe,
And who benevolent? for I would show more benevolence than all the rest,
And who has receiv'd the love of the most friends? for I know what
 it is to receive the passionate love of many friends,
And who possesses a perfect and enamour'd body? for I do not believe
 any one possesses a more perfect or enamour'd body than mine,
And who thinks the amplest thoughts? for I would surround those thoughts,
And who has made hymns fit for the earth? for I am mad with
 devouring ecstasy to make joyous hymns for the whole earth.

Ah Poverties, Wincings, and Sulky Retreats

Ah poverties, wincings, and sulky retreats,
Ah you foes that in conflict have overcome me,
(For what is my life or any man's life but a conflict with foes, the
old, the incessant war?)
You degradations, you tussle with passions and appetites,
You smarts from dissatisfied friendships, (ah wounds the sharpest of all!)
You toil of painful and choked articulations, you meannesses,
You shallow tongue-talks at tables, (my tongue the shallowest of any;)
You broken resolutions, you racking angers, you smother'd ennui!
Ah think not you finally triumph, my real self has yet to come forth,
It shall yet march forth o'ermastering, till all lies beneath me,
It shall yet stand up the soldier of ultimate victory.

Thoughts

Of public opinion,
Of a calm and cool fiat sooner or later, (how impassive! how certain

and final!)

Of the President with pale face asking secretly to himself, What
will the people say at last?
Of the frivolous Judge--of the corrupt Congressman, Governor,
Mayor--of such as these standing helpless and exposed,
Of the mumbling and screaming priest, (soon, soon deserted,)
Of the lessening year by year of venerableness, and of the dicta of
officers, statutes, pulpits, schools,
Of the rising forever taller and stronger and broader of the
intuitions of men and women, and of Self-esteem and Personality;
Of the true New World--of the Democracies resplendent en-masse,
Of the conformity of politics, armies, navies, to them,
Of the shining sun by them--of the inherent light, greater than the rest,
Of the envelopment of all by them, and the effusion of all from them.

Mediums

They shall arise in the States,
They shall report Nature, laws, physiology, and happiness,
They shall illustrate Democracy and the kosmos,
They shall be alimentive, amative, perceptive,
They shall be complete women and men, their pose brawny and supple,
their drink water, their blood clean and clear,

They shall fully enjoy materialism and the sight of products, they
shall enjoy the sight of the beef, lumber, bread-stuffs, of
Chicago the great city.

They shall train themselves to go in public to become orators and
oratrresses,

Strong and sweet shall their tongues be, poems and materials of
poems shall come from their lives, they shall be makers and finders,
Of them and of their works shall emerge divine conveyers, to convey gospels,
Characters, events, retrospections, shall be convey'd in gospels,
trees, animals, waters, shall be convey'd,
Death, the future, the invisible faith, shall all be convey'd.

Weave in, My Hardy Life

Weave in, weave in, my hardy life,
Weave yet a soldier strong and full for great campaigns to come,
Weave in red blood, weave sinews in like ropes, the senses, sight weave in,
Weave lasting sure, weave day and night the wet, the warp, incessant
weave, tire not,
(We know not what the use O life, nor know the aim, the end, nor
really aught we know,
But know the work, the need goes on and shall go on, the
death-envelop'd march of peace as well as war goes on,)

For great campaigns of peace the same the wiry threads to weave,
We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.

Spain, 1873-74

Out of the murk of heaviest clouds,
Out of the feudal wrecks and heap'd-up skeletons of kings,
Out of that old entire European debris, the shatter'd mummeries,
Ruin'd cathedrals, crumble of palaces, tombs of priests,
Lo, Freedom's features fresh undimm'd look forth--the same immortal
face looks forth;
(A glimpse as of thy Mother's face Columbia,
A flash significant as of a sword,
Beaming towards thee.)

Nor think we forget thee maternal;
Lag'd'st thou so long? shall the clouds close again upon thee?
Ah, but thou hast thyself now appear'd to us--we know thee,
Thou hast given us a sure proof, the glimpse of thyself,
Thou waitest there as everywhere thy time.

By Broad Potomac's Shore

By broad Potomac's shore, again old tongue,
(Still uttering, still ejaculating, canst never cease this babble?)
Again old heart so gay, again to you, your sense, the full flush
 spring returning,
Again the freshness and the odors, again Virginia's summer sky,
 pellucid blue and silver,
Again the forenoon purple of the hills,
Again the deathless grass, so noiseless soft and green,
Again the blood-red roses blooming.

Perfume this book of mine O blood-red roses!
Lave subtly with your waters every line Potomac!
Give me of you O spring, before I close, to put between its pages!
O forenoon purple of the hills, before I close, of you!
O deathless grass, of you!

From Far Dakota's Canyons [June 25, 1876]

From far Dakota's canyons,
Lands of the wild ravine, the dusky Sioux, the lonesome stretch, the

silence,

Haply to-day a mournful wall, haply a trumpet-note for heroes.

The battle-bulletin,

The Indian ambuscade, the craft, the fatal environment,

The cavalry companies fighting to the last in sternest heroism,

In the midst of their little circle, with their slaughter'd horses

for breastworks,

The fall of Custer and all his officers and men.

Continues yet the old, old legend of our race,

The loftiest of life upheld by death,

The ancient banner perfectly maintain'd,

O lesson opportune, O how I welcome thee!

As sitting in dark days,

Lone, sulky, through the time's thick murk looking in vain for

light, for hope,

From unsuspected parts a fierce and momentary proof,

(The sun there at the centre though conceal'd,

Electric life forever at the centre,)

Breaks forth a lightning flash.

Thou of the tawny flowing hair in battle,

I erewhile saw, with erect head, pressing ever in front, bearing a

bright sword in thy hand,

Now ending well in death the splendid fever of thy deeds,
(I bring no dirge for it or thee, I bring a glad triumphal sonnet,)
Desperate and glorious, aye in defeat most desperate, most glorious,
After thy many battles in which never yielding up a gun or a color,
Leaving behind thee a memory sweet to soldiers,
Thou yieldest up thyself.

Old War-Dreams

In midnight sleep of many a face of anguish,
Of the look at first of the mortally wounded, (of that indescribable look,)
Of the dead on their backs with arms extended wide,
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains,
Of skies so beautiful after a storm, and at night the moon so
unearthly bright,
Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the trenches and
gather the heaps,
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Long have they pass'd, faces and trenches and fields,
Where through the carnage I moved with a callous composure, or away

from the fallen,
Onward I sped at the time--but now of their forms at night,
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Thick-Sprinkled Bunting

Thick-sprinkled bunting! flag of stars!
Long yet your road, fateful flag--long yet your road, and lined with
bloody death,
For the prize I see at issue at last is the world,
All its ships and shores I see interwoven with your threads greedy banner;
Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest borne to flaunt unrival'd?
O hasten flag of man--O with sure and steady step, passing highest
flags of kings,
Walk supreme to the heavens mighty symbol--run up above them all,
Flag of stars! thick-sprinkled bunting!

What Best I See in Thee

[To U. S. G. return'd from his World's Tour]

What best I see in thee,
Is not that where thou mov'st down history's great highways,
Ever undimm'd by time shoots warlike victory's dazzle,
Or that thou sat'st where Washington sat, ruling the land in peace,
Or thou the man whom feudal Europe feted, venerable Asia swarm'd upon,
Who walk'd with kings with even pace the round world's promenade;
But that in foreign lands, in all thy walks with kings,
Those prairie sovereigns of the West, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois,
Ohio's, Indiana's millions, comrades, farmers, soldiers, all to the front,
Invisibly with thee walking with kings with even pace the round
 world's promenade,
Were all so justified.

Spirit That Form'd This Scene

[Written in Platte Canyon, Colorado]

Spirit that form'd this scene,
These tumbled rock-piles grim and red,
These reckless heaven-ambitious peaks,
These gorges, turbulent-clear streams, this naked freshness,
These formless wild arrays, for reasons of their own,
I know thee, savage spirit--we have communed together,
Mine too such wild arrays, for reasons of their own;

Wast charged against my chants they had forgotten art?
To fuse within themselves its rules precise and delicatesse?
The lyrist's measur'd beat, the wrought-out temple's grace--column
and polish'd arch forgot?
But thou that revelest here--spirit that form'd this scene,
They have remember'd thee.

As I Walk These Broad Majestic Days

As I walk these broad majestic days of peace,
(For the war, the struggle of blood finish'd, wherein, O terrific Ideal,
Against vast odds erewhile having gloriously won,
Now thou stridest on, yet perhaps in time toward denser wars,
Perhaps to engage in time in still more dreadful contests, dangers,
Longer campaigns and crises, labors beyond all others,)
Around me I hear that eclat of the world, politics, produce,
The announcements of recognized things, science,
The approved growth of cities and the spread of inventions.

I see the ships, (they will last a few years,)
The vast factories with their foremen and workmen,
And hear the indorsement of all, and do not object to it.

But I too announce solid things,
Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are not nothing,
Like a grand procession to music of distant bugles pouring,
 triumphantly moving, and grander heaving in sight,
They stand for realities--all is as it should be.

Then my realities;
What else is so real as mine?
Libertad and the divine average, freedom to every slave on the face
 of the earth,
The rapt promises and luminescence of seers, the spiritual world, these
 centuries-lasting songs,
And our visions, the visions of poets, the most solid announcements
 of any.

A Clear Midnight

This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou
 lovest best,
Night, sleep, death and the stars.