

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE.

(Washington City, 1865.)

Spirit whose work is done--spirit of dreadful hours!  
Ere departing fade from my eyes your forests of bayonets;  
Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts, (yet onward ever unfaltering  
    pressing),  
Spirit of many a solemn day and many a savage scene--electric spirit,  
That with muttering voice through the war now closed, like a tireless  
    phantom flitted,  
Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat and beat the  
    drum,  
Now as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to the last,  
    reverberates round me,  
As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return from the battles,  
As the muskets of the young men yet lean over their shoulders,  
As I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoulders,  
As those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them appearing in the  
    distance, approach and pass on, returning homeward,  
Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro to the right and left,  
Evenly lightly rising and falling while the steps keep time;  
Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but pale as death  
    next day,  
Touch my mouth ere you depart, press my lips close,

Leave me your pulses of rage-bequeath them to me-fill me with  
currents convulsive,  
Let them scorch and blister out of my chants when you are gone,  
Let them identify you to the future in these songs.