

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1891-92 edition.

TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN.

Did you ask dulcet rhymes from me?
Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing rhymes?
Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow?
Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to understand—
nor am I now;
(I have been born of the same as the war was born,
The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet music, I love well the
martial dirge,
With slow wail and convulsive throb leading the officer's funeral;)
What to such as you anyhow such a poet as I? therefore leave my
works,
And go lull yourself with what you can understand, and with piano-
tunes,
For I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.

Walt Whitman Archive

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1891/clusters/148>