

Song of Myself

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1855 edition.

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

Houses and roof perfumes the shelves are crowded with perfumes,
I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume it has no taste of the distillation it is odorless,
It is for my mouth forever I am in love with it,
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath,
Echos, ripples, and buzzed whispers loveroot, silkthread, crotch and vine,
My respiration and inspiration the beating of my heart the passing of blood and
air through my lungs,
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and darkcolored sea-rocks, and
of hay in the barn,
The sound of the belched words of my voice words loosed to the eddies of the wind,
A few light kisses a few embraces a reaching around of arms,
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hillsides,
The feeling of health the full-noon trill the song of me rising from bed and
meeting the sun.

Have you reckoned a thousand acres much? Have you reckoned the earth much?
Have you practiced so long to learn to read?
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun there are millions of suns left,
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand nor look through the eyes of
the dead nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from yourself.

I have heard what the talkers were talking the talk of the beginning and the end,

But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now;
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge,
Always the procreant urge of the world.

Out of the dimness opposite equals advance Always substance and increase,
Always a knit of identity always distinction always a breed of life.

For the complete poem:

[Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892. Leaves of Grass \(1855\)
Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library](#)