**Spontaneous Me  
By Walt Whitman**

Spontaneous me, Nature,

The loving day, the mounting sun, the friend I am happy with,

The arm of my friend hanging idly over my shoulder,

The hillside whiten'd with blossoms of the mountain ash,

The same late in autumn, the hues of red, yellow, drab, purple, and

light and dark green,

The rich coverlet of the grass, animals and birds, the private

untrimm'd bank, the primitive apples, the pebble-stones,

Beautiful dripping fragments, the negligent list of one after

another as I happen to call them to me or think of them,

The real poems, (what we call poems being merely pictures,)

The poems of the privacy of the night, and of men like me,

This poem drooping shy and unseen that I always carry, and that all

men carry,

(Know once for all, avow'd on purpose, wherever are men like me, are

our lusty lurking masculine poems,)

Love-thoughts, love-juice, love-odor, love-yielding, love-climbers,

and the climbing sap,

Arms and hands of love, lips of love, phallic thumb of love, breasts

of love, bellies press'd and glued together with love,

Earth of chaste love, life that is only life after love,

The body of my love, the body of the woman I love, the body of the

man, the body of the earth,

Soft forenoon airs that blow from the south-west,

The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and down, that gripes the

full-grown lady-flower, curves upon her with amorous firm legs, takes

his will of her, and holds himself tremulous and tight till he is

satisfied;

The wet of woods through the early hours,

Two sleepers at night lying close together as they sleep, one with

an arm slanting down across and below the waist of the other,

The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant, mint, birch-bark,

The boy's longings, the glow and pressure as he confides to me what

he was dreaming,

The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl and falling still and

content to the ground,

The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects, sting me with,

The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as it ever can any

one,

The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only privileged

feelers may be intimate where they are,

The curious roamer the hand roaming all over the body, the bashful

withdrawing of flesh where the fingers soothingly pause and

edge themselves,

The limpid liquid within the young man,

The vex'd corrosion so pensive and so painful,

The torment, the irritable tide that will not be at rest,

The like of the same I feel, the like of the same in others,

The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young woman that

flushes and flushes,

The young man that wakes deep at night, the hot hand seeking to

repress what would master him,

The mystic amorous night, the strange half-welcome pangs, visions, sweats,

The pulse pounding through palms and trembling encircling fingers,

the young man all color'd, red, ashamed, angry;

The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing and naked,

The merriment of the twin babes that crawl over the grass in the

sun, the mother never turning her vigilant eyes from them,

The walnut-trunk, the walnut-husks, and the ripening or ripen'd

long-round walnuts,

The continence of vegetables, birds, animals,

The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find myself indecent,

while birds and animals never once skulk or find themselves indecent,

The great chastity of paternity, to match the great chastity of maternity,

The oath of procreation I have sworn, my Adamic and fresh daughters,

The greed that eats me day and night with hungry gnaw, till I saturate

what shall produce boys to fill my place when I am through,

The wholesome relief, repose, content,

And this bunch pluck'd at random from myself,

It has done its work—I toss it carelessly to fall where it may.

**To You  
By Walt Whitman**

Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why

should you not speak to me?

And why should I not speak to you?

**Beautiful Women  
By Walt Whitman**

Women sit or move to and fro, some old, some young,

The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than the young.

**Reversals  
By Walt Whitman**

Let that which stood in front go behind,

Let that which was behind advance to the front,

Let bigots, fools, unclean persons, offer new propositions,

Let the old propositions be postponed,

Let a man seek pleasure everywhere except in himself,

Let a woman seek happiness everywhere except in herself.

**What Am I After All  
By Walt Whitman**

What am I after all but a child, pleas'd with the sound of my own

name? repeating it over and over;

I stand apart to hear—it never tires me.

To you your name also;

Did you think there was nothing but two or three pronunciations in

the sound of your name?

**To One Shortly to Die  
By Walt Whitman**

From all the rest I single out you, having a message for you,

You are to die—let others tell you what they please, I cannot prevaricate,

I am exact and merciless, but I love you—there is no escape for you.

Softly I lay my right hand upon you, you 'ust feel it,

I do not argue, I bend my head close and half envelop it,

I sit quietly by, I remain faithful,

I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor,

I absolve you from all except yourself spiritual bodily, that is

eternal, you yourself will surely escape,

The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

The sun bursts through in unlooked-for directions,

Strong thoughts fill you and confidence, you smile,

You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick,

You do not see the medicines, you do not mind the weeping friends,

I am with you,

I exclude others from you, there is nothing to be commiserated,

I do not commiserate, I congratulate you.

**Portals  
By Walt Whitman**

What are those of the known but to ascend and enter the Unknown?

And what are those of life but for Death?

**True Conquerors  
By Walt Whitman**

Old farmer, travelers, workmen (no matter how crippled or bent,)

Old sailors, out of many a perilous voyage, storm and wreck,

Old soldiers from campaigns, with all their wounds, defeats and scars;

Enough that they've survived at all—long life's unflinching ones!

Forth from their struggles, trials, fights, to have emerged at all—

in that alone,

True conquerors o'er all the rest.

**Stronger Lessons  
By Walt Whitman**

Have you learn'd lessons only of those who admired you, and were

tender with you, and stood aside for you?

Have you not learn'd great lessons from those who reject you, and

brace themselves against you? or who treat you with contempt,

or dispute the passage with you?

**An Evening Lull  
By Walt Whitman**

After a week of physical anguish,

Unrest and pain, and feverish heat,

Toward the ending day a calm and lull comes on,

Three hours of peace and soothing rest of brain.

**A Persian Lesson  
By Walt Whitman**

For his o'erarching and last lesson the greybeard sufi,

In the fresh scent of the morning in the open air,

On the slope of a teeming Persian rose-garden,

Under an ancient chestnut-tree wide spreading its branches,

Spoke to the young priests and students.

"Finally my children, to envelop each word, each part of the rest,

Allah is all, all, all—immanent in every life and object,

May-be at many and many-a-more removes—yet Allah, Allah, Allah is there.

"Has the estray wander'd far? Is the reason-why strangely hidden?

Would you sound below the restless ocean of the entire world?

Would you know the dissatisfaction? the urge and spur of every life;

The something never still'd—never entirely gone? the invisible need

of every seed?

"It is the central urge in every atom,

(Often unconscious, often evil, downfallen,)

To return to its divine source and origin, however distant,

Latent the same in subject and in object, without one exception."