Whalt Withman

**Influences**:

Deism/ freethinking mind.

Theology of the Swedish scientist Emanual Swedenborg.

Transcendentalism Emerson.

Not very influenced by any other artist. James Mcp and Martin Forquar Tupper?

**Songs of Myself:**

Written in 1855, in “Leaves of Grass”. Perpetual Journey of the individual. The self expanding out into the world. Experience of the poet. TRANSCENDENTALISM and INDIVIDUALISM.

Analysis (section 1):

Iambic pentameter line. Referring materials, emotions and ideas. Use of YOU, MY SOUL and I = collectivity and individuals. Metaphors 🡪 ATOMS = parts of the individual (PART OF NATURE). 🡪 LEAF OF GRASS = sing of transference ⇨ The grass growing in gravers.

Topic = the release of beliefs and possessions, the experience. The poet celebrates himself for that (self-elegy).

Analysis (section 5):

Resources (anaphora and parallelism) (lines 11-15) 🡪 “And I know that…”, “And that…”. He continues the perpetual journey from the first section. Religion references (lines 11-15 ) 🡪 “The hand of God is the promise of my own”, “The spirit of God is the brother of my own”. The importance of loafe on the grass (to see what he is telling his soul).

Analysis (section 11):

Sexual content. Identification of the self with the selves. Relation with nature (metaphor = God). Reflection of individualism. Grass = symbol of divinity, part of the neture. Lines 1-3 🡪 parallelism 🡪 “Twenty-eight…”.

**“Vigil Strange 1 kepts on the field one night”:**

Drum-Taps, 1865. American Civil War. Incorporated in the “Leave of Grass”. Sumary: The story of a soldiers.

Analysis (section 1):

2 theories of interpretation:

* Emory Holloway: first person narration.
* M.Wynn Thomas: persona invented by Whitman.

Analysis (section 2):

Poem 🡪 dramatic monologue. Spiritual level. Repetition of “vigil”: central meaning. Anguish. Powerless soldier. Change in narrator’s voice. Deat as a religious experience.

Analysis (section 3):

No rhyme. Irregular lines, no stanzas. Repetition to emphasise ideas. Inversion of words.

**O Captain! My Captain!**

1865; “Leaves of Grass”. Tribute to Abraham Lincoln. Very interested in his figure. More poems about Lincoln 🡪 “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d, // Hush’d Be the Camps To-day // This Dust was Once the Man”.

Analysis (section 1):

Great metaphor: Captain/Father = Abraham Lincoln; Ship = United States. Went to the war and their people are waiting for the return. 3 stanzas 🡪 4 lines + refrain (4 lines) 🡪 rhyme scheme.

Analysis (section 3):

Vocabulary related to death. Points of view: - Same poet. – 1st & 2nd stanzas: talking directly to the captain. – 3rd stanza: talking about the Captain in the 3rd person.

**Forward influences:**

Oscar Wilde and Edward Carpenter. Érza Pound. Bram Stoker. Beat Generation 🡪 Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Federico Garcia Lorca.

Conclusion:

Whitman = significant American romanticism writer. Expression of feeling and thoughts. The impact of the American Civil War. Defender of individual rights. Agree with homosexual love. Disagree with slavery.