

aside, there are two substantive departures from Emerson's text and a mended misspelling—"subtle" for "subtile"—in the first stanza, two interlined corrections in the second and fourth stanzas, a lower-case "b" for "Brahmin" in the third, and six errors in terminal punctuation.

Within this context, it would be reasonable to conclude that Whitman was simply passing the time by writing out from memory two poems that had appealed to him. His apparent admiration for poems of such diverse accomplishment as "Brahma" and "Garden" certainly shows for the latter a peculiar catholicity of taste. But that Whitman had actually composed the "Garden" piece during the important 1865–1873 period is something else again. These years saw the publication of *Drum-Taps* (1865), *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (1865–6), containing "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," the 1867 (fourth) edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the annex *Passage to India* (1871), containing the title poem, and the 1871 (fifth) edition of *Leaves*.

The note on p. 697 acknowledges that ". . . this verse is most atypical of Whitman's poems of the period. One can only surmise that either the poet was recalling a ballad he had heard, or that he was trying his own hand." The evidence clearly supports the former conjecture.<sup>3</sup>

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#### NOTES

- 1 A probable lapse for "ware."
- 2 Container 27. A note in the folder attributes "Brahma" to Emerson, but the holograph itself is not listed in the index to the Feinberg Collection or on the folder.
- 3 I have been unsuccessful in locating the authorship of this poem, but those I've queried generally support its place among the sentimental magazine or newspaper verses of the period.

#### EBEN J.—NOT ELIAS J.—LOOMIS IN WHITMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE AND DAYBOOKS

Polly Longworth's *Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair & Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984) is the last place one might expect to find anything about Walt Whitman. But on p. 13, and also on p. 18, we read that Mabel Loomis Todd's father, Eben Jenks Loomis, took walks with Whitman when he was in Washington between 1867 and 1872. Loomis, his daughter learned, distorted the truth about himself—"Exaggeration, it was, rather than lying"—and he was never a "mathematician, scientist, astronomer, philosopher, or professor—all titles by which his family identified him" (p. 15). But for 50 years, beginning about 1851, he was little more than a clerk (later a Senior Assistant) in the Nautical Almanac Office in Washington. According to his daughter, he was born in 1828 and died in 1912.

In a letter dated 25 June 1882 to William D. O'Connor, Whitman writes that he sent a copy of *Leaves of Grass* "to Prof. Loomis" (*The Correspondence*, edited by Edwin

Haviland Miller [New York: New York University Press, 1964], 3:294), and Mr. Miller records in a footnote that Whitman "sent the volume on June 20 [1882] to Professor Elias Loomis (1811-1889), the astronomer and Yale professor, who at the time was in the Nautical Almanac Office of the Navy Department in Washington (CB). According to O'Connor's letter of June 19, Loomis knew that Emerson had never qualified his praise of *Leaves of Grass* (Feinberg; Traubel, I, 313)."

O'Connor, like Whitman, Horace Traubel, and everyone else, was taken in by Loomis, referring to him four times in the letter as Professor Loomis (see Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden* [Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1906], 1:309, 310, 313, 314); and though his first name is not given in the text of Traubel, the index refers to "Loomis, Eben J." So one wonders where Mr. Miller got the name "Elias," for Whitman's *Daybooks and Notebooks* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 1:58, gives the name E. J. Loomis, and the address Nautical Almanac Office, Washington, D.C., where Whitman sent *Two Rivulets* on 27 July 1877 and *Leaves of Grass* on 20 June 1882 (*Daybooks*, 2:296). My own footnotes, on both occasions and again on 1:69n, give the identification as "Elias J. Loomis (1811-1889), astronomer and Yale professor," which I must have taken from Mr. Miller.

Mr. Miller and I are not the only ones who erred—as there could not have been both an Eben J. Loomis and an Elias J. Loomis at the Nautical Almanac Office in Washington in 1877 and 1882—for Jerome Loving, in *Walt Whitman's Champion: William Douglas O'Connor* (College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1978), p. 135, writes that O'Connor welcomed "the testimony of Professor Elias Loomis of Yale that Emerson had never lost his enthusiasm for *Leaves of Grass*."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Loving cites *With Walt Whitman in Camden* in a footnote as his source, but Traubel does not give the name as Elias—that came from *The Correspondence* footnote.

My, how little errors do perpetuate.

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## NOTES

1 Polly Longworth (p. 15n) writes: "From girlhood Mabel [Loomis Todd] addressed her letters to Professor Eben J. Loomis. Her father's scholarly demeanor encouraged the title, and he must have given silent assent to its use by the 'men of science' among whom he worked, for he often participated in the annual meetings of the National Academy of Science by reading one of his poems, appearing in the program as Professor Loomis."

Loomis is mentioned three times in Clara Barrus's *Whitman and Burroughs: Comrades* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), pp. 168, 218, 229, as E. J. Loomis, "an intimate friend of Thoreau, having boarded with Thoreau's mother, eaten at the same table with Thoreau, roamed the woods with him, and bathed with him in Walden Pond"; as "Prof. Loomis, the astronomer, a distinguished man" (in a letter from O'Connor); and as "Professor Loomis."