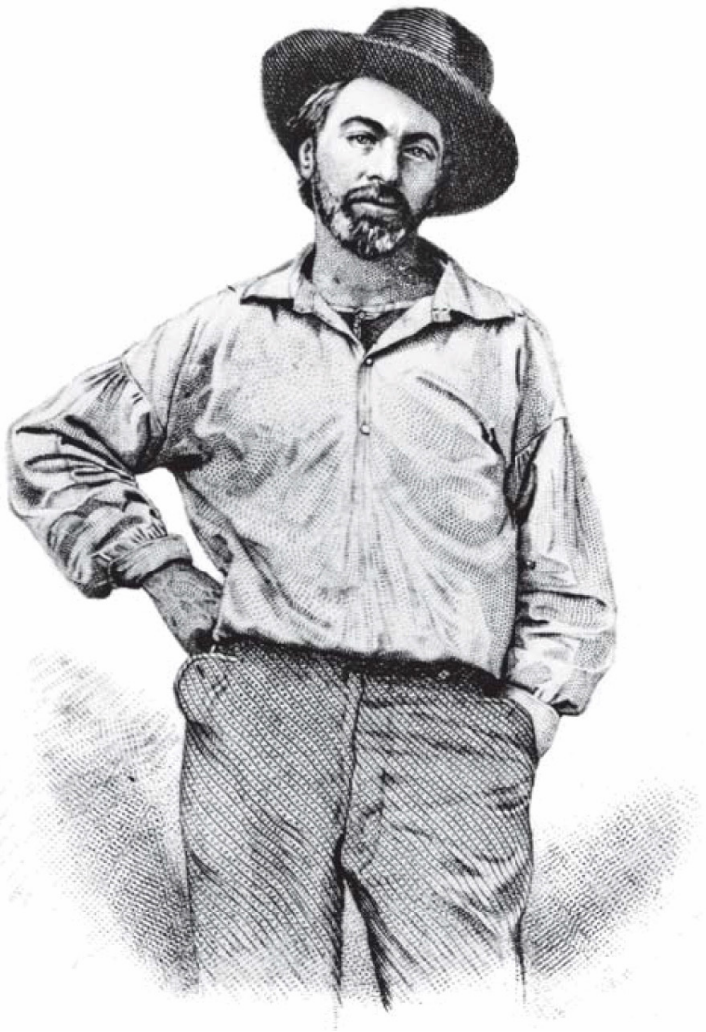

WALT WHITMAN
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Front Cover: Facsimile of the frontispiece of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* / Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Iowa Libraries.

CONTENTS

"WHOEVER YOU ARE, WE TOO LIE IN DRIFTS AT YOUR FEET": WALT WHITMAN'S MYSTIC SELF IN JORIE GRAHAM'S WATER POETRY

VICKY PENN

Jorie Graham has long held a fascination with Walt Whitman's work and often quotes his poetry in interviews and sees his poems as influences on her own work.[1] While Whitman's influence on Graham's poetry is certainly notable, this article seeks to highlight the ways in which Graham also transposes Whitman's relation to nature into a contemporary context, often writing out of or against his assertion of the self as an assured, universal, and timeless existence. Graham's poetry, while in part continuing Whitman's precedent of reconceptualizing traditional considerations of nature, also urgently reflects the shrinking of the inhabitable world, highlighting how nature, the human, and the self are continually damaged and threatened by our refusal to connect with or see ourselves as part of the natural world.

The complex relationship between Whitman and Graham has been frequently examined throughout Graham's long and influential poetic career, as critics not only note echoes of Whitman within Graham's writing but also explore the ways in which she writes out of and at times against this troubled poetic legacy. While some critics, like Brian Henry, frame Whitman and Graham as embracing a shared connectedness with nature,[2] others see Graham "unstitch[ing] . . . the pages of Whitman's poetic fantasy of America" and rejecting Whitman's notion that a poem constitutes an "incorruptible . . . textual body sustained by a shared corporeal experience."[3] Graham's continued and growing emphasis on the unmistakable realities of the climate crisis throughout her poetry thus reflect her urgency to move away from the notion of an enduring American ideal of perpetual universality and self-(re)creation.[4] Building on the foundational work of M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Christine Gerhardt's more recent insistence on Whitman's ocean poetry as a site of ecopoetic resistance to this "fantasy,"[5] this essay will trace how Graham's more recent experiences of the climate crisis translate and evolve this nature/human relationship to reflect the reality before her.

The following pages, then, will examine the extent to which Whitman's perspective on bodies of water underpins or informs his ontological proclamations and will consider what aspects of this approach to nature survive in Graham's poetry or are transformed therein to reflect the climate crisis in which she writes. Focusing on two sets of poems that speak to each other across time, I explore this relationship between two foundational American poets as it is refracted, diluted, dispersed, and intermingled through water, both as a joint fascination of the two poets and as a key medium through which the human and the natural interact, exchange, and perform their symbiotic dependencies. In this process, I consider the extent to which both Whitman and Graham engage with the global and the local, the universal and the individual/personal, and how these notions of human existence as part of a shared framework are challenged by water's power and placeless identity as a fluid, ever-moving entity. Graham's focus on the erasure and decay of human existence alongside the natural world as a result of the climate disaster offers a unique perspective on placelessness and posits water as both a site of universality and of destruction.[6]

Oceanic Poetics

Whitman's focus on water as a vehicle through which to express both an eternal, transcendental, euphoric experience and the inevitable cycle of life, death, and renewal is the center of my study, particularly how this translates into or is counteracted by Jorie Graham's contemporary ecopoetics. In her introduction to the anthology *Earth Took of Earth* (1996), which includes Whitman's "Elemental Drifts" and the 1867 version of "As I Ebb'd With the Ocean of Life," Graham not only addresses the reader in a typical Whitmanian fashion (particularly echoing the end of "As I Ebb'd")—"whoever you are, picking up this volume"—but notes the surprising ubiquity of water throughout the poems she collated:

> I was struck [when compiling the anthology] by how much of the poetry written in America takes place on water, underwater, at the edge of water, overwhelmed by the mystery of water—drowning in it, wading into it, meditating along its shores.[7]

Graham's own work is awash in the same "oceanic poetics" she references in her introduction, as she frequently returns to the "mystery of water" throughout her collections (most notably perhaps in *Sea Change* and *Fast*).[8] This focus reflects her ecopoetic concerns as the inhabitable earth shrinks and water becomes the vehicle through which geopolitical tension and inequalities multiply.[9] Water refuses to remain static, always becoming, giving life and taking it away. It

is ubiquitous both on our planet and within our bodies, the vessel through which we become part of and mutually dependent upon the natural world.

It is unsurprising, then, that Graham has long held a fascination with "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," perhaps Whitman's most famous water poem. In 1992, she gave a reading of the poem for the Centennial of Whitman's death, for which poets were asked to read Whitman poems that had had the most powerful impact on them and their work.[10] A year later, Graham published *Materialism*, which included a poem entitled "from Walt Whitman's Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," again placing Whitman's poem at the heart of her own poetic investigations.[11] David Baker, in his review of *Materialism,* also finds echoes of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" in Graham's poem "In the Hotel," in which the speaker asks "What do you / want, *you*, listening here with me now?"[12] Baker argues that he "can clearly hear Whitman's passionate attempt to situate himself and his readers within the fluid yet constant tide of time in 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'" in Graham's poem.[13] The democratic impulse, the desire to situate "you" with(in) "me" flows through both Whitman and Graham's work, as both seek to draw humanity into a wider appreciation of our commonality and community to varying degrees, both with each other and with the natural world of which we are a part.

Nick Selby traces the evolution of Graham's relationship with the poem, noting that in *Swarm*, Graham grapples with Whitman's self-assurance and belief in a future resurrection or continuance of the self that emerges from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." Selby argues that Graham "sees her poetic body as scattered, edited, silenced, and beside herself," juxtaposed with Whitman's "poetic claims to transparency" throughout his work.[14] Here, then, we see the translation of Whitman's transcendental legacy into the changing world, as Graham continues the American fascination with the identity of the self, both individual and communal, but cannot recreate Whitman's certainty of a future within an increasingly unstable climate.

More recently, Graham's 2002 collection *Never* opens with a poem entitled "Prayer," which begins with what Edward Byrne describes as "a situation reminiscent of Walt Whitman's 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'":[15]

> Over a dock railing, I watch the minnows, thousands, swirl
> themselves, each a miniscule muscle, but also, without the
> way to *create* current, making of their unison (turning, re-
> infolding,
> entering and exiting their own unison in unison) making of themselves a
> visual current . . .[16]

The celebration of life found here, as the minnows "swirl" from one line to the next in a multitude of Whitmanesque participles ("making," "turning," "re- / infolding"), sinks towards the end of the poem. The long lines of explosive movement that continually feed into one another without end are replaced by the clipped, short sentences that stop the poem: "I cannot of course come back. Not to this. Never. / It is a ghost posed on my lips. Here: never" (ll. 23–24). Graham documents the "aftershocks" of the realization that "Never again are you the same" (l. 14), holding "hands full of sand, letting it sift through / in the wind, I look in and say take this, this is / what I have saved" (ll. 18–20). As Graham's poetic focus shifts towards these apocalyptic, ecopoetic concerns, these realizations—that what has been can never be again—become more frequent. Instead of the transcendental assurance of continued existence, Graham presents an erosion of the self, something slipping away that cannot come back, "a ghost" of what once was. The desire towards the communal for which "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is famous survives in Graham's work, and speaking of *Never*, she describes "the attempt to rebuild the shattered community of the 'we' . . . we have to act in unison."[17] However, as Graham's poetry addresses the growing environmental concerns of our time, Whitman's desire for universality, to fuse one voice to all voices, both human and natural, across time and space, becomes increasingly unattainable.

"The Wake Off the Ferry" is a more recent reinterpretation of Whitman's poem from Graham's 2020 collection *Runaway*. In the poem, Graham again eschews Whitman's expansive, self-assured long line (often utilized to great effect in her previous collections such as *Sea Change*), preferring instead a more Dickinsonian, clipped, abbreviated line that splits words and letters away from each other. This reflects the way that the concept and futurity of human beings dissolves above water, which merely "rebecome[s]" in the wake of such destruction.[18] Using the same setting, adrift on a ferry between the two landmasses, Whitman and Graham offer meditations on water and humanity that share a common transcendental or ecocritical desire towards communality while offering vastly different understandings of our place within that community. Through the following close engagement with Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," I seek to highlight the prophetic, "universal self" established in Whitman's poetry, which then informs my consideration of Graham's translation of Whitman's self into her contemporary setting.

"To me the same as they are to you": Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

For Whitman, the setting of a ferry, a vessel poised between two land masses and dependent on fluidity, creates the conditions in which a fluid sense of self may thrive and reach out to others, unmoored from the confines of solidity to which one may be tied on land. Whitman remarks that "My own favourite loafing places have always been the rivers, the wharves, the boats," and that he "always had a passion for ferries; to me they afford inimitable, streaming, never-failing, living poems . . . communion with the waters, the air, the exquisite *chiaroscuro*—the sky and stars, that speak no word, nothing to the intellect, yet so eloquent, so communicative to the soul."[19] The state of rest, the "loafing" to which he refers in these notes, also provides the conditions for Whitman's communion with the universal and with past, present, and future Americans. In this position, Whitman's narrator speaks the world into being akin to God in the creation story of Genesis. The poem begins, "Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!," positioning the water in relation to the human presence which "sees" and validates it through human terms "face to face."[20] The speaker continues to position aspects of the vast landscape in relation to himself—"Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face" (l. 2)—which sets the water and the skies as compass points, with the human perception as the central point out of which all else takes form. Perhaps echoing 1 Corinthians 13:12, in which Paul notes that "now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face,"[21] Whitman places himself in the middle of a creation scene as the mystic figure in communion with the natural world who experiences this transcendental communion with nature, and thus imbues the speaker with divine authority to make such proclamations.

Whitman's prophet-speaker of the natural world is able to "see clearly" that which gives him authority to speak over future generations: "A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them, / Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide" (ll. 18–19). Positioning himself as the center of this landscape, Whitman's speaker not only inhabits these sunsets and tides of the future alongside his own but speaks future passengers into being: "you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence" (l. 5), who "are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose" (ll. 5–6). The repetition of "to me" throughout the first section of the poem builds this scene and the importance of the speaker, plainly making these connections between self and water and self and others

on board. Here, Whitman characteristically assumes knowledge of those to come through this position as the prophet of the natural world, aggrandizing the self as an omniscient, all-knowing eye to those who are more "than [they] might suppose" to him. Through this assertion and assumption of connection, Whitman nurtures the transcendental Universal Being, which acknowledges both the brevity and individuality of individual existence through the double meaning of "myself disintegrated" (l. 7) but also widens the potential of this existence as part of a wider, continual whole, "every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme" (l. 7). Through this shared experience and shared space of crossing, past and future generations step outside our linear understanding of time and individual existence and can exist simultaneously in the speaker's imagination.

The East River, on which the poetic crossing takes place, is not in fact a river but a saltwater tidal estuary in which the water does not flow through but rather moves up and down and in and out, according to the tides. This paradoxical movement within the confines of one place is reflected in Whitman's address to the future generations who will occupy the same space, crossing to and fro, moving from youth to age, and yet performing the same arrested movement as he does. Time and water move together through the poem as Whitman's speaker attempts to join himself to this continual flow onwards while remaining, at least for the moment, held in place.[22]

This timelessness and the connection across the ages are introduced as, in section three, Whitman asserts that "It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not, / I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence" (ll. 20–21). There follows a sequence of "Just as you" statements answered with "I was," which subverts the present tense of Whitman's speaker by applying the present tense to the addressed future generations. By prioritizing their present above his own, Whitman straddles both time periods, moving between his own and projecting himself via an understanding of universality into the future he imagines; "I am with you" becomes the surviving truth.

This abstraction of the human from our perceptions of time is brought about by the contemplation of their surroundings (ll. 22-25):

> Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
> Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
> Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
> Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried ...

As both present and future gaze into the river (or are imagined so to do), their identities as part of the crowd become liquid and expand out from the

physical to the spiritual crowd which spans generations and times. By using this sequential form, again reminiscent of the syntactical parallelism of the creation story in Genesis, Whitman mirrors the "pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide" (l. 19) and so connects the continuity of the addressed generations with this eternally moving water.

Through this assumption of universality and affinity with those to come, however, Whitman erases the possibility of difference of experience and identity and assumes a certain importance of his own identity that must be preserved through this connection. In assuming and asserting that "These and all else were to me the same as they are to you" (l. 49), Whitman uses the privilege of his race, gender, and class to assert his dominance over the future present, erasing all other experience of identity and place in an assumption that "Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them" (l. 52). Whitman writes of and considers water as a transcendental wonder of the universe that reveals itself to him in order to expand this sense of self past human understandings of time, place, and mortality into the eternal. Other experiences of water are vastly different: a locus of fear, for example, used to displace people from their homeland, or as a desperate way out of persecution aboard a slave ship.

Dawid Juraszek explains that "Whitman's approach to future generations in the poem is not altogether different from the way nature poetry treats earthly objects as property [from which] to extract personal meaning."[23] Whitman creates these future generations through imagining them as echoes of his own being, and in so doing leans towards a reductive view of future generations as mere resources, "ripe for exploitation and instrumentalization."[24] Here lies a great irony in the poem, as in attempting to universalize and eternalize his experience, Whitman reduces and erases the possibility of otherness, and thereby confines himself to his own experience. This erasure of different experiences is of course not limited to Whitman or even to transcendentalists. The cultural erasure of anything outside the white, male, relatively wealthy perception of identity and existence has defined literature and culture for centuries and continues to do so.

This assumption that "these and all else were to me the same as they are to you" seems also to erase the reality of water, which is constantly moving and reshaping the land in which it moves, never remaining "the same."[25] Instead of upholding the continual flow of the "flood-tide" and "ebb-tide" that run through the poem, Whitman, through this assertion, begins to stagnate the current, moving away from the reality of an ever-changing, ever-evolving landscape governed by and wholly dependent upon water.

Despite this focus on the human connection outside time through water and on the individual as part of this interconnected whole, Whitman also

acknowledges the way in which this body is dependent upon water and continues to use the framework of a mystic, transcendental experience with a higher power as he explores this concept. The speaker asserts that:

I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my body (ll. 62–64).

Whitman points to the shared human condition of being "held in solution" as the continual ebb and flow of the river surrounds and permeates the musings of the poet and his construction or exploration of the self. Instead of relying entirely upon this continual flow of water on and through the body, however, Whitman characteristically maintains a constant state of self-governance as he asserts that "I too had receiv'd identity by my body" while recognizing this self-governance in his audience as he joins with them in "I too."

This connection and knowledge of a fluid self "held in solution," which stretches on through the centuries, becomes an asset to his mystic identity as Whitman claims that "I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born" (l. 88). Echoing the biblical Psalmists,[26] Whitman positions his prophet-speaker as the author of the scene, an omniscient presence abstracted from linear time who can see all aspects of the present as well as the future and writes the lives of those to come before they have even existed. The dominant master or father role in the Psalm—"thou" who "possessed my reins"—is lessened here, however, as the preceding "I, too had receiv'd identity" places the speaker as one also created by or subsumed into a higher being: the Universal Being which both speaker and audience inhabit.

Consequently, Whitman's account of creation occurs out of a traditional, linear time sequence as he creates future generations' lives while looking back on his own. The reception of "identity" is followed by snapshots of this parallel life: "I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine" (l. 57). The audience is taken through different phases of life, including a darker "patch," as Whitman assures us that:

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?
Nor is it you alone who knows what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil (ll. 65–70)

Instead of a God-creator who sees the imperfection of His creation from His own perfect state on high, Whitman admits his own "evil" and the human struggle with "dark" thoughts of irrelevance and impermanence alongside his reader, as "he . . . knew what it was to be evil." Only after this account of inevitable maturity, as human consciousness evolves and begins to question itself and its importance within its surroundings, Whitman unveils his role in creating such a being, that he "consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born." This abstraction of both speaker and audience from linear chronology reinforces Whitman's communion with a Universal Being that exists outside our chronology and equalizes past and present, as "What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you" (l. 87). Instead of the perfect Father creating time-bound, earthly children, Whitman creates his reader on his level, part of the same, of past, present, and future simultaneously.

Whitman's unavoidable attachment to and constant dialogue with the water around him allows this connection with those of the future. The prepositions repeat the flowing sense of water continually connecting people and places and times to one another, such as: "What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face? / Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?" (ll. 96–97), where "into" is repeated to emphasize the "fusing" of "ties" between people. Whitman figures himself as tied to the water through this fluid identity as part of a whole in order to escape his mortality and be "with you" yet retains his own autonomy through this reliance upon "the body" to create and nurture his identity. I now turn to Graham's "The Wake Off the Ferry," in which she translates Whitman's democratic impulse towards futurity and universality into her contemporary ecopoetic context, reflecting the immutable eternity of water in the wake of impermanent human connection.

"to see it rebecome // itself": Graham's "The Wake Off the Ferry"

Graham, writing as an American poet after Whitman, embraces Whitman's prophetic, mystic viewpoint, given authority by this transcendental experience to speak to something outside our perception or understanding. "The Wake Off the Ferry" echoes Whitman's setting of being unmoored from solid land, physically dependent upon the placeless water that upholds the human presence upon it. Graham's speaker is much less certain and assured of her place within this setting, however, as the poem explores the difference between water's continual "rebecom[ing]" (1. 25) as it reforms to "close / back up" (ll. 23–24) after the ferry and the broken human relationship that she gestures to aboard the ferry.

Whitman's anthropocentric river scene, spanning across time, is characteristic of his era. Graham subverts this, however, as the human presence in her poem is pulled apart and complicated by the water's presence, and it becomes impossible to see which is driving the poem. The short lines with no punctuation cut phrases away from each other, pulling other words into contact to create connections that are not immediately obvious. Placing the end of "never again / exactly the / same" (ll. 13–15) next to "when I / love // you" (ll. 15–17) exaggerates the distance between "love" and "you," and seems to translate the "never again exactly the same" of water's reforming onto the brokenness and frailty of the human love that does not quite reach across the stanza break. This is then echoed:

you as you
me never again
are we (ll. 17–19)

This both cements the failure of relationship and splits "you as you" and "me" into two separate entities that no longer "are we," as the beginning of the question "are we the ones / we love" (ll. 19–20) also rounds off this breakdown of connection between the two characters. In contrast to Whitman's account of transcendental unity, of Americans tied together outside time through this shared place, Graham creates an intense locality of "you" and "me" and the rift between "we" around which water easily flows. While Whitman uses water as a vehicle to express the timeless expansion of the human into this fluid state, Graham's poem offers a "wake" for human connection that remains disconnected from the water, which continues past and around us regardless.

This clipped, brief structure also gives the poem a hesitancy that suggests the limitations of the poetic trope of using the natural world as a canvas or symbol for human existence. Instead of asking this of the water, Graham instead interrupts the human relationship with water's presence that flows round the "disturbance" (l. 6) to "rebecome" at the end. These two words, the longest in the poem, create a sense of something at work outside the hesitancy of the speaker, as if telling the story of the water outside our human qualifications and symbols. Through this "rebecom[ing]," the sea becomes something other than a symbol of the relationship between the two humans in the poem, as they go from "we" (l. 3) at the beginning of the poem to the separate "you" and "I," but the water continues on undaunted as "itself" (l. 26). Through this "disturbance" of both the physical water by the ferry, which easily closes back up after the ferry has passed, and the human speaker who is disturbed by this water continually

challenging the sense and flow of their speech, Graham notes the failure of using the sea as a symbol or tool of self-aggrandizement. Instead, Graham suggests that water's vastness stands outside our comprehension as "itself," referring to the sea, stands alone at the end of the poem, unconnected to the human attempt "to see" (l. 22).

Graham acknowledges that water is continually becoming and reforming, as "the / disturbance of / our having / gone" (ll. 5–8) is "close[d] up / again but // never again / exactly the / same" (ll. 11–15). Water's power to re-establish and reform itself transcends human perception in the poem:

. . . I look

as far as I
can see to see
it close
back up (ll. 20–24)

Here, Graham's speaker narrates how water goes on past the limits of her perception, which is complemented by the line breaks that continually disrupt speech.[27] The echo chamber of the repeated "I" and "see to see" suggests that this looking to see does not grant the speaker understanding of the water, which is reinforced by the title of the poem, as "The Wake Off the Ferry" situates the human on the ferry and the wake as "off," unmoored from our manmade constructions.

Although Graham's title is instantly evocative of Whitman's poem and her subject similarly "held in solution," instead of bringing the human into sharp focus and using the water to facilitate a wider existence as part of a universal whole as Whitman does, Graham's poem questions this practice. The human presence is continually vague and unsure, broken up by the brevity of lines that reflect the small waves that "rebecome" the sea as the ferry travels through it. Graham subverts Whitman's model of the water as something with which to engage with eternity and instead acknowledges her own fragility, poised above an entity that so easily "rebecome[s] / itself," even in the "wake" of "disturbance" and human destruction.

In the following section, I present another close reading of a Whitman poem in order to examine a different aspect of his relationship with the natural world, one which seems darker, more mature, and somewhat more aware of his own mortality within the Universal Being. I then consider two of Graham's poems in answer to this evolution of Whitman's approach to water to present a

holistic understanding of the mystic self through both poets' relationship with water and how this adapts and evolves through their vast bodies of work.

"Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)": Whitman's "As I Ebb'd"

Whitman's "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" moves from the assured, universal self of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" into a more morose, individual contemplation of the speaker's complex relationship with the ocean and his place within eternity. Whitman uses the shoreline as a site of personal and poetic reflection but also acknowledges that the sea's vastness resists such treatment. As Huck Gutman aptly summarizes, the poem "is about fathers, the shore, the failure of poetry, personal inadequacy, and profound uncertainty," as Whitman projects his own complexities of emotion and ontology onto the oceanic vastness before him, personifying it into these parental figures to serve his self-exploration.[28] The sea reacts with a physical, dangerous reminder of his relative insignificance and its power beyond his imagination of it as a symbol for his own emotions.

"As I Ebb'd" presents a bleaker state of mind, occupying one of the "dark patches" of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (l. 65) that casts the speaker into a dejected mood in which "The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious" (l. 67). Whitman creates a somewhat hostile seascape at the beginning of "As I Ebb'd," using the sounds of the ocean to evoke the shoreline upon which he walks:

> As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok,
> Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant,
> Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways (ll. 3–5)

In both content and sound, the poem performs the ebb and flow of the sea as Whitman's aqueous voice trickles down the page and the sibilance echoes the crashing of waves upon the shore. Gerhardt suggests that "the repeated 'As I' of the first three lines emphasizes the initial focus on the self-absorbed speaker, whose mystifying notion of ebbing 'with the ocean of life' evokes sea and shore as external images of his own thoughts."[29] The beginning of the poem assumes this traditional human centrality as the reader's vision follows the speaker, who is in control and dictates the movement of the poem, the "electric self" (l. 7) commanding the reader's attention. As the description of the shore and its inhabitants continues, however, this certainty of self becomes less confident, and the "hoarse and sibilant" voice of the ocean begins to take over the poem. As such, the poem performs the inevitable "ebb" of the speaker into death, but

also builds up a picture of the natural world's unshakeable power so that when the speaker submits himself to the waves and becomes one with the ocean, the "flow" of life, which he assures himself will return, seems possible.

Whitman's anthropomorphising of the sea into a "fierce old mother" underpins the poem and the existential contemplation therein, as Whitman considers both the oceanic "cradle" and "grave" before him and his place as an individual who is born, dies, and will be reborn through the endless waves of its universality.[30] Instead of a positive, affirming proclamation of futurity and connection between here and now and that to come, this poem is a more reserved, personal contemplation of the self and the oceanic vastness thereof. The poem presents the "real Me" which "all my arrogant poems" (l. 28) cannot reach in the face of the ocean, whose depths are similarly intangible. The isolation and loss evoked by the realization that "I have not once had the least idea who or what I am" (l. 27) allows for this conflict between self and the power of nature to overwhelm the poem and its speaker, which leads to the ultimate submission of the self into the waves at the end of the poem.

Through this conflict between Whitman's self and the imagined "mother" of the waves, one can see the maturity of Whitman's vision of nature materialize from a facilitator of his universality to an acknowledgment of its overwhelming vastness and dominance over the individual human. The sea strips away the certainty of the self and human understanding or comprehension, as "I wended the shores I know" (l. 2) turns later into "As I wend to the shores I know not" (l. 18), and Whitman's speaker transcends his human form into the unknown through this communion with the sea. Nature's power becomes militant towards the helpless speaker in the poem:

> I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single object, and that no man ever can,
> Nature here in sight of the sea taking advantage of me to dart upon me and sting me
> Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all. (ll. 32–34)

The natural world "sting[s]" and "take[s] advantage" of the speaker, as though reacting against the former assurance of self and assumption of human power over the natural world. The image of the sea as a "mother" adds to the speaker's desperation, as though the emblem of a universal existence, the sea itself, denies responsibility over the speaker: "Nature here in sight of the sea" persecutes him as reprimand for his past carelessness and assumptions. Gerhardt suggests that "by providing nature not only with agency but also with authority, a subjecthood that resists control, Whitman imaginatively turns the sea and shore into subjects who strain against being conceptually grasped and

thus contained."[31]

Though this walk along the shore is Whitman's canvas for the expression of the smallness of the self amidst the mystery of the universe, as he explores this oceanic expanse before him, it becomes clear that the sea resists such symbolic use and thus becomes an object of fear as it asserts its power over the human. The shore is "a dynamic place," according to Gerhardt, which "momentarily de-emphasiz[es] the speaker's physical and linguistic agency," allowing Whitman to develop an association with the sea which then evolves into the more modern, (now) ecocritical ways of understanding it.[32] By claiming the ocean as "mother" and "father," however, Whitman ties himself to the sea, asserting that "You oceans both, I close with you" (l. 35) as a way to preserve himself within the universal as he surrenders himself to the power of the ocean.

There are echoes within the poem of the mystic character in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," as Whitman's speaker asserts that "I . . . Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails underfoot, / The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe" (ll. 6–9). Although the speaker acknowledges in the passive "was seized" that the ocean and its alluring, unknowable vastness have control over the human interloper, there is a definite sense of being set apart, that the speaker has been chosen as a vessel for capturing and translating this transcendental experience of "the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe" to the reader.

Through embracing his individual, human death, Whitman's speaker is set free into the endlessness of the ocean, assured by the cycles of ebb and flow which govern the natural world. "Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)" (l. 51), he instructs himself, and the final stanza of the poem is delivered from beyond death: "(See, from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last . . .)" (l. 59). This posthumous address performs Whitman's place as part of this Universal Being, tied to the everlasting endlessness of nature, and exaggerates the relief in the release of his soul from its decaying human form into full communion with the ocean. Whitman uses the archaic literary term for the sea, "ooze," to emphasize this union.

The sea and Whitman's speaker are united into "we," as he addresses "You up there walking or sitting, / Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet" (ll. 70–71). Gerhardt suggests that "Whitman succeeds in both imagining the impossible, namely, our becoming one with the world even as this implies a loss of self, and capturing the very impossibility of such a move as a viable speaking position."[33] The fragmentary voice of the rest of the poem enables

this conclusion, as the desperation, doubt, and resignation of the speaker to the ebbing away of life allow him to submit himself without reservation to the power of the waves before him. Gerhardt notes that "Death here is not a state at the end of a linear narrative, but a presence that connects the poet's body to the natural environment even as he seals his irrevocable distance from it in speaking the words that constitute his poem."[34]

Instead of an inevitable, permanent end, "As I Ebb'd" imagines death as a solution to human frailty, a way to connect "I" to "you," creating the everlasting "we" which speaks on after the death of the individual. This trajectory of the poem also questions the self-aggrandizement of Whitman's other poems, as the submission of the self entirely into nature's motherly arms suggests an admission of his own sub-dominance to the ocean. Gerhardt agrees, explaining that "at the cultural moment when modern environmentalism emerged, Whitman's figure of the dead poet articulating living speech embodies the necessity of an utterly humble, self-effacing" speaker who is aware of his own infancy next to the vast power of the ocean.[35] As the poem develops, therefore, Max Oelschlaeger's observation of "a shift . . . from viewing wild nature as merely a valuable resource . . . toward a conception of wilderness as an end in its own right" during Whitman's time becomes clear, as Whitman begins to understand his shift from assumed master of nature to his position as a supplicant who must surrender himself entirely to become part of the endless futurity of the ocean.[36]

Having established this ecocentric shift in Whitman's relationship to water and nature/human coexistence more broadly, I now turn to Graham's development of this relationship within her contemporary context of the climate crisis, which necessitates deeper engagement with and acknowledgement of our symbiotic relationship with the natural world as its accelerates towards extinction.

"Something feels like it's not / coming back.": Graham's "Ebbtide" and "Dusk Shore Prayer"

Like Whitman's "As I Ebb'd," Graham's 2002 collection *Never* continually returns to a littoral setting to examine the individual's place within the vast, ungovernable natural world. As a poetic response to Whitman's poem of dissolution, "Ebbtide" again challenges our assumptions of the established way of relating to and assigning meaning to the natural world as a flawed way of interacting with it. Graham's speaker in "Ebbtide" records her observations of

creatures and aspects of nature as she walks along the shore but does not use her observations primarily as a means of reflecting on and coming to terms with herself. The title again signals Whitman's pertinence in Graham's writing, but again erases the "I" of "As I Ebb'd" to focus instead on the limits of human perception and authority within nature. Graham's poem observes the split between individual perception of the ocean scene and true communion with or understanding thereof, noting the fragility of the individual self and the hesitancy of a future within the universal.

When asked to offer one of her poems for inclusion in a 2005 collection of poets celebrating Whitman's work, Graham selected "Dusk Shore Prayer,"[37] and so I reflect on this poem too as an answer to or translation of Whitman's oceanic, ecological turn within Graham's water poetry. The poem translates echoes of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" into further meditations on "The creeping revelation of shoreline" that haunt "As I Ebb'd."[38] I trace the evolution of Whitman's shift towards more ecological concerns within Graham's "Ebbtide" and "Dusk Shore Prayer"—two meditations on this space of crossing between human and nature.

Willard Spiegelman acknowledges Graham's focus on the limits of perception and the expansiveness of that which we attempt and ultimately fail to fully perceive when he suggests that "in *Never*, it is the poet herself who wrestles not only with acts of perception but also with activities of control and the determination of destiny." Throughout "Ebbtide," this wrestling with "the act of perception" is clear, as Graham's speaker moves from one observation to the next, ceaselessly onwards towards the climax of the poem in which the "control and the determination of destiny"[39] seem to play out before her eyes. It is through this absolute focus on perception above comprehension or the symbolic function of what she observes that Graham's speaker begins to question her own "determination of destiny," as that which she has experienced and perceived becomes irrevocably past.

Edward Byrne notes that *Never* "particularly suggests new ways of viewing and understanding today's natural world: Graham perceives the landscape with a sense of immediacy and urgency," which is clear in both poems.[40] In "Ebbtide," the speaker builds up the pace of the poem towards the end, acknowledging the absence of futurity and offering no hope of an answering, renewing "flowtide" to come. The poem omits a continuation of human perception after the natural world has ceased to offer it, replacing Whitman's optimistic belief in a future resurrection with the reality that "Nothing is coming back the way it was" (l. 77).

Evoking Whitman's mysticism, Graham begins "Ebbtide" with a similar

positioning of the speaker to that in "As I Ebb'd":

> I am a frequency, current flies through. One has
> to ride
> the spine.[41]

The poem begins as though in the same tone as Whitman's proclamations of authority in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," as a vessel through which the universal may speak. The opening two words echo Whitman's biblical construction, as the declaration of the self, "I am," occurs throughout the Bible as God's self-creation and assurance of divine identity. However, with the admission of anonymity ("a" frequency rather than "the" frequency) and passivity ("current flies through"), Graham's voice is more akin to the bleaker voice of "As I Ebb'd," which acknowledges the lack of human control in the face of such oceanic vastness. Using the anonymity of "one," Graham suggests a departure from the aggrandizement of Whitman's speaker and notes instead the existence of "other / frequencies" (ll. 4–5) that exist alongside her but are not claimed as part of her. Through this, Graham suggests a communality of sorts, but these "other[s]" are equally passive in their reception of the "current" and neither the speaker nor these others have ultimate authority over this scene. Graham translates Whitman's universality into a contemporary context, as the climate collapse brings with it the erasure of past and future, necessitating a more fragmented sense of a reality in which we all exist as "frequencies," together in our shared predicament but not assured of a future.

Instead of a single, divinely inspired mystic given ultimate authority to speak these prophecies to present and future generations, Graham is more focused on the act of perception, the limits of the individual in observing that which they ordinarily assume knowledge over. The identity as a "frequency" rather than a prophet reinforces this, as it sets up the speaker as something through which energy moves or is transferred, but only at specific times and in certain places. These "other / frequencies" to which she refers may have their own visions and prophecies, but these are not revealed to the speaker, who remains merely a vessel through which energy may pass.

This is also explored later in the poem when Graham writes "I'm squatting so I hear / sand sucking water in" (ll. 53–54), which solidifies the notion that human perception is situational, dependent on where the eyes and ears are placed at any given time, and these sights and sounds are only available to the speaker because of her position at that precise moment. Graham's speaker must move along the shoreline to see these different realms of creatures and habitats

and may only observe and record them as they are revealed to her through this contortion of her body.

The omniscience and omnipresence that give Whitman's speaker his grandeur in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" are replaced by the paring down of humanity to its core parts in Graham's poem: the "spine" which conducts energy for a time but will inevitably become "the spine of the picked-clean story" (l. 83), as Graham foretells at the end of the poem. Graham's position as a mystic or prophet in the poem is necessarily brief, as she acknowledges at the end that "One feels one has in custody / what one cannot care for for long" (ll. 75–76). Through this admission, Graham marks the fragility of both that which she perceives and the human eye itself, which will die and become sightless, a reversal of Whitman's futurity of the self looking out over the ageless water in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." Instead of becoming one with the "ooze" and surrendering herself to the waves as Whitman's speaker does in "As I Ebb'd," Graham's speaker remains on the shoreline, which highlights the different contexts in which the two poets write. The assurance of a future that underpins Whitman's work is absent from Graham's, and so she may only offer this snapshot of the present moment and the urgency of the feeling that "something" (l. 35) will not come back.

As Graham's poem unfolds, the "I," this "frequency," is made more and more contingent on the surrounding natural world, acknowledging that the perception of "I" or the eye of the speaker is limited by the physicality of one human being wandering along the shore, as "my / gaze can barely reach shore-break" (ll. 64–65) suggests a limit to this vision. The speaker explains that:

> Making one's way one sees the changes.
> What took place before one
> looked. (ll. 10–12)

This positions the mystic self within the frame of an individual human who has knowledge only of an individual lifetime and has no claim to a Universal Being which brings knowledge of the past along with it.

Whitman's "As I Ebb'd" addresses the "ebb" of the individual towards death but finds within this morose contemplation a way through to universality, as the sea is offered as a way to perpetuate the self into the eternal "we." Graham's poem instead suggests an irrevocable decline of "something" into nothing as the speaker warns, "Something feels like it's not / coming back." (ll. 35–36). The repetition of "one" throughout the poem cements this isolation, as it emphasizes the singularity of the speaker, alone and not tied to any certainty in the future. This isolation is echoed through the observed components on the

shore, as everything is "receding" (l. 6) and "unfocusing" (l. 15). The speaker records a "single tubefish, dead" (l. 16), "two vultures feeding on a pelican" (l. 33), and the tone of decay, fragmentation, and destruction continues to haunt the poem.

Writing as Graham does in 2002 on the brink of climate collapse, as the ocean levels rise and become more unstable, the perpetual communion between sea and humanity that Whitman envisions is thrown into doubt, alongside this confidence in future generations who might look out on the same scene. The scene that Graham paints towards the end of the poem, "Looking back / I see the birds eating the bird. The other way my / gaze can barely reach shore-break" (ll. 63–65) is emblematic of this radical change in contexts and the shrinking of the visible, inhabitable world from which Graham writes. Looking back, Graham's speaker can only see death and decay, and looking forward, her perception is limited to that which is immediate as the sense of futurity is called into question.

The observation of the "tubefish" at the beginning of the poem helps to solidify this isolation of the self and the speaker's underlying preoccupation with their inevitable death:

> The single tubefish, dead, long as a snake, half-snout,
> rolled over and over as the waves pick up, return, return
> less often, go away. For a while he is incandescent
> white, then blue, deep green, then white again, until he's
> left, half-turned,
> eyes sandy till one wave, come back
> this far as if in error, cleans him off. (ll. 16–22)

The tubefish is introduced as though a character of some significance, whose death, we assume, will provide the canvas for some proclamation of human emotion, a "memento mori" that inspires the speaker to "carpe diem." This is almost tantalizingly offered as "for a while he is incandescent" genders the fish and so brings him into contact with our human sensitivity, and the grandeur of "incandescent" makes the reader anticipate some symbolic emphasis to come. The enjambment of "incandescent / white, then blue" instantly rejects this expectation and instead continues to describe in a very factual, documentary manner the changing colours of the fish's corpse as it is moved by the natural fluctuations of the shore. The individual death presented here is merely another observable feature, as "dead" begins the physical description of the fish alongside "long as a snake, half-snout." This unemotional observation makes it hard even to feel pity for the creature as it is thrown around by the waves, or "left, half-turned" until a wave "as if in error, cleans him off." The wave's apathetic

treatment of its subject is a far cry from Whitman's "fierce old mother" who "endlessly cries for her castaways."

We may read significance into the scene of the dead fish beginning to decompose on the shoreline as a harbinger of our own destruction and the insignificance of our mortal bodies after death. This significance is not offered by the poem's speaker, however, who continues past this sight towards her own similar future, "the spine of the picked-clean story" without comment. This fragmentary way of observing the natural world around the speaker reflects the "erosion" that erases history and connection. It is also itself a kind of time in the poem as this realization that there will be a "too late," that something will not return, makes the piecemeal, snapshot tone of the poem necessary.

Throughout the poem, this sense that "something" is lost is reflected in the way that each observation of the items on the shoreline is presented as a fragment never pulled into a wider proclamation or sense of significance (as one may expect in a Whitman poem). The speaker addresses this at the beginning of the poem with the contemplation "How often and how hard are answerings" (l. 5), which is performed through the poem, as "answerings" continue to evade the speaker and each observation bleeds into to the next. The only suggestions of significance are unsure, as "One feels word should be sent us / from some source" (ll. 72–73) is not answered by any such reassurance from a higher or omniscient power. The speaker asserts that "Too much is / asked. Nothing is coming back the way it was" (ll. 76–77), and thus notes the departure of this present time from that which has come before, making these "answerings" impossible. The juxtaposition of "too much" with "nothing" seems to act as a microcosm for the current state of erosion and destruction, as humanity asks "too much" of the natural world and is faced with the inevitability of "nothing" in return. All one can do, in such a case, is "wait for the next hem, next bride" (l. 78) of the waves to transform the present perception, the "frequency" one inhabits now.

The language of the poem is broken up as it continues where fragments of sentences replace full ones. The linear continuation of time follows this as things begin to merge into different times, such as "two vultures feeding on a pelican. Later, claws and beak / float in the brack" (ll. 33–34). The two states of recent death and "picked-clean," itemized "claws and beak" are juxtaposed as though part of the same observed image. Time speeds up as the erosion of the landscape, the "unnatural causes" of human destruction of the environment, distorts the land physically and temporally, and this sense of order and structure is lost forever. Instead of Whitman's timeless creation of like-minded future beings outside time in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," here Graham offers a nightmarish realization of the erasure of existence as the certainty of a future is

thrown into doubt. Whitman's transcendental expansiveness is replaced by an urgency necessitated by the decay and destruction of the contemporary climate emergency in which Graham's speaker finds herself.

This urgency heightens at the poem's end as a series of short sentences interrupt each other:

> . . . This hand, this
> sugar-stalk. The cane-fields in the back of us,
> the length of tubefish back there too. And
> if I write my name. And how mist rounds the headland
> till the sea
> is gone. (ll. 67–72)

The speaker offers a kind of answering here as the "tubefish" reappears, yet it is referred to in a fragmented sentence that offers no new information or contemplation but merely recalls the fish and the speaker's observation of it. The forward motion resists this "answering" or conversation between past and present, and instead continues to build the pace through the poem. The human observation of that which exists on the shoreline is cut off as soon as the eye moves on, and Graham shows the limits of perception through this.

The significance of the individual human, the "name" by which the speaker marks her identity, is left in a fragmented sentence, immediately eclipsed by "mist," which creates the illusion that "the sea / is gone." Again, this limit of perception looks forward to the inevitable end of this scene, as the individuality of the speaker is lost amidst the sense of time running out. The autonomy and significance of this speaker is questioned through the poem, leading on from the opening claim that "I am a frequency."

The final line cements the irrevocable change and decay that haunts the poem as the speaker looks back on her own journey along the shoreline:

> . . . I can see through the trees,
> through the cane grove, palm grove, out far enough into
> the clearing where
> the spine of the picked-clean story shines. (ll. 80–83)

As in Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Graham here condenses present and future into one perception, using her identity as a "frequency" to elucidate this inevitable future scene which imprints itself onto the present. The poem ends on a positive note of perception, as the speaker can see "far enough" to observe something of significance. However, this strength of perception is

framed by the effort it takes to see and the barriers that impede this perception. Instead of the jubilant celebration of life and futurity that Whitman finds in such an identity, Graham's experience of this prophetic vision is rooted in decay and fragmentation. The "spine" of the beginning of the poem, which was presented as the core of existence, here turns to the corpse of a story erased. What story this may be, whether that of the individual speaker, humanity as a whole, or any one of the poem's characters is unclear, as the poem continues to refuse to draw these perceptions and sightings into a wider image. Instead of a celebration of universality, Graham's vision of the future is one of erosion and decay, of destruction and the end of this limited human perception.

The limits of language, perception, and expression continue to form the core of Graham's engagement with Whitman in "Dusk Shore Prayer." Here, too, human perception is fragile, pared down to the monosyllabic "*I am*" (l. 21), and though still somewhat ambiguously communal in the use of "one" (l. 19), the speaker's expression of the "revelation" (l. 1) found on the shoreline remains limited by the waning sunlight which obscures the path.

"Dusk Shore Prayer" is awash with metaphors of writing and speech, mirroring the beginning of "As I Ebb'd," "where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok, / Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant, / Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways" (AIE, ll. 3–5). Graham's poem answers this sibilant fluviality with "The under-shadowed paisleys scripting" (l. 2) the waves and the "golden sentences" (l. 7) of sunlight "writ on clearest moving waters" (l. 7). The speaker clarifies, however, that these attempts to script the shoreline are "meaningless . . ." (l. 8) and remain "on (not *in*) the moving of the / waters" (ll. 8–9). The urgency of the italicized "*in*" here notes this distinction between the sunlight's immersion within the waves and the limits of human perception that sees sunlight only atop them. Instead of Whitman's assurance and assumption of ebbing "with the ocean" (AIE l. 1), Graham's speaker constantly grapples with her inability to fully express or perceive the shoreline before her.

The following section further illustrates this barring of human perception from the full reality of the waves through Graham's use of disruptive punctuation:

(which feels tugged)(the rows of scripting
[even though it's a trick] adamant with
self-unfolding)(wanting the eye to catch and take
dominant final-hold, feel the thickest rope of
waterlipped
scripting (ll. 10–15)

Each parenthesis cuts the meaning of the phrase away from the rest of

the sentence. While the lack of space between each parenthetical phrase at first glance seems to reflect the voluminous swell of wave upon wave, this juxtaposition of closed bracket and open bracket merely solidifies the boundary between what we see and what is there. The square brackets within the parentheses add an extra layer of disassociation between human eyes and the interplay of sunlight on (but not in) waves.

As the poem draws towards a conclusion, the echoes of speech and writing intensify, as the "waterlipped / scripting" flow over the desire "to be a producing of a thing that speaks [to whom / one does not know, but a true speech])" (ll. 16–17) and the speaker seeks:

> . . . to believe this truly,
> not in metaphor—
> to put it in the blank in which one *sees*,
> and then into the blank in which one *is*,
> to separate *I am* from *I have being* from *I am*
> *apart*. And not to want to *be*. And never to be
> emptied by the wound of meaning.
> The gash of likeness. The stump interpretation.
> Spelled from the living world . . . (ll. 17–25)

The possibility of wholeness—believing, seeing, being, having being—is continually swept away from the speaker through the italics that separate this Platonic ideal from the reality. The belief in these absolutes is only hypothetical, a "wanting" (l. 12) which is placed far away from this section to emphasize the gulf between reality and ideal. The desire to "believe this truly" is curbed by the distinction "not in metaphor," as seeing and being are desired to fill "the blank," a reality in which the speaker wrestles with "the wound of meaning. / The gash of likeness. The stump interpretation." Human perception here becomes that which limits us: the limits of language and expression of what it is *to be* become that which bar us from what *is*. Spiegelman aptly summarizes this when he notes that in the poem Graham "wants to catch and take hold of what she knows she cannot just as she realizes the impossibility of her analogous wish: 'to believe this truly, / not in metaphor.'"[42]

⋆

Though varied between the celebratory tone of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and the gloomy, world-weary tone of "As I Ebb'd," Whitman's water poetry presents a mystic figure, positioned at the center of a Universal Being, and assured of his authority to speak over this universal experience as one of many, in communion with the divine. Whitman wrote "at the cultural moment when modern envi-

ronmentalism emerged" as part of a radical transcendental movement which instigated "a shift . . . from viewing wild nature as merely a valuable resource . . . toward a conception of wilderness as an end in its own right."[43]

The evolution of this shift towards an ecopoetic consideration of the natural world is clear in Graham's poetry. Whitman's continued influence on her work more than a hundred years after his death and the continued echoes and answers of his poems within hers emphasize the importance of Whitman's poetry both for Graham and within the contemporary ecopoetic movement more broadly. While Whitman presented an expansionist celebration of the world around him (particularly in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry") typical of his era, it is clear that the natural world was not a mere resource to fuel this expansion, but rather part of the continuation of his identity within the Universal Being. Whitman wrote of his own poetry that:

> Its analogy is *the Ocean*. Its verses are the liquid, billowy waves, ever rising and falling, perhaps sunny and smooth, perhaps wild with storm, always moving, always alike in their nature as rolling waves, but hardly any two exactly alike in size or measure (meter), never having the sense of something finished and fixed, always suggesting something beyond.[44]

Water flows through Whitman's poems both physically—in their fluid, expansive construction across the page—and conceptually in the transcendentalist reach towards "something beyond" the isolation of an individual self. This interconnectedness of all things within and dependent upon water sows the seeds for the contemporary ecocritical movement, which also sees the natural world and water within it as "never having the sense of something finished or fixed." Graham translates these ideas around the symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature/water into the reality of the climate crisis, in which Whitman's assurance of the future is quelled by the shrinking inhabitable world. As Whitman presents an environmentally focused voice for the expansionist mindset of his generation, so too Graham captures the ecopoetic realization of the limits of that expansion within the current context.

Graham offers a perspective informed by the late-stage climate catastrophe that moves away from the centralization of human experience. Graham's poetry in part echoes Whitman's mysticism, as her speaker is positioned as a "frequency" through which "current flies," and she acknowledges her placelessness as she too is "held in solution." Instead of claiming her own place in eternity "forever," Graham observes this interconnection between nature and humanity facilitated by water as it lies before her in the moment.

The sense of placelessness, of water that "closes up / again" and "rebe-

come[s]" after a human "disturbance," is met with a disassociation from the human sense of importance and value, as we are mere "frequencies" through which the natural world may pass, but we do not hold power over it, nor over eternity as Whitman asserts. Though the seeds of Whitman's American, expansive poetry may begin to bloom in Graham's ecopoetry, they are clipped by her acknowledgement of the reality of the climate disaster, which questions the continuity of any eternity in the face of such destruction and erasure of life and can speak only from the assurance of the here and now.

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Notes

1 See J. P. O'Malley's "Interview: Jorie Graham's Poetry," *The Spectator* (June 22, 2012), spectator.co.uk/article/interview-jorie-graham-s-poetry/, in which Graham notes that "Poetry's job is, among other things, to make resistance to emotional oversimplification possible. 'Do I contradict myself,' says Whitman, 'very well then, I contradict myself.'" See also Thomas Gardner's interview with Graham in which she discusses "The desire to create one's self…Whitman trying to find a body," and "that motion towards the opposite in order to complete oneself and forge a soul"; Thomas Gardner, "Jorie Graham: The Art of Poetry No. 85," *Paris Review* 165 (Spring 2003), 53-97.

2 Brian Henry, "Exquisite Disjunctions, Exquisite Arrangements: Jorie Graham's 'Strangeness of Strategy,'" *The Antioch Review* 56, no. 3 (Summer 1998), 281–288.

3 Nick Selby, "Prometheus Unbound: Touching Books in Jorie Graham's Swarm and Susan Howe's 'Scattering as Behaviour Toward Risk," in Michael Hinds and Stephen Matterson, eds., *Rebound: The American Poetry Book* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 191.

4 Graham, speaking to Katy Waldman in an interview for *The New Yorker*, articulates her ideas surrounding the tension between individual perception and communality in her poems: "In working to expand, or explore, the traditional lyric speaker, that individual subjectivity, I sometimes felt as if I had access to a collective subjectivity. . . One might once have called this "the chorus"—something the polis speaks. The chorus may at times be the ancestors, or the future, the as-yet unborn, watching us. I feel them pressing with incredible urgency. . . How plural are we? I'm not that persuaded by notions such as hive mind or the singularity. I'm interested in accountability. . . Stepping into her historical moment, any living poet's responsibility is to speak for the human to that brief moment." Graham here outlines her focus on the "accountability" of poetry to speak to the "brief moment" of the present it

occupies, refusing to claim a future from those who may inhabit it but undoubtedly aware of the "urgency" of these future generations whose existence relies on our actions in the present time. Katy Waldman, "Jorie Graham Takes the Long View," *The New Yorker* (January 1, 2023), newyorker.com/culture/the-new-yorker-interview/jorie-graham-takes-the-long-view.

5 See M. Jimmie Killingsworth, *Walt Whitman and the Earth: A Study in Ecopoetics* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004) and Christine Gerhardt, *A Place for Humility: Whitman, Dickinson, and the Natural World* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014).

6 Here, I follow David Borthwick, who notes that "[p]lace offers a solace and grounding for many ecopoets, a site for digging in, gaining insights from which to see a wider connection to a shared world. Others take a more global view, wrestling with wider perspectives and other kinds of connection . . . the knowledge we cannot ignore: that the local is the global, too" ("Introduction," in David Knowles and Sharon Blackie, eds. *Entanglements: New Ecopoetry* [Isle of Lewis: Two Ravens Press, 2012], xix).

7 Jorie Graham, "Introduction," in Jorie Graham, ed., *Earth Took of Earth* (New York: Ecco, 1996).

8 Graham, "Introduction."

9 See, for example, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, in which water pollution caused large health risks, particularly in children, and corroded water pipes, which led to high-risk levels of lead in the town's drinking supply. See also Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod, and Astrida Neimanis, "Introduction: Toward a Hydrological Turn?," in Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod, and Astrida Neimanis, eds., *Thinking with Water* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2013), who argue that "water has a particularly intimate relationship with political and social power" (6). Chen et al. point to "The construction of the Sardar Sarovar mega-dam in India's Narmada Valley," which "has displaced and disenfranchised approximately half a million people. . . In spite of discourses promising a fair distribution of benefits, the imposition of managerial control over the Narmada River had brought more water (and, therefore economic wealth) to already privileged constituencies, while radically dispossessing the mostly tribal populations of the region" (6).

10 Ed Folsom, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), xvii.

11 Jorie Graham, "from Walt Whitman's Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," *Materialism* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1993), 108.

12 David Baker, "The Push of Reading," *The Kenyon Review* 16, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 162; Jorie Graham, "In the Hotel," *Materialism* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1993), 57–58, ll. 64–65.

13 Baker, "The Push of Reading," 162.

14 Selby, 189, 191.

15 Edward Byrne, "Review: Jorie Graham *Never*," *Valparaiso Poetry Review* 2 (Spring/Summer 2024), valpo.edu/vpr/byrnereviewgraham.html.

16 Jorie Graham, "Prayer," in Jorie Graham, *Never* (New York: Ecco, 2002), 3, ll. 1–6. All further references to this poem are to this edition, and line numbers will be indicated after the text in brackets.

17 Gardner, "Jorie Graham, The Art of Poetry No. 85," 165.

18 Jorie Graham, "The Wake Off the Ferry," in *Runaway* (Manchester, UK: Carcanet, 2020), 81, l. 25. All further references to this poem are to this edition, and line numbers will be indicated after the text in brackets.

19 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; orig. pub. 1908), 2:71; available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.waltwhitmanarchive.org), Walt Whitman, *Prose Works 1892*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1963), *Specimen Days*, 1:16, 183.

20 Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," *Leaves of Grass* (David McKay: Philadelphia, PA, 1891–1892), 129, available on the *Whitman Archive*.

21 King James. Paul is referring here to the meeting of God and human, in the trans-corporeal shift of the soul into the afterlife, in which human understandings of God, now seen "darkly," will become clear.

22 Killingsworth suggests that "[r]ather than saying that the poem implies a transcendence of time, it might be better to call it a rejection of temporal limits or a denial of history. In this sense, the poem allows for the kind of spatially situated view of experience that modern environmentalists and nature mystics long for in their concepts of conservation and protection, a view of place elevated above the imposition of a transcendent concept of human progress that values development and human evolution over the sanctity of the land" (*Walt Whitman and the Earth*, 129).

23 Dawid Juraszek, "Clustering of cognitive biases in Walt Whitman's 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,'" *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 48 no. 4 (2023), 613.

24 Juraszek, 613.

25 Testament to this fact is shown in the building of Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, which made it impossible for the future Americans Whitman imagines to experience this same image with him from the ferry.

26 "For thou has possessed my reins: thou has covered me in my mother's womb. . . My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139: 13–16, King James Version).

27 These lines are reminiscent of Emily Dickinson's last line "I could not see to see—" in "I heard a fly buzz—when I died—," which narrates the point at which death overcomes the senses and the speaker's perception of the room is suddenly beyond her reach. Graham uses this failure of human perception to highlight the expansiveness of water. Emily Dickinson, #465, in Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), 224, l. 16.

28 Huck Gutman, "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," in J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds., *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopaedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), *Whitman Archive*.

29 Gerhardt, 126.

30 Jeffrey Yang argues that "Whitman viewed the sea as both cradle and grave," which is evident in the poem as the speaker presents himself as both a child of the "fierce old mother" and describes the process of his individual death in order to begin the lifecycle again. See Jeffrey Yang, "Introduction: Apologia for the Sea," in Jeffrey Yang, ed., *The Sea is a Continual Miracle: Sea Poems and Other Writings by Walt Whitman* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2017), xxxv.

31 Gerhardt, 128.

32 Gerhardt, 125.

33 Gerhardt, 129.

34 Gerhardt, 129.

35 Gerhardt, 130.

36 Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 4.

37 Éric Athenot and Olivier Brossard, eds., *Walt Whitman Hom(m)age 2005/1855* (New York: Turtle Point Press, 2005).

38 Jorie Graham, "Dusk Shore Prayer," in *Never*, 31, l. 1. All further references to this poem are to this edition.

39 Willard Spiegelman, "Review: Repetition and Singularity," *The Kenyon Review* 25 (2003), 168.

40 Byrne, "Review: Jorie Graham *Never*."

41 Jorie Graham, "Ebbtide," in *Never*, 36, ll. 1–3. All further references to this poem are to this edition, and line numbers will be indicated after the text in brackets.

42 Spiegelman, 165.

43 Gerhardt, 4.

44 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; orig. pub. 1906), 1:414–415.; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

WHITMAN'S FOURTH KNOWN SELF-REVIEW OF *LEAVES OF GRASS* (1855)

ZACHARY TURPIN

After *Leaves of Grass* first appeared in print in July 1855, its initial reviews ranged from glowing, to fair-mindedly ambivalent, to perplexed, to downright scathing.[1] But among the most jubilant responses to the book, three were anonymous reviews that Whitman himself had penned. The first, "Walt Whitman and His Poems," appeared in the *United States Review* for September 1855, gleefully announcing that here was "[a]n American bard at last! One of the roughs, large, proud, affectionate, eating, drinking, and breeding."[2] Such emphasis on equating the poet with his poetry recurs in Whitman's second self-review, "Walt Whitman, a Brooklyn Boy" (published in the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, September 29, 1855); in it, he anonymously insists that *Leaves* will seem "[v]ery devilish to some, and very divine to some" because it is "an attempt . . . of a live, naive, masculine, tenderly affectionate, rowdyish, contemplative, sensual, moral, susceptible and imperious person."[3] Finally, in "An English and an American Poet" (in New York's *American Phrenological Journal*, October 1855), Whitman itemizes—again anonymously—details about himself, once again emphasizing his working-class sensuousness, the many-sidedness of American life, and the Whitmanian equation of poetry with the self with the nation. Tellingly, Whitman once more includes long lists of poeticized qualities and objects and puts his poetry beyond, if not reaction, then reproach:

> Of the spirit of life in visible forms—of the spirit of the seed growing out of the ground—of the spirit of the resistless motion of the globe passing unsuspected but quick as lightning along its orbit—of them is the spirit of this man's poetry. Like them it eludes and mocks criticism, and appears unerringly in results. Things, facts, events, persons, days, ages, qualities, tumble pell-mell exhaustless and copious, with what appear to be the same disregard of parts and the same absence of special purpose, as in nature.[4]

Regardless of Whitman's hope that *Leaves* would "elude . . . criticism," it didn't—nor did his anonymous reviews. It did not take long, in fact, for critics to pick up on Whitman's authorship of these pieces. As early as September 8, 1855, a

writer for the New York *Albion*, a literary weekly, noted that the "main fault" of the review "Walt Whitman and His Poems" is "that it suggests the notion of a man reviewing his own work."[5] The next year, a *New York Daily Times* reviewer would do more than merely *suggest* the notion after being shocked to find that Whitman had bound all three self-reviews into a later printing of the first edition of *Leaves*:

> Then returning to the fore-part of the book, we found proof slips of certain review articles about the *Leaves of Grass*. One of these purported to be extracted from a periodical entitled the *United States Review*, the other was headed "From the *American Phrenological Journal*." . . . On subsequently comparing the critiques from the *United States Review* and the *Phrenological Journal* with the preface of the *Leaves of Grass*, we discovered unmistakable internal evidence that Mr. Walt Whitman, true to his character, of a Kosmos, was not content with writing a book, but was also determined to review it; so Mr. WALT. WHITMAN, had concocted both those criticisms of his own work, treating it we need not say how favorably.[6]

One might imagine that being outed so publicly would be devastating. After all, it is one thing to hint that Whitman is his own reviewer, as the British *Saturday Review* did earlier that year, nudgingly suggesting that the poet "favours us with hints—pretty broad hints—towards a favourable review of it."[7] It is another thing entirely to accuse, and with evidence. The *New York Daily Times*, in particular, fumes that "[i]t is a lie to write a review of one's own book, then extract it from the work in which it appeared and send it out to the world as an impartial editorial utterance. It is an act that the most degraded helot of literature might blush to commit. It is a dishonesty committed against one's own nature, and all the world."[8] Yet, devastated Whitman was not, not least because the *Times* reviewer immediately pivots to a rather glowing review of *Leaves* itself: "We confess we turn from Mr. WHITMAN as Critic, to Mr. WHITMAN as Poet, with considerable pleasure."[9] And as for Whitman, he would go on to unabashedly include two of his three self-reviews in an appendix to the second edition of *Leaves* (1856) called "Leaves-Droppings"; with the third edition of 1860, he went further still, collecting all three—as well as the *Daily Times* article unmasking them!—in *Leaves of Grass Imprints*, a specially produced, 60-page publicity booklet (which, perhaps unsurprisingly, he then reviewed anonymously).[10] Decades later, at the end of his life, the poet would even acknowledge his authorship and authorize their republication under his own name.[11]

Thus, this trio of pieces has long been accepted as the only "known self-reviews of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*."[12] Earnest and concerned, rhapsodic and uncareful, making almost no effort to hide their authorship, these three self-reviews stand today as some of Whitman's earliest and most unguarded

attempts to sum up his poetic project. Yet, unknown to scholars of Whitman, a fourth self-review has been hiding in newsprint since 1855. This short piece, published in August 1855, not only provides another early glimpse of Whitman's views of his own poetry and its need for public curation, but also, I will suggest, hints at previously unknown journalistic writing or editorial work Whitman may have produced during this period. This self-review, titled "A Poet Showing the New York Muscle," made its original appearance in the New York *Sunday Dispatch*, a literary weekly, for August 26, 1855, page 4. It is reprinted here for the first time since 1855,[13] and finally under the poet's own name:

A POET SHOWING THE NEW YORK MUSCLE.—The article on "*Walt Whitman and his Poems*," which we copy elsewhere from the September number of the *United States Review*, contains some suggestions to which the whole of the American press ought candidly and cordially to respond. As at present managed, the writing of poetry, not only by the popular poets, but by their numberless followers, is a shallow, dyspeptical, tinkling, sloppy, half-pretty, half-sickish sort of work; the same rhymes ten thousand times repeated—the same fancies and illustrations, most of them inconsistent with nature—the same old complaint of having the horrors bad, or being smitten with some charmer, of disgust with "hollow hearts," and with everything going wrong, the poet included. If Walt Whitman succeeds in his bold dash at all this effete stock of material, and substitutes the true model for a manly, friendly, wholesome, fortifying, muscular, American race of poets, worthy of the Thirty-One live United States, and the thirty-one millions of live men and women that inhabit them, he will do what shall make his name remembered in this land with a remembrance dear as nation ever gave to its most beloved writers. There is something in the very attempt of the poet, whether it succeeds or no, that deserves the warmest good will of the truly American literati.[14]

There are a number of remarkable things to note about this review. The most immediate is that its author is Whitman himself. Several characteristics make his hand plain. First, its stylistic and thematic quirks are just as obviously, even shamelessly, Whitmanian as the previously known trio of self-reviews. The long lists of adjectives are perhaps the clearest giveaway: "shallow, dyspeptical, tinkling, sloppy, half-pretty, [and] half-sickish" all being well known negatives in Whitman's poetic worldview; and "manly, friendly, wholesome, fortifying, muscular, [and] American" being common Whitmanian positives. As Heather Morton has said of Whitman's self-reviews, no one but Whitman himself "could describe him in that indescribable and distinctive style, in a prose so like his poetry."[15] But even setting aside the catalogs of adjectives, the reader may find a startling number of Whitmanian identifiers in so short a space: the jubilant and unqualified support for *Leaves* (which no early reviewer ever demonstrated, except Whitman himself); the screed-like use of the review "not only to advertise

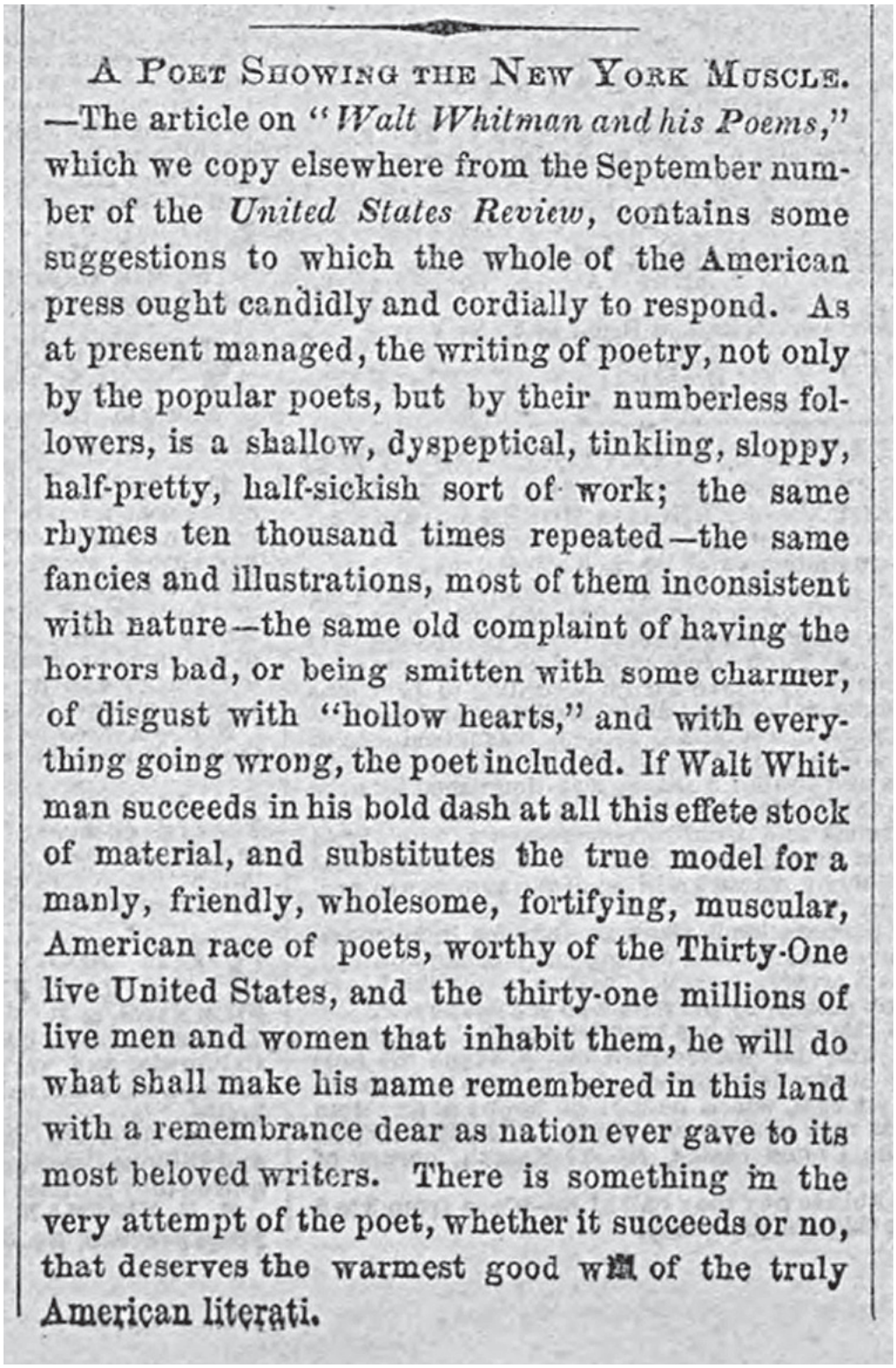
but also to enhance the effects of his poems and Preface";[16] the utter disdain for rhyme and traditional poetic ornament; the titular emphases on muscularity and New York City; the cross-reference to *another* of his anonymous reviews (in this case, "Walt Whitman and His Poems," which had just appeared in the *United States Review*); the capitalized enumeration of the then-current states and US population ("the Thirty-One live United States, and the thirty-one millions of live men and women that inhabit them"); the use of keywords of which Whitman was notably fond in his journalism and fictions, like "candidly" and "dyspeptical"; and the concluding suggestion, ever unsubtle, that Whitman and his poetry should be, *will* be, embraced by the nation at large.

Such puffery may seem naïve and unpracticed, but Whitman was no newcomer to the practice of self-reviewing. By 1855, the year Whitman became a professional poet, the habit was longstanding, with Whitman the editor/journalist having had more than a decade's practice promoting his latest literary productions in whatever newspaper he happened to be editing. M. Jimmie Killingsworth notes that "[a]s early as 1842, Whitman anonymously 'puffed' his novel *Franklin Evans* and quoted from his own short story 'Death in the Schoolroom (a Fact).'"[17] Such would be Whitman's lifelong habit, continuing not just through his self-reviews of the first edition of *Leaves* (and their reproduction in subsequent editions) but also throughout Whitman's career as a professional poet. A number of other self-reviews have been previously identified, including:

- [Whitman, Walt], "Leaves of Grass.— Brooklyn, NY [1856]," *Brooklyn Daily Times* (December 17, 1856), 1.[18]
- [Whitman, Walt, and Henry Clapp], "Walt. Whitman's New Poem," *Cincinnati Daily Commercial* (December 28, 1859), 2.
- [Whitman, Walt], "All about a Mocking-Bird," *New York Saturday Press* (January 7, 1860), 3.
- [Whitman, Walt, and Sylvester Baxter], "Leaves of Grass," *Sunday Herald* (October 30, 1881), 3.[19]
- [Whitman, Walt, and Sylvester Baxter], "Whitman's New Book," *Boston Sunday Herald* (October 15, 1882), 9.

Until now, however, the 1855 self-review in the New York *Sunday Dispatch* has been unknown.

It is unclear why it appeared in the *Sunday Dispatch* rather than any of the dozens of other papers in Manhattan or Brooklyn. What does the *Dispatch* have in common with the other venues wherein Whitman's self-reviews appeared? *The Brooklyn Daily Times*, say, or the *American Phrenological Journal*? The likely answer is that, as Karbiener has argued, the poet's self-reviews were invariably "published in journals with which Whitman had working affiliations."[20]



A Poet Showing the New York Muscle. —The article on "*Walt Whitman and his Poems*," which we copy elsewhere from the September number of the *United States Review*, contains some suggestions to which the whole of the American press ought candidly and cordially to respond. As at present managed, the writing of poetry, not only by the popular poets, but by their numberless followers, is a shallow, dyspeptical, tinkling, sloppy, half-pretty, half-sickish sort of work; the same rhymes ten thousand times repeated—the same fancies and illustrations, most of them inconsistent with nature—the same old complaint of having the horrors bad, or being smitten with some charmer, of disgust with "hollow hearts," and with everything going wrong, the poet included. If Walt Whitman succeeds in his bold dash at all this effete stock of material, and substitutes the true model for a manly, friendly, wholesome, fortifying, muscular, American race of poets, worthy of the Thirty-One live United States, and the thirty-one millions of live men and women that inhabit them, he will do what shall make his name remembered in this land with a remembrance dear as nation ever gave to its most beloved writers. There is something in the very attempt of the poet, whether it succeeds or no, that deserves the warmest good will of the truly American literati.

Figure 1: Whitman's self-review in the *Sunday Dispatch*, image courtesy of the Library of America's *Chronicling America* database.

Whitman's ties to the editors of the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, for example, were such that he would later edit it himself (ca. 1857-1859). And he was so close to the owners of the *American Phrenological Journal*, the Fowler brothers Lorenzo and Orson, that the latter two men would not only hire Whitman to write for their weekly journal *Life Illustrated* but also agree to anonymously publish the second edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1856), which they sold from their storefront Phrenological Cabinet in Manhattan's Clinton Hall. The *Sunday Dispatch* is no exception to this rule—Whitman has a well-known publishing connection to it, and, I suggest, an unknown one as well.

The known connection is that Whitman had already published in the *Sunday Dispatch* several times prior to the appearance of the newly discovered self-review. His first foray within the literary weekly (founded by editors Amor J. Williamson and William Burns in 1846) was a series of pseudonymous travel essays in late 1849 and early 1850, titled "Letters from a Travelling Bachelor" and signed "Paumanok." The next, only recently uncovered, was an unsigned, serialized novel published in spring 1852 in the *Sunday Dispatch*, under the title *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle: An Auto-Biography; in Which the Reader Will Find Some Familiar Characters*.[21] Added to these large, serial publications, several smaller ones have been noted in the pages of the *Dispatch* for 1852, as when scholar Wendy Katz located previously undocumented art criticism in its pages for April and May of that year, including a letter to the editor (signed "W.") published just one week after the conclusion of *Jack Engle*.[22] Similar letters may be found from the *Jack Engle* period: "Brooklyn and Her Botherations" (March 6, 1852) and "A Visit to the 'People's Bath and Wash House'—A New Era" (May 2, 1852), both signed "W. W."[23]

Beyond publishing him, the editors of the *Sunday Dispatch* also had a history of lauding Whitman's writings. They had reprinted several of his poetic efforts, such as "Sailing Down the Mississippi, at Midnight!" (June 2, 1850) and "Resurgemus" (August 4, 1850), both with attribution. And beyond these republications, there was the occasional editorial notice in the *Dispatch*, always laudatory, of Whitman's latest editorial endeavor. For instance, on March 19, 1848, they note his capable editorship of the New Orleans *Daily Crescent* ("Walter Whitman, Esq., formerly of this city [is] a gentleman of taste and talent, and a most capable editor"). Likewise, on November 9, 1851, they mention that "[t]he weekly newspaper, the *Salesman*, published in Brooklyn, by Walter Whitman, is to be enlarged, and its name changed to the *Brooklynite*. Our friends over the river need a good local weekly." All of these publications, reprints, and notices indicate that Whitman likely enjoyed a friendly relationship with the editors of the *Sunday Dispatch*.

What they do not fully reveal is that, during the period in which he published his novella *Jack Engle* in the newspaper (March-April 1852) and perhaps for a few months after, Whitman may also have been involved with the *Sunday Dispatch* in an editorial capacity, perhaps as a guest editor or temporary editor/writer of some sort. I do not assert this with certainty, since it rests primarily on the appearance of thematic and stylistic oddities that seem unusually Whitmanian: for example, editorials on liquor laws, temperance, waterways, and so on, as well as telltale keywords that Whitman often deploys in his unsigned journalism and fiction, "candidly" being a good example. *Jack Engle* notably begins with the word: "Candidly reader we are going to tell you a true story." The word "candidly" appears several times subsequently in the novella, as well as in reviews and editorials that seem suspiciously Whitmanian, such as a review of a new encyclopedia on hydropathy (June 6, 1852) in which the editor "candidly assert[s] that there is more or less truth in everything."[24] Similar uses of the word appear in other Whitmanian editorial writings of this period: An editorial in the *Daily Times* on Swedenborg (May 15, 1858), for instance, attributed to Whitman via manuscript evidence, begins its discussion after recalling when "a lady . . . candidly asked, 'And what is Swedenborgianism?'"

None of this is more than circumstantial evidence. Frankly, little is known of Whitman's activities at *all* in 1852, beyond his real estate development business with his father (based on extant receipts for house-building materials), his advertising debts (posted in Brooklyn newspapers), and the editorial and writerly efforts mentioned above. However, this situation is consonant with Whitman's later-life recollections of the period, in which he rarely revealed anything more about this era. In his episodic memoir *Specimen Days* (1882), for example, the following is his complete summation of the period (when, it should be noted, he must have been composing *Leaves of Grass*): "1852-'54—Occupied in house-building in Brooklyn. (For a little while of the first part of that time in printing a daily and weekly paper.)"[25] Therefore, Whitman's silence on the matter of any possible relationship with the *Sunday Dispatch* makes some sense, not only because he retroactively wreathed the origins of *Leaves* in mystery, but also because he does not seem to have wanted those origins muddied by the knowledge that he'd been writing novels or silently editing papers. Nevertheless, beyond the newly discovered self-review of 1855, there are circumstantial bits of evidence that hint at Whitman perhaps having an editorial hand in the *Sunday Dispatch* earlier, in 1852. Such would be his practice again a few years later, in 1858, when he likely edited the *New-York Atlas*, as discovered recently by Stefan Schöberlein, Stephanie Blalock, Kevin McMullen, and Jason Stacy.[26]

One more item of interest in the *Sunday Dispatch* that I will mention is a local history series from the period, which sometimes reads as if it was written by Whitman. Having published *Jack Engle* during this time, it would make sense that Whitman, had he been on the paper in an editorial role, might have generated additional content for the *Sunday Dispatch*—as for example, the local-history series "The City of New York: Street Aspects—Past and Present, with Occasional Glances Indoors," published beginning in late July 1852, which sounds very much like a similar, if later, serialized city history of Whitman's, the anonymous "Brooklyniana" (1861-62). It is a typically brisk history of the city, often cribbed from other sources, with curiously Whitmanian asides now and then (see Figure 3).

This series is not Whitmanian to the degree of the self-review unveiled above, but enough that it and the editorials mentioned above are suspicious and worth further investigation. I am wary, as is Karbiener, that "[i]t is tempting to see Whitman in the months of editorials dedicated to many of his favorite subjects"; she rightly withholds certainty where prior scholars had offered stylistic markers as "conclusive" proof.[27] After all, stylistic influence can run both ways in newspaper networks; it is worth noting the possibility that the *Sunday Dispatch*'s editorial style may have influenced Whitman's own style in 1852 rather than Whitman having edited the newspaper. More investigation is needed. I thus follow Karbiener's example here, and merely suggest that the existence of

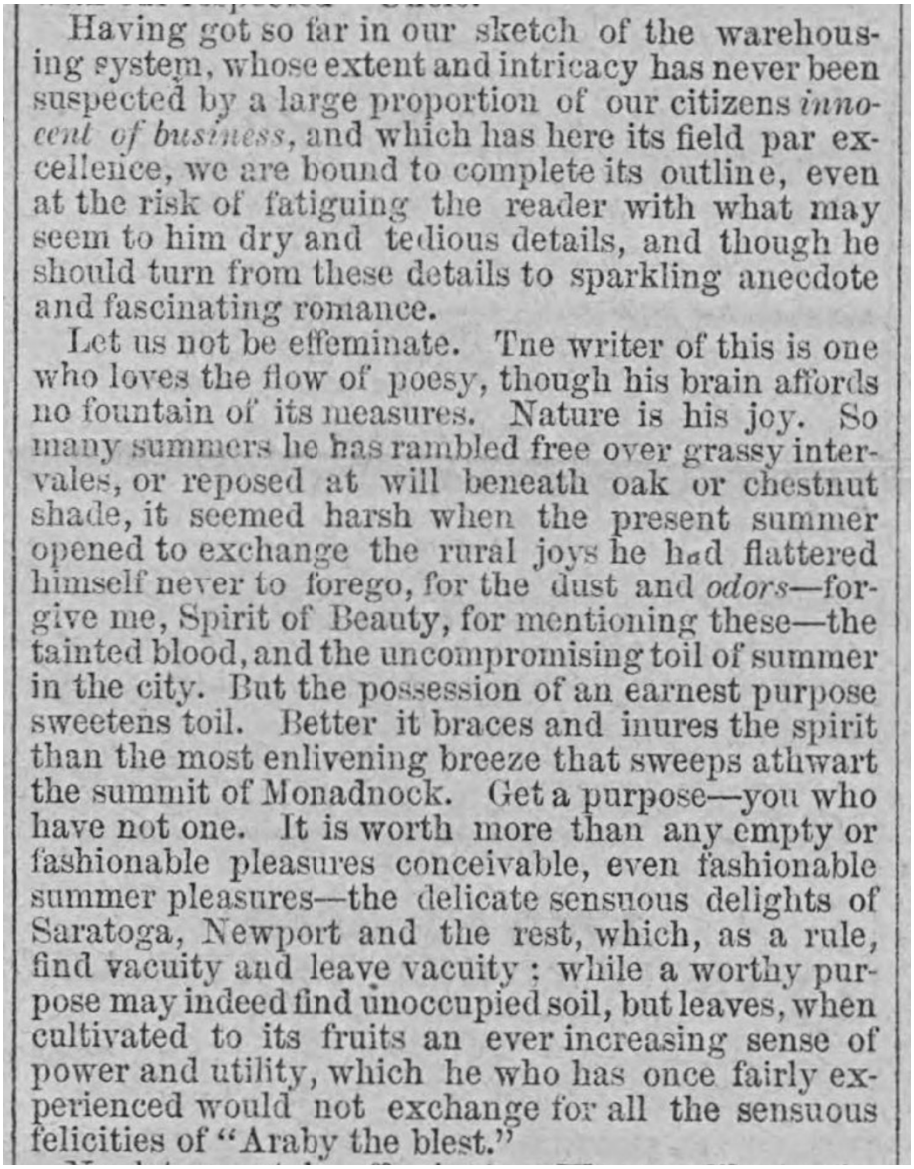

[Written for the Sunday Dispatch.]

THE CITY OF NEW YORK:

STREET ASPECTS—PAST AND PRESENT,

WITH OCCASIONAL GLANCES INDOORS.

Figure 2: Detail of the "City of New York" local history series, from August 1, 1852 issue.



Having got so far in our sketch of the warehousing system, whose extent and intricacy has never been suspected by a large proportion of our citizens *innocent of business*, and which has here its field par excellence, we are bound to complete its outline, even at the risk of fatiguing the reader with what may seem to him dry and tedious details, and though he should turn from these details to sparkling anecdote and fascinating romance.

Let us not be effeminate. The writer of this is one who loves the flow of poesy, though his brain affords no fountain of its measures. Nature is his joy. So many summers he has rambled free over grassy intervales, or reposed at will beneath oak or chestnut shade, it seemed harsh when the present summer opened to exchange the rural joys he had flattered himself never to forego, for the dust and *odors*—forgive me, Spirit of Beauty, for mentioning these—the tainted blood, and the uncompromising toil of summer in the city. But the possession of an earnest purpose sweetens toil. Better it braces and inures the spirit than the most enlivening breeze that sweeps athwart the summit of Monadnock. Get a purpose—you who have not one. It is worth more than any empty or fashionable pleasures conceivable, even fashionable summer pleasures—the delicate sensuous delights of Saratoga, Newport and the rest, which, as a rule, find vacuity and leave vacuity; while a worthy purpose may indeed find unoccupied soil, but leaves, when cultivated to its fruits an ever increasing sense of power and utility, which he who has once fairly experienced would not exchange for all the sensuous felicities of "Araby the blest."

Figure 3: Detail of the "City of New York" local history series, from the August 15, 1852 issue.

much more Whitmanian and Whitman-related content in the *Sunday Dispatch* during the *Jack Engle* period requires further examination for Whitman's possible hand in its editing in early 1852. This guest editorship would, at the very least, explain the appearance of *Jack Engle*, the editor having decided to publish his own fiction, and not for the first time.

What needs no additional proof, though, is the authorship of "A Poet Showing the New York Muscle." Likely inserted into the *Sunday Dispatch* on the strength of Whitman's prior publications in (and possible editing for) the paper, this newly uncovered bit of puffery reveals once again Whitman's telling and

incautious dedication to generating a public reception for his first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Whether one thinks of his self-reviews as largely ego-centric and persona-building (as Morton does), as "a nexus of texts that often overlap in style and content . . . so that poetry becomes promotion and promotion becomes poetry" (as James Franco does), or as a groundswell-building extension of his prose preface to the first edition of *Leaves* (as I do), the value of finding more of them is that, once again, we may see what Whitman *hoped* his readers would value in his work.[28] That he would do almost anything to promote such values, the latest self-review proves once more. And while it is certainly self-serving, "[t]here is something in the very attempt . . . whether it succeeds or no, that deserves the warmest good will" of readers today.

University of Idaho

Notes

1 Fair-minded examples include Charles A. Dana's review of *Leaves* (the very first ever to appear), which was published by the *New York Daily Tribune* on July 23, 1855; and Charles Eliot Norton's review in the September 1855 issue of *Putnam's Monthly*. Dana says of Whitman that while "[h]is language is too frequently reckless and indecent," his "*Leaves of Grass* are not destitute of peculiar poetic merits, which will awaken an interest in the lovers of literary curiosities." Norton adds, rather astutely, that "the poems themselves . . . may briefly be described as a compound of the New England transcendentalist and New York rowdy." The most caustic early review, on the other hand, is probably that written by poetry critic and anthologist Rufus Wilmot Griswold, who says of *Leaves* that "it is impossible to imagine how any man's fancy could have conceived such a mass of stupid filth, unless he were possessed of the soul of a sentimental donkey that had died of disappointed love." All three reviews may be viewed online at the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org), as well as in *Walt Whitman: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Kenneth M. Price (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which contains nearly all of the reviews discussed below.

2 [Walt Whitman,] "Walt Whitman and His Poems," *United States Review* (September 1855), 205; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

3 [Walt Whitman,] "Walt Whitman, a Brooklyn Boy," *Brooklyn Daily Times* (September 29, 1855), 2; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

4 [Walt Whitman,] "An English and an American Poet," *American Phrenological Journal* (October 1855), 90-91; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

5 The full notice is republished in Ed Folsom's "A Previous Unknown 1855 *Albion* Notice: Whitman Outed as His Own Reviewer," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 27 (Summer/Fall 2009), 78.

6 "Leaves of Grass," *New York Daily Times* (November 13, 1856), [2]; available on the *Whitman Archive*. This review is often attributed to William Swinton, a New York writer, translator, and philologist who would shortly become Whitman's friend and language tutor, but as demonstrated by Stefan Schöberlein, the review is unlikely to have been his. See Schöberlein's rationale in his chapter on "*Rambles Among Words*: Whitman in the Etymological Thicket," in *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman*, ed. Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 160-161.

7 "Leaves of Grass," *Saturday Review* (March 15, 1856), 393; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

8 "Leaves of Grass," *New York Daily Times*.

9 "Leaves of Grass," *New York Daily Times*.

10 The self-review of *Imprints* appeared in the *Brooklyn City News* for October 10, 1860; see Joel Myerson's facsimile reprint of *Leaves of Grass Imprints: American and European Criticisms on "Leaves of Grass"* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), vi and viiin. Also of interest, there is a small measure of crossover between Whitman's self-reviews and his poetry: namely, he cribs lines from "Walt Whitman, A Brooklyn Boy"—lines describing his own body, health, and daily occupations—for silent inclusion in "Broad-Axe Poem" (1856), later retitled "Song of the Broad-Axe." See the full comparison, plus detailed commentary, in Heather Morton's "Democracy, Self-Reviews and the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 81 (Spring 2005), 229-243.

11 See *In Re Walt Whitman*, ed. Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, and Thomas B. Harned (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1893), 13: "This article and the two that follow, written by Walt Whitman within the year following the issue of the first edition of his poems, express in deliberate and emphatic form the root emotions and convictions out of which the book expanded and developed. Whitman has remarked to us that in a period of misunderstanding and abuse their publication seemed imperative. He consented before his death that they should here appear, as they have never elsewhere appeared, under his own name."

12 Karen Karbiener, "Reconstructing Whitman's Desk at the *Brooklyn Daily Times*," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 33 (Summer 2015), 29.

13 Interestingly, this review has been reproduced online in the publicly maintained LGBTQIA+ Archives Wiki, but it is not attributed to Whitman or any other author (archive.lgbt/wiki/index).

14 Transcribed from images available at the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* online newspaper database, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

15 Morton, "Democracy, Self-Reviews and the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*," 237-238.

16 M. Jimmie Killingsworth, "Whitman's Anonymous Self-Reviews of the 1855 *Leaves*," *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Donald D. Cummings and J.R. LeMaster (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), available on the *Whitman Archive* as "Self-Reviews of the 1855 *Leaves*, Whitman's Anonymous."

17 Killingsworth, "Whitman's Anonymous Self-Reviews."

18 Joel Myerson argues that this review is Whitman's own work, though there is no broader scholarly consensus yet. For what it is worth, the review sounds quite Whitmanian, though the depth of its reserve about *Leaves* makes this writer question if it is so. Just the same, Myerson's suggestion appears in his introduction to *Leaves of Grass Imprints*, v.

19 Kenneth Price and Janel Cayer establish this review as partially authored by Whitman, in "'It might be us speaking instead of him!': Individuality, Collaboration, and the Networked Forces Contributing to 'Whitman,'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 33 (Fall 2015), 114-124.

20 Karbiener, "Reconstructing Whitman's Desk," 29.

21 See Zachary Turpin's "Introduction to Walt Whitman's *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 34 (Winter/Spring 2017), 225-261.

22 Wendy J. Katz, "Previously Undocumented Art Criticism by Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 32 (Spring 2015), 215-229.

23 Joseph Jay Rubin originally found this latter letter in the *Williamsburgh Times* for May 4, where it is identified "from the pen, we judge, of our friend Walter Whitman." Since, however, it appears two days earlier in the *Sunday Dispatch*, the *Times* version now appears to have been a reprint.

24 "The Hydropathic Encyclopedia [review]," *Sunday Dispatch* (June 4, 1852), 1; *Chronicling America* (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov).

25 Walt Whitman, *Complete Prose Works* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1892), 518; available on the *Whitman Archive*.

26 See Stefan Schöberlein, Stephanie Blalock, Kevin McMullen, and Jason Stacy, "Walt Whitman, Editor at the *New-York Atlas*," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 39 (2022), 189-204. During this probable editorial tenure, Whitman's men's wellness guide, *Manly Health and*

Training, appeared serialized in the pages of the *Atlas*.

27 Karbiener, "Reconstructing Whitman's Desk," 31.

28 The quote is sourced from James Franco, "'Song of Myself': Why Walt Whitman Was the Original Kanye West," *Vice Online* (December 13, 2013), vice.com.

Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography

Aaron Irwin Trio. (*after*). New York: Adhyâropa Records, 2024. [Musical recording of nine compositions, all by Aaron Irwin and each based on a particular poem, including the sixth track, based on Whitman's "When I Heard at the Close of the Day"; performed by Aaron Irwin (alto sax and bass clarinet), Mike Baggetta (guitar), and Jeff Hirshfield (drums).]

Aćamović, Bojana. "'That's Me, Not Whitman': Tin Ujević and Ivan V. Lalić as Whitman's Yugoslav Poet-Translators." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 586-605. [Examines twentieth-century translations of Whitman's poetry into Serbo-Croatian by Tin Ujević (1951) and Ivan V. Lalić (1974); contextualizes these publications in the biographies of their translators as well as the long political history of Yugoslavia and its shifting attitudes towards American literature; concludes by observing that both translators saw Whitman as "an inspiration, a poet who helped them fashion their own poetics by making them aware of their place amid global literary developments."]

Barnat, Dara. "Walt Whitman in Jewish American Poetry: Charles Reznikoff and Allen Ginsberg." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 627-644. [Explores the adoption of Whitmanian poetics by Jewish American poet Charles Reznikoff, and the influence of both on Allen Ginsberg; contextualizes this development in the works of the Jewish Objectivist Group and literary Modernism more broadly; argues that Reznikoff's embrace of Whitman serves as "a response to intellectually and culturally exclusionary elements in Poundian literary circles and in America more broadly."]

Bateman, Micah. "Whitman's Web: The Political Poet 2.0." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 198-222. [Examines the relevance of Whitman on the social media platform Twitter from 2006 to 2022; demonstrates that "political reception of Whitman on Anglophone social media is expansive but left-leaning"; suggests that "online publics" turn to Whitman in a quest for "political affinity bonds" based in "extra-partisan sentimental affirmation of political participation," drawing from and echoing Whitman's own sentimental politics.]

Bernardini, Caterina, and Kenneth M. Price. "Making the Cut: Whitman's Excisions and Their Consequences." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 47-66. [Interrogates the role that excisions, deletions, and revisions played in Whitman's authorial practice; traces how deletions "might be seen as still exercising subterranean influence on his concept of the whole" of *Leaves of Grass*; considers this "*alternative* corpus" of Whitman's to argue that, in his excision practice, the poet "ultimately interrogates textuality itself, and the fictions of its stability."]

Bertman, Stephen. "An Undetected Echo of Tennyson's 'Ulysses' in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 35-36. [Notes a previously undetected resonance between the concluding verses of Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" and Whitman's "The Untold Want," suggesting that Whitman's echo of Tennyson ("to seek and find") was his way of paying tribute to Tennyson, a poet Whitman admired.]

Blalock, Stephanie M.; Kevin McMullen, Stefan Schöberlein, and Jason Stacy. "'One of the Grand Works of the World': Walt Whitman's Advocacy for the Brooklyn Waterworks, 1856-59." *Technology and Culture* 65 (January 2024), 237-263. [Documents Whitman's "fierce, multiyear lobbying effort" for the Brooklyn Waterworks, which opened in 1859 and on which his brother Jeff worked, and "introduces a wealth of newly recovered Whitman writings on the issue," revealing ways "Whitman exemplifies the nineteenth-century press as an intermediary between expert engineers and popular readers"; proposes that Whitman's waterworks writings offer "an underappreciated case study of the confluences of technology, public health, and local journalism."]

Bradford, Adam. "'Move Slowly Through that Beautiful Place of Graves': Walt Whitman's Cemeteries." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 298-321. [Examines Whitman's engagement with nineteenth-century cemetery culture to "illuminate Whitman's belief in the grave's ability to foster a better understanding of the nature and value of human experience"; historicizes Whitman's churchyard musings in *Jack Engle* (1852) in the rural cemetery movement, focusing in particular on Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery; argues that Whitman's writings sought to maintain emotive bonds across death and that graveyards "mobilized the types of interpersonal connections such spaces could broker in order to suggest the transcendent value of such connections and inspire a sense of nationalist and local identity."]

Brehm, Brett. *Kaleidophonic Modernity: Transatlantic Sound, Technology, and Literature*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2023. [Chapter 4, "The Amazing Chorus: Whitman and the Sound of New York City" (136-154), examines how Whitman "absorbs and transforms the sounds of New York into song through his mode of rapturous listening" and how "his urban lyric depends upon this noisy turbulence."]

Bronson-Bartlett, Blake. "Whitman's Paginator: A Case Study in the Interpretation of Mutant Books." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 116-136. [Examines Whitman's manuscript collection variously titled "Words" or "Notebook for an Intended American Dictionary"; argues that it distinguishes itself from other manuscripts by being a "fabricated booklike thing" that is more productively analyzed as a "paginator," a "decentralized writing and reading process imploded into the evacuated space of what once was a printed book"; argues that Whitman's use of colored pages discloses traces of a shifting organizational system that allows for multiple access points and emerging narratives; concludes that "polychromatic instances record the non-linear temporalities afforded by codices that have their way with our random access to its paginated inscriptions and yield the multiple interpretations that playful readers derive from their books."]

Chitrarasu, Mahendra, and Lisa Hill. "The Influence of Classical Stoicism on Walt Whitman's Thought and Work." *History of European Ideas* 50 (September 2023), 249-265. [Explores the "transmission of Stoicism to America" and its early American reception, and argues that "Whitman's 'spinal ideas'—the ontological, moral, metaphysical and political threads of order in his thinking—are most consistently Stoic in origin"; examines Whitman's writings "in the context of the primary and secondary Stoic material with which he was familiar" and demonstrates how "a number of ideas at the heart of Whitman's literary vision—his pantheism, materialism, cosmopolitanism, reconciliation of evil and death, and conceptions of both providence and virtue—were strongly indebted to Stoic thought."]

Cohen, Nan. Review of Dara Barnat, *Walt Whitman and the Making of Jewish American Poetry*. *Jewish Book Council* (February 26, 2024), jewishbookcouncil.org.

Daly, Brian. "What Is the Symbolism in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*?" *The Collector* (January 31, 2024), thecollector.com. [Discusses the themes of *Leaves of Grass* and briefly examines how "Whitman work[s] around this theme of life" by focusing on "the contiguity of life" and "the magnitude of life and growth" and of being "freed from the confines of beginnings and ends."]

Dobbs-Allsopp, F. W. *Divine Style: Walt Whitman and the King James Bible*. Cambridge, U.K.: Open Book, 2024. [Offers a detailed examination of the King James Bible's importance in the development of Whitman's idiosyncratic poetic style, from his long lines to his use of parallelism, to his frequent use of parataxis; focuses on the years just preceding the first edition (1855) of *Leaves of Grass* on through the first three editions (1855, 1856, 1860), examining Whitman's prose in the 1850s (including *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*), as well as his notebooks and poetic manuscripts; chapters include "The Bible in Whitman: Quotation, Allusion, Echo" (63-110), "Whitman's Line: 'Found' in the KJB?" (111-222), "Parallelism: In the (Hebrew) Bible and in Whitman" (223-284), and "'The Divine Style': An American

Prose Style Poeticized" (285-336); with an "Afterword" (337-350) that discusses Whitman's altered use of the Bible after 1860, including a close look at his posthumously published "Death's Valley."]

Dunphy, Melissa. "Come My Tan-Faced Children." New York: 2019. [Song, for solo mezzo-soprano and piano; based on Whitman's "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" but with the text altered to delete the repeated "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" at the end of each stanza so as to carry a different meaning about race in the U.S.; written for mezzo-soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis and premiered by her at Lyric Fest's "Carol of Words—Walt Whitman in Song" in April 2019 at Lyric Fest, Academy of Vocal Arts, Philadelphia, PA.]

Dzama, Marcel. "No Less Than Everything Comes Together." 2021. [Artwork composed of four mosaic panels, depicting the constant flow of people through time in New York City; inspired by Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; installed in New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority Bedford Avenue L Station.]

Einboden, Jeffrey. "Indigenous Glyphs, Granite Inscriptions: From Mazinaw to the Middle East with Whitman's *Leaves*." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 507-526. [Examines Whitman's fascination with "hieroglyphic antiquity" expressed in his various manuscripts and, perhaps, in William Swinton's *Rambles Among Words*; argues that Whitman developed a fascination with "unnamed antiquity" in his readings of Carsten Niebuhr; observes that each edition of *Leaves* would "feature more specific appeals to Bronze Age legacies and the Middle [East]"; claims that Whitman's poetry shows a "concern for excavating the past, seeking to recover significance amid mineral deposits and mountainous inscriptions"; concludes with a eulogy to Iraqi Whitman translator Saadi Youssef.]

Folsom, Ed. Review of Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days*, ed. Max Cavitch. *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 47-51.

Folsom, Ed. "Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 55-66.

Folsom, Ed. "Whitman Left to His Own Devices." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 9-27. [Examines Whitman's "most intimate passages," with his claims of a sentient codex in mind, to determine how they work to evoke, to *enact*, the physical interaction between a living reader and a book that *responds* to that reader; builds upon the recent critical turn toward the material and the body that manifests itself in new studies on intimacy, materiality, and haptics in literature; analyzes Whitman's "erotics of reading," the way he imagined his material book itself to be a kind of haptics—an early version of a joystick or a smartphone, a technology of touch feedback, and examines Whitman's own use of haptic diction—*touch*, *tenderness*, *press*—and demonstrate how

he has carefully orchestrated a kind of metonymic haptics, creating a book that insists upon the reader's body materially touching the poet's body (of work)—"I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from"; probes how Whitman uses deictic words—*this*, *here*, *now*—to point to nothing specific and thus to the one place and moment that these words all magically *do* point: a moment of *now*, *here*, where *you* are reading *this* material book, a codex that Whitman has programmed as sentient—"Is this then a touch?"; looks at what is ultimately most "magical" in Whitman's poetry—the way his words, when cast in ink on the face of his pages, insist that they feel the pulse of the reader's wrist as the physical hand of the reader descends the actual physical printed page, a page that Whitman has programmed to respond to that touch; concludes by examining the way this magic is, in fact, very much an artifice, a device, a kind of artistic con-game.]

Gannon, Thomas C. "'Flights and Songs and Screams': Walt Whitman's Birds." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 400-420. [Examines Whitman's bird poems to interrogate his "birder-poet" persona; historicizes Whitman's avian poetry in the context of John Burroughs, Jacob P. Giraud, and other nineteenth-century ornithologists; critiques the scholarly binary of "naturalistic observation" versus "poetic imagination" to conclude that, in poets and ornithologists alike, there is "little or no escape from an othering anthropocentrism"; includes photographs of a northern mockingbird and a hermit thrush by Gannon.]

Gerhardt, Christine. "Whitman's Garden Ecology of Transformation." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 380-399. [Examines Whitman as a "poet of gardens"; argues that Whitman "makes [gardens] key to his idea of America's evolving natural democracy"; reads sections of "Song of Myself," "This Compost!," "Song of the Exposition," "Song of the Broad- Axe," and "Song of the Open Road" to observe that its author developed a "seemingly counterintuitive reimagination of gardens as dynamic realms of wildness, work, and mobility" and he "recasts them as ultimately utopian sites of ecological and social possibility"; concludes that Whitman's "unorthodox gardens" are "central elements of a poetic project that negotiates the contradictions between ecological perspectives and democratic ideals."]

Gray, Nicole. "Whitman's Prodigal 'Pictures.'" In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 69-93. [Reconstructs the evolving history of Whitman's "Pictures" manuscripts and their complicated relationship to *Leaves of Grass*; refutes scholarly efforts to dismiss the unpublished work as mere juvenilia to instead describe it as "an ongoing project, a metaphorical construct and a constellation of scenes that Whitman continued to revise and that informed almost every book of poetry he published"; conceptualizes "Pictures" as a "spinal idea," which generated a "constellation of manuscripts and published lines" over a span of decades.]

Grünzweig, Walter. "'Solidarity of the World': Walt Whitman as an International Poet." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 547-567. [Argues that a theory of international literature was at the core of *Leaves of Grass* from its inception; suggests Whitman gleaned the idea of a "Weltliteratur" from Goethe (in translation); observes that Whitman likely originated the notion of the United States as "nation of nations," which allows for *Leaves* to be both internationalist and "American"; explores international editions overseen by Whitman, which may suggest his "international theory"; includes a "Poetological Case Study" of retranslations of "To Foreign Lands" as a mode of exploring Whitman's internationalist valences.]

Harrigan, Joe. "Silverwell Street, Bolton, site could be turned into flats." *Bolton News* (June 9, 2024). [Reports on plans to turn an 1840s Bolton, England, building into "nine new self-contained flats"; reports that the building, abandoned for the past decade, was "once the home to JW Wallace, founder of the Eagle Street College dedicated to the works of 19th century American poet Walt Whitman," and thus "an important heritage building in a historic Bolton street."]

Hendler, Glenn. "Walt Whitman and the Police." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 322-340. [Examines Whitman's writings on policing, observing that "Whitman witnessed and wrote about … gradual changes and sudden crises in urban policing"; claims that Whitman was a "a theorist of governmentality and of state power"; historicizes Whitman's shifting attitudes on policing in New York's police reforms of 1845, the police riots of 1857, Whitman's friendship with officer George McWatters at Pfaff's, and the draft riots of 1863; argues that policing as a theme morphs from a marginal social force (in *Franklin Evans*), into a weariness of "police power" in the early 1850s (expressed in *Jack Engle*), and culminating in a cautious embrace of state power and even "repressive government apparatuses such as federal troops or more local police forces" during the time of the Civil War.]

Hoiby, Lee, composer. "Whitman Symphony." New York: Rock Valley Music, 2024. [Posthumously published choral symphony incorporating several of Hoiby's (1926-2011) earlier Whitman-inspired compositions, including "Measureless Love" and "For You, O Democracy"; premiered by Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and Buffalo Chamber Players, conducted by Adam Luebke at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Hamburg, NY, on June 14, 2025.]

Liu Shusen. "Whitman in China: Uncovering His Early Reception from 1870 to 1920." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 568-585. [Introduces what is likely Whitman's "first" appearance in print in Asia, a reprinting of "A Night on the Prairies" in the *Shanghae Evening Courier* of 1870; summarizes Whitman's "fascination with China" and poetic reaching out to Asia; analyzes second newly discovered

reprint from the *China Press* in 1920; discusses the publication context of these pieces in light of the British-Chinese newspaper culture of Shanghai's Bund neighborhood; argues that these early (1870-1930) English-language articles on Whitman published in China "allow for a fresh interpretation of Whitman's ties with east Asia," modifying the standard assertion "that Chinese reception of Whitman began with Chinese students studying in Japanese universities in the early twentieth century."]

Martínez Benedí, Pilar, and Ralph James Savarese. "Backhanded Compliments, or Rehabilitating Rehabilitation in Whitman." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 423-444. [Explores Whitman's thinking about "rehabilitation" in the context of his comments on "left-hand writing" of wounded veterans in *November Boughs*; examines Whitman's "nearly lifelong interest in handwriting"; reads sections of *Specimen Days* to explore Whitman's own "care web" and argues that the poet saw "nature as a kind of alternative rehab facility"; concludes that "Whitman's rehabilitative project" suggests that the poet embraced the "generative potential of disability" and framed "disability as aesthetics, not a threat to them."]

Matheis, Caitlin, and Micah Bateman. "Songs of Ourselves: The Circulations and Citations of Nineteenth-Century American Poetry on Twitter." *C19 Data Collective* (May 20, 2024), c19datacollective.com [DOI: 10.34770/fbhp-c751]. [Assembles "a quantitative dataset that charts the number of citations per day by which Twitter (now X) users may refer to nineteenth-century American poets" to aid in investigations of "how social media users engage literature publicly"; offers data for 115 poets, including Whitman, whose "O Captain! My Captain!"—for one example—remains "a viral poem circulated to honor organizational leadership," especially during "the transition of power from Barack Obama to Trump."]

McLaughlin, Don James. "An Idle Criticism: Whitman as Disability Theorist in 'How I Get Around at 60, and Take Notes.'" In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 445-463. [Examines Whitman's series "How I Get Around at 60, and Take Notes"; traces the conceptual history of the series in Whitman's plans for a book titled Idle Days and Nights of a Half- Paralytic; suggests that "variations on *Idle Days and Nights of a Half- Paralytic* came closest to Whitman's sustained vision" for *Specimen Days* and that he "may have continued to prefer the earlier idea"; concludes that Whitman developed an "idle criticism" in his writings on disability: "a method that lingers, stalls, deviates, shifts into lulls, and refuses to hurry toward disclosing what its author appreciates or why"; proposes that these sections sketch out "a position and method from which something like a disability criticism could naturally emerge."]

McMullen, Kevin. "Taking a Page Out of Whitman's Scrapbook: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Poet's Composition Process." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University

Press, 2024), 94-115. [Details the process of digitally reassembling Whitman's "Cultural Geography Scrapbook" for the *Walt Whitman Archive*; traces its original assembly by Whitman in the 1850s, its unbinding and reselling by manuscript dealers following the poet's death, and its reconstruction and publication in 2020; provides examples of the many "small but textually significant ways in which Whitman's cultural geography scrapbook played a role in his writing" and analyzes how it assisted the poet in "tying self-identification to physical geography"; argues that the scrapbook served not merely as a factual primer but that it "forced the poet to consider the beauty and dignity of that which supersedes time, geographic features, borders, languages, and cultural traits, namely, the universality and inevitability of individual human existence."]

Meehan, Sean Ross, and John Durham Peters. "'What Is It, Then, Between Us?': Whitman's Elemental Media." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 343-359. [Examines Whitman as theorist of media who "anticipates and enriches our thinking about media even if he hardly could have imagined our informational ecology"; focuses on Whitman's elemental sense of mediality as "conveyances, appearances, specimens"; provides extensive readings of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Eidólons," and sections of *Specimen Days* to argue that Whitman's writings are engaged in a "constantly and obsessively varying dialectic of immediacy and mediation"; suggests that Whitman developed an "ethic of living amid media" which "encourages us to find peace" in being always already embedded in the "*realia* of [the] world."]

Miller, Matt. "Walt Whitman: Poet of Prizefighters." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 258-278. [Builds on Miller's 2016 piece "Boxing History: Walt Whitman, Poet of Prizefighters" on BadLeftHook.com to trace "how Whitman developed as a person and writer in conjunction with the growth of boxing as the country's most widely discussed sport of the mid-nineteenth century"; summarizes and historicizes Whitman's writings on "pugilism" from his early reporting in the New York *Aurora* to poems in *Leaves of Grass* (such as "A Song of Joys"); focuses in particular on Whitman's engagement with boxers John C. Heenan, John Morrissey, and John L. Sullivan; argues that "from around 1857 to 1860, Whitman became in the eyes of some 'the poet of prizefighters,' but his interest in pugilism soon waned," ceasing fully with the outbreak of the Civil War; concludes that Whitman's writings on pugilism are "awaiting rediscovery and the chance to show that, as with so many other things, Whitman wrote about it first."]

Mullins, Maire. "'Building the House that Serves Him Longer': A History of Walt Whitman's Tomb." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 1-34. [Traces in detail "the story of Whitman's tomb," from initial ideas through the planning and construction of what Whitman called his "burial house" in Harleigh Cemetery in Camden, New Jersey; offers newly discovered materials that provide a clearer understanding of the complex story.]

Nation, Zaxxson. "Lilacs & Letters." 2024. [One-act play about Whitman at Armory Square Hospital in Washington, D.C., on an early morning in 1865, as he sits with wounded soldiers, reflects on national grief, and finishes his eulogies to President Lincoln; premiered January 24, 2024, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois; with performances scheduled through March 2024; featuring Zaxxson Nation as Whitman.]

Neely, Michelle. *Against Sustainability: Reading Nineteenth-Century America in the Age of Climate Crisis*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2020. [Chapter 1, "Recycling Fantasies: Whitman, Clifton, and the Dream of Compost" (21-50), examines how "Whitman's interest in the recycling of matter was stoked by the work of Justus Liebig" and how "critics who have treated Whitman's writing about compost have almost uniformly tied it to progressive democratic and environmental attitudes"; goes on to "juxtapose Whitman's interest in compost with his poetry's obsession with appetite, exploring the connections between consumption and material recycling and the relationship of both of these to Whitman's democratic and poetic projects"; argues that, "in Whitman's hands, the cyclical quality of compost yields a fantasy of perfect material recycling, of an earth that can convert everything discarded, dead, or used up back into something alive, clean, and usable again," making "appetite . . . the twin of compost in Whitman's poetic environment"; concludes by contrasting "Whitman's approach to biotic community, compost, and the celebration of the self" to "the twentieth-century African American poet Lucille Clifton's treatment of these same topics," finding that "Clifton's rich eco-poetry articulates the difficulties and dangers of Whitman's (and often, our own) uncritical embrace of consumption and compost."]

Parker, Ray Allen. "Leaves of Grass: Walt Whitman." 2021. [Portrait of Walt Whitman, oil on canvas, based on a Mathew Brady Civil War-era photograph of the poet; exhibited in "Panoply: 26 Painted Lives," all works by Parker, at The Bradbury Art Museum at Arkansas State University, March-May 2023; the Whitman portrait is one of a series of seventeen portraits collectively called "Lit," permanently housed at The Bradbury Art Museum.]

Peterson, Christopher. *Monkey Trouble: The Scandal of Posthumanism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. [Chapter 4, "Listing Toward Cosmocracy: The Limits of Hospitality" (93-121), deals with Whitman's "nonsubtractive, wholly receptive bearing of and toward the world," a "solarity" that is "remarkably similar to the plane of immanence championed by object-oriented ontology," "eschew[ing] the hierarchical, fractional distribution of subjective intentionality"; problematizes this "solarity" by examining how there can be both "a capacious and a rapacious solarity" that are not easily distinguishable from each other; engages political theorist Jane Bennett's notions of Whitman's "influx and efflux" and examines how Whitman's sense that "humans do not plumb the depths of objects implies a nonappropriative relation to them, yet their silent ministration to humans nevertheless appears more passive than active"; engages Derrida and others in probing just what the limits of democracy are,

since "to speak of political measures and decisions as more or less democratic implies an all-inclusive ideal against which this or that other can be added or subtracted," leading to the problem of "the impossible advent of full inclusivity" with the resulting realization that "the 'perfect' democracy would be the worst democracy: a democracy that negates itself by insulating itself"; concludes by examining "Whitman's desire to broaden democracy beyond the human," an "impulse" that can only be described as "cosmocratic."]

Pöhlmann, Sascha. "Urbanity, Biopolitics, and Race in Whitman's 'Manly Health and Training.'" In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 243-257. [Considers "Manly Health and Training" (1858) as "one of Whitman's major urban prose texts" that addresses social anxieties over unattached "young white men" in urban metropolises; argues that "Manly Health" is a "blend of self-help manual and biopolitical manifesto" which "presents the city as both the problem and its solution"; describes "Manly Health" as a conflicted eugenicist text, torn between advocating a need for "governmental biopolitical" intervention while also celebrating an "individualist training regime."]

Pollak, Vivian R. "Walt Whitman and Muriel Rukeyser Among the Jews." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 606-626. [Interrogates Whitman's claim to be an "honorary Jew" by analyzing how Whitman thought about Jews and Judaism, from his early journalistic work to his late-life discussions with Horace Traubel; specifically focuses on Whitman's use of Jewish characters in *Jack Engle*; then shifts to exploring how Muriel Rukeyser, a "queer Jewish woman," appropriated Whitman, in turn, to negotiate markers of her own conflicted identity.]

Price, Kenneth M. "Bohemian Bureaucrat: Making Sense of Walt Whitman's Scribal Documents." *Textual Cultures* 11 (2017), 1-16. [Investigates the significance of "the discovery of 3,000 previously unidentified documents inscribed by the hand of Walt Whitman" that he copied as a clerk in the Attorney General's office, and that "treat everything from routine office requests to disputes over the railroads claiming western lands; conflicts with Native Americans' plural marriage in the Utah territory; controversies over the disenfranchisement of people who had taken up arms against the federal government; the rise of the Ku Klux Klan; black voting rights; international incidents, and much else"; raises questions about how such scribal documents "can be illuminating about our work as textual scholars" by "prompt[ing] questions about what we include and why" and about just how clear "the distinctions between authorial and non-authorial" actually are, especially given Whitman's own comments about how he did not just copy these documents but actually composed some of them for the officials who later reviewed and signed them; proposes that literary scholars need to move beyond a "preoccupation with a single-author model" to embrace the value of surprising and sometimes hidden cases of collaborative writing; demonstrates

how Whitman's own manuscripts, many written on Attorney General's Office letterhead, challenge what we traditionally think of as "boundaries between literary and scribal documents"; examines "a possible connection between his government work and crises he endured over same-sex love" in his Washington DC years; concludes by encouraging scholars to be "more alive to the resonances . . . between things like books of poetry and things like government documents."]

Price, Kenneth M., and Stefan Schöberlein, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2024. [Contains thirty-one original essays, each listed separately in this bibliography; essays arranged under nine section titles: "Reading and Writing Whitman"; "Notebooks, Scrapbooks, and Mutant Books"; "Whitman and Data, Whitman as Data"; "Fitness, and Struggle, and the Nation"; "Whitman, Chronicler of City Life"; "Whitman's Natures"; "Embodied Variants"; "Inscribing Identity"; "Whitman Networks, Global and National"; with an introduction ("Introduction: Whitman and His Handbooks" [1-8]) by Price and Schöberlein.]

Riley, Peter. "'Arm, Fortify, Harden, Make Lithe, Himself': 'Manly Health,' German Turners, and Whitman's Poetics of Training." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 225-242. [Reads Whitman's 1858 "Manly Health and Training" in the context of the "revolutionary-nationalist German Turnverein movement"; examines contemporaneous reporting in the *Brooklyn Daily Times* on local Turners, possibly authored by Whitman; suggests that "Manly Health" shows how "as the possibility (and perhaps inevitability) of war presented itself, Whitman's fascination with the male body mutated into a call for its physical preparedness"; closes with an extended reading of "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" as Whitman "taking instruction from, and submitting to, the demands (and rhythmic patterning and training) of his own legacy."]

Robbins, Timothy. "Walt Whitman, Daniel Garrison Brinton, and the Poetics of an 'American' Ethnology." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 487-506. [Examines the relationship between Whitman and ethnographer Daniel Garrison Brinton in the context of the development of the field of anthropology into a scientific discipline; describes Brinton as a "bridge figure" in the history of anthropology and highlights his fascination with Whitman; compares Whitman's and Brinton's evolutionary beliefs; reads Whitman's "An Indian Bureau Reminiscence" as ethnography, concluding that "it was typical for nineteenth-century authors to transfigure the laws of natural development into social doctrines, and Whitman was no different," thereby rendering him an important figure in the history of anthropology in the United States.]

Rumeau, Delphine. *Comrade Whitman: From Russian to Internationalist Icon*. Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2024. [Investigates Russian and Soviet uses of Whitman, focusing on ways Russian and Soviet writers contributed to his transformation into a revolutionary communist icon not only in Russia but in Latin America and the

U.S., and tracks circuitous paths of influence, translations, and interpretations between the Soviet Union, Europe, and the Americas, with chapters on "Whitman as a *primitive* (1880s-1910s)," "The Futurist poet (1910s-1920s)," "Whitman the prophet (1880s-1930s)," "From democrat to socialist (1880s-1919)," "The extraordinary adventures of Walt Whitman in the land of the Bolsheviks (1918-1936), "Between the wars: a transatlantic fellow traveler (1919-1938)," "Pioneers and Pionery: political transfers (1886-1944), "Anti-fascist Whitman (1936-1945)," "'Salut au Monde!' across the Iron Curtain (1946-1956)," and "Back from the USSR (1955-1980s)."]

Scheyer, Lauri, and Zanyar Kareem Abdul. "The Function of Poetry in the Modern World: A Case Study of Walt Whitman and Audre Lorde's Poems." *Language Literacy* 6 (December 2022), 245-250. [Compares Whitman and Audre Lorde as American poets who "differ in historical periods, sex, race, and other factors, yet both uphold the conventional functions of lyric poetry and prove its continuing relevance to a global readership," demonstrating how "poetry could represent honesty, realism, democracy and even power."]

Schöberlein, Stefan. Review of Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass / Grashalme: Zweisprachige Fassung der Erstausgabe von 1855*, trans. Walter Grünzweig and a team of translators at TU Dortmund University. *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 52-54.

Schöberlein, Stefan. "*Rambles Among Words*: Whitman in the Etymological Thicket." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 157-175. [Reexamines evidence for Whitman's co-authorship of William Swinton's *Rambles Among Words* (1859); summarizes the close friendship of the two, suggesting "the young Scotsman appears to have been an understudied romantic attachment of Whitman in the late 1850s and 1860s"; provides a detailed comparison table of overlap between Whitman's writings on language and *Rambles*; examines the near-complete manuscript of *Rambles* in Swinton's hand; details a "rolling stylometry" computational assessment that found little to no evidence of Whitman contributing text to *Rambles*; concludes that "Whitman was clearly *thinking through the book* as parts of it were still being generated [by Swinton] but he likely did not compose significant parts of it"; suggests that "*Rambles Among Words* … does not appear to be a 'secret' book by Whitman; it should likely never have been added to Whitman's *Collected Writings*."]

Stacy, Jason. "Walt Whitman's Print Personas: 1840-1865." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 281-297. [Expands on and updates Stacy's *Walt Whitman's Multitudes* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) to argue that Whitman's journalistic "foreground can fruitfully be understood as an experiment in print persona-making"; outlines and examines three such personas: the "Schoolmaster" in "Sun-Down Papers" (1840-1841), the "Journalist and Editor" during the height of his journalistic output (1842-1860), and that of "Missionary" in his Civil War reporting (1860-1865); argues that while

Whitman's journalistic writings "do not necessarily offer an aesthetic foregrounding in Emerson's terms, they present a compelling dramatic background for Whitman's poetry."]

Stewart, Ashlyn, and Matt Cohen. "Walt Whitman's Archives." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 28-46. [Examines how Whitman conceptualized the notion of a literary archive and asks "to what degree did an anticipatory preservation shape his work?"; traces the poet's attention to "the posthumous state of famous writers" of his day and his conversations on preservation with Horace Traubel; closes with a reflection on the "spiritual and … historical dimensions of the question of Whitman's archives" and how it figures into "preserving Whitman today."]

Thomas, M. Wynn. "The Pioneer: D. H. Lawrence's Whitman." In M. Wynn Thomas, *Transatlantic Vistas: On the Literatures of Wales and the United States*, ed. Kirsti Bohata and Daniel G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2024), 110-130. [Examines in detail how D. H. Lawrence "turned his obsession with [Whitman] into a poetry distinguished not only by its derivativeness but by its astonishing originality—an originality mysteriously . . . enabled, rather than disabled as was the case with lesser writers, by his great predecessor"; analyzes Lawrence's 1917 book of poetry, *Look! We Have Come Through!*, in relation to his much-revised essay on Whitman in *Studies in Classic American Poetry* (1923); analyzes Lawrence's "five-year obsession" with Whitman's work from 1913 to 1919, confirming the ways that "Whitman's aesthetics of spontaneity had excited Lawrence into new creative expression"; carefully reads *Look! We Have Come Through!* to "consider in particular the ways in which it is informed by a dialogue with Whitman, a dialogue which centrally involves a critique of the American's understanding of spontaneity"; offers a study of Whitman's use of (and avoidance of) the word "spontaneous," and looks at Whitman's "Spontaneous Me" (1860 version) as indicating his "enthusiastic commitment to spontaneity," which he equated with "the personal freedom he believed to be the preserve of truly democratic societies"; examines Whitman's and Lawrence's "different use of participial forms" as revelatory of their "fundamental difference in ideology" and their "related notions of spontaneity"; explains how spontaneity for Lawrence, unlike for Whitman, is a "dialectic," an "obsessively insistent belief that all human relationships are an alloy of love and hate, of identity and difference"; concludes by detailing how Lawrence, in his final version of his essay on Whitman, "sets about correcting Whitman, substituting his own concept of 'identity' for the specious one he has attributed to the American and proposing 'the first great purpose of Democracy: that each man shall be spontaneously himself—each man himself, each woman herself, without any question or inequality entering in at all.'"]

Thomas, M. Wynn. *Transatlantic Vistas: On the Literatures of Wales and the United States*. Ed. Kirsti Bohata and Daniel G. Williams. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2024. [Collection of essays, interviews, and reviews by Thomas; Section 1, "On Walt

Whitman" (19-130), contains five essays, four previously published and here revised ("'Till I hit upon a name': Calamus and the Language of Love" [20-46], originally in *Huntington Library Quarterly* [December 2010]; "Whitman and the Labouring Classes" [47-66], originally "Labor and Laborers" in Donald D. Kummings, ed., *A Companion to Walt Whitman* [2006]; "States United and United States: Whitman's National Vision in 1855" [20-86], originally "United States and States United: Whitman's National Vision in 1855" in Susan Belasco, Ed Folsom, and Kenneth M. Price, eds., *Leaves of Grass: The Sesquicentennial Essays* [2007]; and "Whitman, Tennyson, and the Poetry of Old Age" [87-109], originally in Stephen Burt and Nick Halpern, eds., *Something Understood: Essays and Poetry for Helen Vendler* [2009], with added material drawn from "A Study of Whitman's Late Poetry," *Walt Whitman Review* [March 1981]); and one new essay, "The Pioneer: D. H. Lawrence's Whitman" [110-130], listed separately in this bibliography.]

Trantanella, Charles. *Preacher Teacher Hater Fraud: The Life of Lilla Mabel Hodgkins, a.k.a. Rev. Mabel MacCoy Irwin*. Westford, MA: Progressive Empire Press, 2024. [Biography of the Unitarian minister and eugenicist who self-published a 1905 book on Whitman, *Whitman: The Poet-Liberator of Woman*; Chapter 4, "Rev. Mabel MacCoy Irwin Moore, 1899-1911" (91-116), recounts her discovery of Whitman's work and her writing of *Poet-Liberator* and offers an analysis of the book; Chapter 6, "The Slow Slide Out, March 1916-1928" (145-174), discusses Irwin's lectures on Whitman and her participation in his centenary birthday celebration, and also reprints her ode to Whitman, as well as examines a letter she wrote to William Sloane Kennedy regarding her unrealized future plans for writing about Whitman and his work; the epilogue assesses Irwin's legacy as a Whitman scholar.]

Tuggle, Lindsay. "The 'Dark Bequest': Inheriting Whitman's Unworldly Specimens." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 464-484. [Reflects on Tuggle's use of Whitman's "unworldly specimens" in her own writings; reads "A Twilight Song" to suggest a "dark bequest" casts a shadow from Whitman's Civil War writings over Tuggle's poetry, most notably her *Calenture* (2018) and her forthcoming *The Autopsy Elegies*; observes that "Whitman articulates the dissonance between viewing human remains as worthy of mourning on the one hand, yet subject to medical scrutiny on the other."]

Turpin, Zachary. "Whitman's Secret Publications." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 139-156. [Examines the history of Whitman rediscoveries, here dubbed "secret publications," and traces the commonalities among them, namely their anonymous or pseudonymous appearance, their play with "un-Whitmanian" genres, and the importance of bibliographic evidence in their rediscovery; theorizes that Whitman's covert publishing was a way to "test out the viability of ideas and expressions that … diverged not only from Whitman's accustomed genres, but from his early and rela-

tively traditional philosophies of life, language, and literature"; closes by outlining pathways and methods for future Whitman rediscoveries.]

Turpin, Zachary. Review of Dara Barnat, *Walt Whitman and the Making of Jewish American Poetry*. *American Literary Realism* 56 (Spring 2024), 281-282.

Tye, Nathan. "Fellowship Dinners and The Armory Show: Two Unrecorded Robert Henri Letters to Horace Traubel Regarding Walt Whitman." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 41 (Summer/Fall 2023), 37-46. [Reprints and analyzes two previously unrecorded letters (1909, 1913) from artist Robert Henri (1865-1929) to Horace Traubel revealing Henri's relationship with both Whitman and with Traubel's Whitman Fellowship, as well as revealing Whitman's influence on Henri's own teaching, where he often lectured on Whitman.]

Vendler, Helen. "The Red Business: PTSD and The Poet." *Liberties* 4 (Spring 2024), libertiesjournal.com. [Considers the "troubling questions" Whitman faced "everywhere in the composition of his war poetry," including "moral questions" and "formal questions"; describes Whitman's remarkable empathetic poetic skills, the way "he could 'effuse' himself into almost anyone"; turns to a detailed reading of "The Artillery Man's Vision" (including drafts of the poem), where "Whitman invents . . . the first American poem of PTSD," a poem that "through its bizarre structures and disorganized suites of perceptions . . . becomes a surreal portrait of the grim alterations of a disturbed mind"; emphasizes how the poem is "not a war poem but emphatically a postwar poem" that seeks "to diagnose, silently, by the apparently incoherent reportage of the postwar mentality of a flailing soldier, a disordered mind helpless against the midnight assaults of its alternately frightful and (secretly) zestful vision."]

Vernon, Zackary. *Our Bodies Electric*. Raleigh, NC: Fitzroy Books, 2024. [Novel about a Southern teenager coming of age and struggling to understand his gender and sexuality in a very conservative social and familial environment; gains understanding of his identity when an elderly neighbor gives him a copy of Whitman's "Song of Myself."]

Wagner-Martin, Linda. *Walt Whitman: A Literary Life*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. [Part of the Palgrave Macmillan "Literary Lives" book series; offers a succinct summary of Whitman's life and an overview and analysis of his literary production.]

Waples, Emily. "Whitman's Atmospheres." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 360-379. [Examines Whitman's embrace of "open air" health concepts; observes that Whitman "posits the atmospheres of breathing and reading as collectively constituted spaces, sites of communication and exchange that may be either contaminating or curative"; historicizes Whitman's journalism and poetry in the context of "Air Cure" theories; notes that Whitman equates good air "not only with health,

but with *virtue*," claiming he developed a "poetics of ventilation"; examines works like "Manly Health and Training," "This Compost!," "Ashes of Soldiers," *Memoranda During the War*, and *Specimen Days* to conclude that "Whitman often appeals to 'atmosphere' to theorize forms of communication and influence."]

Whitley, Edward. "Whitman and Poe's Literary Networks." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 176-197. [Employs social network analysis to reveal "a meaningful relationship between Whitman and Poe that does not depend solely on aesthetic influence to become legible"; demonstrates and exemplifies its underlying computational method; focuses on a social network of the 1850s and 1860s bohemian scene in New York City to trace the collaborations, friendships, antagonisms, and acquaintanceships through which Poe and Whitman maneuvered; concludes that instead of direct lineages of influence, "literary history is better defined as the interconnected webs of individuals and institutions that publish, promote, and even prohibit authors from accessing a readership."]

Whitman, Walt. *Benliğimin Şarkısı* [*Song of Myself*]. Translated by Aytek Sever. Ankara, Turkey: Dogu Bati, 2024. [Turkish version of *Song of Myself: with a Complete Commentary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016); contains complete Turkish translation, by Aytek Sever, of the final (1881) version of "Song of Myself" (23-120), along with a section-by-section commentary on the poem by Ed Folsom and Christopher Merrill (123-282), translated into Turkish by Sever; introduction by Ed Folsom, "*Benliğimin Şarkısı'ni Okumak*" ["Reading *Song of Myself*"] (9-17), translated into Turkish by Sever; translator's note (in Turkish) by Sever (19-21).]

Whitman, Walt. *Selected Poetry and Prose*. Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2024. [A *Broadview Anthology of American Literature* edition, with selections of Whitman's poetry and prose drawn from that anthology; contributing editors for this particular edition are Nora Ruddock and Helena Snopek; contains an unsigned introduction (9-14).]

Whitman, Walt. *Liet fan Mysels* [*Song of Myself*]. Translated by Lubbert Jan de Vries. Loenen aan de Vecht, Utrecht, Netherlands: Hispel, 2024. [Frisian translation of the complete final (1881) version of "Song of Myself" (8-61); with an introduction, in Frisian, by Ed Folsom (4-7); also contains a Frisian translation by Lubbert Jan de Vries of Whitman's preface to the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* (62-86).]

Wilkenfeld, Jacob. "'O Baffled, Balked': Interrogating the Poetics of Absorption in Whitman's 1860 'Leaves of Grass' Cluster." In Kenneth M. Price and Stefan Schöberlein, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Walt Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 527-544. [Analyzes the grouping of poems titled "Leaves of Grass" in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*; contends that the core of Whitman's poetics is a theory of "absorption," namely "the ideal of allowing otherness to speak through his poetry"; argues

that the "Leaves of Grass" cluster serves as a "testing ground" for this notion and reflects "a moment of intense self-contestation, a kind of 'make or break' moment in Whitman's artistic development."]

Wolosky, Shira. *The Bible in American Poetic Culture: Community, Conflict, War*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. [Examines the Bible as "an ongoing force in American poetry," "central to how poetry has both shaped and been shaped by American civic, political, and social history, including issues of ethnicity, race, and gender"; Section 2 ("Walt Whitman's Scriptural Transfigurations" [171-181]) of Chapter 5 ("Rewriting Scripture: Emerson, Whitman, Melville" [155-200]) examines what Whitman meant when he said *Leaves of Grass* was "the most religious book among books, crammed full of faith," and argues that "this faith embraces the Bible as Whitman assumes and transmutes it"; proposes that the Bible serves Whitman "as a way of seeing the world and the self through levels of figuration," allowing him to develop a poetry with an "intensity of figuration in which processions of images and tropes unfurl from each other," and allowing him to realize "the biblical promise of multiple levels of meaning in complex point and counterpoint, stretching from self to material world and economy to nature, to sexual and to social experience," as he "abandons . . . any sort of eternal design governing the processions of words and time" but "retains biblical figural energy without metaphysical frameworks or anchors"; goes on to argue that "Whitman's figural biblicism . . . is non-apocalyptic," rendering a "vision" that is "firmly temporal, material, and historical, albeit facing toward a future he hopes to point in creative directions," creating a "distinction" that "is not between religion and secularity so much as totalism and pluralism"; for Whitman, "'Divine' is an adjective and not a noun, not a reified or transcendent figure, but the possibilities of the human," thus "ultimately center[ing] biblical as well as democratic commitment to the image of God in the human"; concludes with a reading of "I Sing the Body Electric" that demonstrates how the slave auction section of the poem "at once protests and registers how far America is from his visionary faith that economy can participate positively in democratic social and political life."]

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QUOTING AND CITING WALT WHITMAN'S WORK

When quoting from individual editions of *Leaves of Grass* (the 1855, 1856, 1860, 1867, 1870-1871, 1881, 1891), please use the facsimiles available online on the *Walt Whitman Archive*, and cite the edition, date, and page numbers, followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org)." Do not list the URL of individual page images or the date accessed. After the initial citation, contributors should abbreviate as "LG" followed by the year of the edition and the page number (e.g., LG1855 15).

The standard edition of Whitman's work is the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www. whitmanarchive.org) in addition to *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, twenty-two volumes published by the New York University Press under the general editorship of Gay Wilson Allen and Sculley Bradley, and supplemented with volumes published by the University of Iowa Press and Peter Lang. Citations and quotations from Whitman's writings not yet available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* should be keyed to the specific volumes in this edition.

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EPF	*The Early Poems and Fiction*, edited by Thomas L. Brasher (1963).
PW	*Prose Works 1892*, edited by Floyd Stovall. Vol. 1: *Specimen Days* (1963); Vol. 2: *Collect and Other Prose* (1964). with a Composite Index (1977); Vol. 7, edited by Ted Genoways (2004).
DBN	*Daybooks and Notebooks*, edited by William White. 3 vols. (1978).
NUPM	*Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, edited by Edward F. Grier. 6 vols. (1984).
Journ	*The Journalism*, edited by Herbert Bergmann, Douglas A. Noverr, and Edward J. Recchia. Vol. 1: 1834-1846 (1998); Vol. 2: 1846-1848 (2003).

Corr *The Correspondence*, edited by Edwin Haviland Miller. Vol. 1: 1842-1867 (1961); Vol. 2: 1868-1875 (1961); Vol. 3: 1876-1885 (1964); Vol. 4: 1886-1889 (1969); Vol. 5: 1890-1892 (1969); Vol. 6: A Supplement; Vol. 7: edited by Ted Genoways (2004).

For Whitman's correspondence, letters available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* take precedence over the *The Correspondence* edited by Edwin Haviland Miller. These should be cited in this format: Sender to recipient, month, day, year, followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*, ID: xxx.00000."—e.g., Herbert Gilchrist to Walt Whitman, August 20, 1882. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*, ID: loc.02192.

Horace Traubel's With Walt Whitman in Camden (9 Vols) is available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*. After an initial citation followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org)," it should be abbreviated WWC, followed by its volume and page number (e.g. WWC 3:45).

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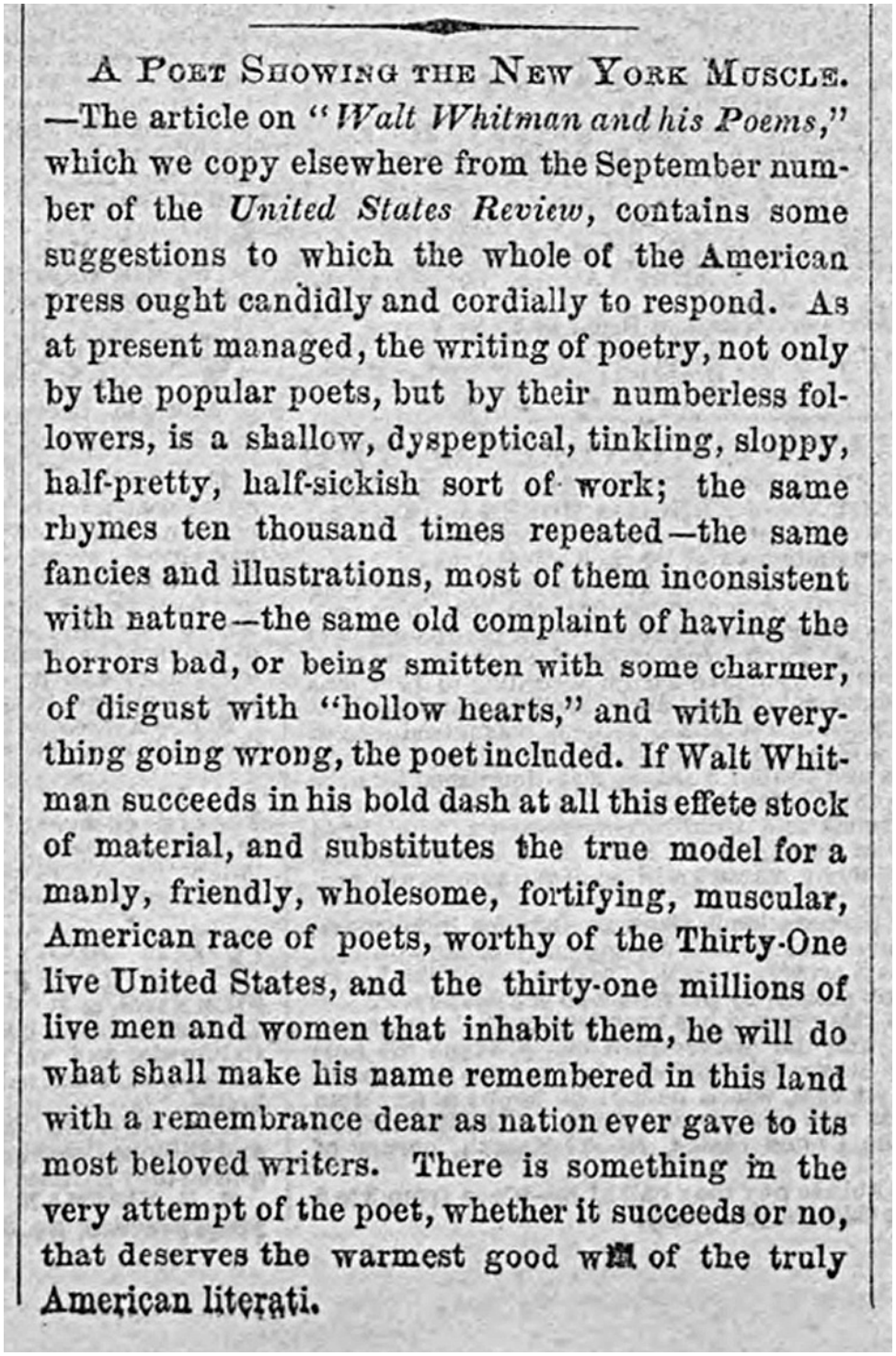

A POET SHOWING THE NEW YORK MUSCLE. —The article on "*Walt Whitman and his Poems*," which we copy elsewhere from the September number of the *United States Review*, contains some suggestions to which the whole of the American press ought candidly and cordially to respond. As at present managed, the writing of poetry, not only by the popular poets, but by their numberless followers, is a shallow, dyspeptical, tinkling, sloppy, half-pretty, half-sickish sort of work; the same rhymes ten thousand times repeated—the same fancies and illustrations, most of them inconsistent with nature—the same old complaint of having the horrors bad, or being smitten with some charmer, of disgust with "hollow hearts," and with everything going wrong, the poet included. If Walt Whitman succeeds in his bold dash at all this effete stock of material, and substitutes the true model for a manly, friendly, wholesome, fortifying, muscular, American race of poets, worthy of the Thirty-One live United States, and the thirty-one millions of live men and women that inhabit them, he will do what shall make his name remembered in this land with a remembrance dear as nation ever gave to its most beloved writers. There is something in the very attempt of the poet, whether it succeeds or no, that deserves the warmest good will of the truly American literati.

Whitman's self-review in the *Sunday Dispatch*, image courtesy of the Library of America's *Chronicling America* database. See pp. 30-42.