

Walt Whitman

Written for the Sunset of Bon Echo

By J. W. Bengough

Thy very name enthralls my captious ear
Like music from the olden, simple days
Of honest homespun, days of open grate,
Broad crackling fire and voices of free souls,
And fields that spread out to the distant verge
And merge into the boundless sea beyond,
'Twere mocked and lessened by a schoolman's tag,
Or any title known to heraldry.

WALT WHITMAN—at the sound there lives again
The sturdy good grey poet, with broad brimmed-hat,
Loose-flowing cloak, emancipated throat
And boisterous laughter ringing down the age,
As striding free, with cudgel in his hand,
He went his way and said the thing he thought
In his own dialect, and sang his song
Of man and of Democracy!

The Muse

That nursed him was a giantess; his verse
Voiced the deep melody of primal truth
Beyond the ken of little rhyming bards
Who buzzed like gnats about his towering head.

His name and memory are in wakened hearts
As fitting sepulchre; they need no monument,
Or, if it must be, let it be no work
Of dainty Art; let nature fashion it;
Let Art but carve some fitting line of his,
Say on yon Bastion by Bon Echo's shore,
Gibraltar-like in lonely majesty,
And so Walt-Whitman-like.