

Walt Whitman

Written for the Sunset of Bon Echo
By Charlotte Perkins Gilman

When we are young, we love poetry, as poetry, for the beauty and sweetness of it.

Growing older, we look for feeling as well as music, and have our Favorite Poets, whom we worship.

But in the long stretch of mature life, besides music and emotion, we want thought, vision, strength, in poetry.

Whitman has beauty, not as the ordered flower beds of a garden, nor even as the chosen "scenery" selected for a picture, but the beauty of the earth as a whole.

Whitman has music, not for the dance or serenade or lullaby, but the music of the wind and the sea.

He rouses feeling, indeed, but by no means the sympathy and excitement of broken hearts and thwarted desires; rather the feeling of an illuminated humanity.

When for some years, my personal possessions were limited to one trunk, I carried two books always: Olive Schreiner's "Dreams"—that little wonder book, and Whitman the Great.

One does not read Whitman through, any more than one runs forever up and down on the face of the earth.

No, Whitman is to wander in, to make ever new discoveries, to show one's friends some special point of view, best loved.

And always comes new light, new power, new love and understanding of this dear world and the human life that crowns it.

To Walt Whitman

On the One-Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth

Written for the Sunset of Bon Echo
By James L. Hughes

Great see-er of the unseen things
That are eternal in their might,
You saw man's glory shining clear,
And flashed to other souls, its light;
You heard God's wireless messages
Resounding upward, height to height.

You saw the radiant vision, glow,
Revealing man's high destiny.,
When round the world from selfishness
All men shall be forever free,
And souls unfettered shall acclaim
The triumph of democracy.

Great comrade! On your "Open Road"
We meet you with deep gratitude,
To learn "primeval passwords" true
That kindle love of highest good,
And sing with you the songs of hope,
And comradeship and brotherhood.