

Let the old propositions be postponed!¹
 Let faces and theories be turn'd inside out! let meanings be
 freely criminal, as well as results!²
 Let there be no suggestion above the suggestion of drudgery! 10
 Let none be pointed toward his destination! (Say! do you
 know your destination?)
 Let men and women³ be mock'd with bodies and mock'd with
 Souls!
 Let the love that waits in them, wait! let it die, or pass still-
 born to other spheres!
 Let the sympathy that waits in every man, wait! or let it also
 pass, a dwarf, to other spheres!
 Let contradictions prevail! let one thing contradict another! and
 let one line of my poems contradict another!
 Let the people sprawl with yearning, aimless hands! let their
 tongues be broken! let their eyes be discouraged! let
 none descend into their hearts with the fresh lusciousness
 of love!
 (Stifled, O days! O lands! in every public and private corrup-
 tion!⁴
 Smother'd in thievery, impotence, shamelessness, mountain-
 high;
 Brazen effrontery, scheming, rolling like ocean's waves around
 and upon you, O my days! my lands!
 For not even those thunderstorms, nor fiercest lightnings of the
 war, have purified the atmosphere;) 20
 —Let the theory of America still be management, caste, com-
 parison! (Say! what other theory would you?)
 Let them that distrust birth and death still lead the rest!⁵ (Say!
 why shall they not lead you?)
 Let the crust of hell be neared and trod on! let the days be
 darker than the nights! let slumber bring less slumber
 than waking time brings!
 Let the world never appear to him or her for whom it was all
 made!
 Let the heart of the young man still exile itself from the heart
 of the old man! and let the heart of the old man be ex-
 iled from that of the young man!

¹ Lines 6, 7, 8, with lines 65 and 66, afterwards published under title of "Reversals."

² 1856 adds "(Say! can results be criminal, and meanings not criminal?)"

³ 1856 '60 '67 read "Let trillions of men and women," etc.

⁴ Lines 17-20 added in 1870.

⁵ Lines 22, 44 and 46 afterwards published under title of "Transpositions."