

*The Green  
Book of the  
Bards*

I read it every morning,  
I ponder it by night;  
And Death shall overtake me  
Trimming my humble light.

He'll say, as did my father  
When I was young and small,  
"My son, no time for reading!  
The night awaits us all."

He'll smile, as did my father  
When I was small and young,  
That I should be so eager  
Over an unknown tongue.

Then I would leave my volume  
And willingly obey,—  
Get me a little slumber  
Against another day.

Content that he who taught me  
Should bid me sleep awhile,  
I would expect the morning  
To bring his courtly smile;

New verses to decipher,  
New chapters to explore,  
While loveliness and wisdom  
Grew ever more and more.

For who could ever tire  
Of that wild legendry,  
The folk-lore of the mountains,  
The drama of the sea?

I pore for days together  
Over some lost refrain,—  
The epic of the thunder,  
The lyric of the rain.

This was the creed and canon  
Of Whitman and Thoreau,  
And all the free believers  
Who worshipped long ago.