

*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.