



Myself, Typical, Before All

I have gone freely with powerful un-
educated persons, and with the young
and with the mothers of families,
I have read these leaves to myself
in the open air—

I have tried them by trees, stars, rivers;
I have dismissed whatever insulted my
own soul or defiled my own body,
I have claimed nothing to myself which I
have not carefully claimed for others
on the same terms,
I have studied my land, its idioms
and men,

I am willing to wait to be understood by
the growth of the taste of myself,
I reject none, I permit all,
Whom I have staid with once I have
found longing for me ever after.

—*Walt Whitman.*