

A Song of Himself (Walt)

1

What is this I hear, President Smythe?

An invitation?

Camerado—my thanks!

2

To be present with many whole-souled men and women, lovers of
Whitman,

Whitman the Kosmos, of Manhattan the son,

Maker of strange revolts, turbulent, fleshy, eating and drinking,

And keeping the middle of the long brown path;

His 97th birthday keeping—day when his short sharp barbaric
yawp

Burst first over the parental roof at Paumanok.

Allons, I say, and Forward; I can scarce contain my contentment

Save that the engagement previous cripples the anniversary joy.

3

I observe it is Open—Free. Were it not so, I should decline it as
less than modest.

For me, I would unscrew the locks from the doors

Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs.

I would accept nothing of which all could not have the counterpart
on the same terms.

4

To enjoy this meal equally set; this meal for the natural hunger,
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous, you have made
appetites with all,

All conjoined in the new Fellowship Whitman, formally gathering

On the Eve of the Sixth month, month of the sweet young grass,

and the blue flag, hilarious with beauty,

Month of the lilac's pungent perfume in the blooming back yards of
the masses. (Cheers, brothers).

You then, all diners, make poems of the materials, for are they not
the most spiritual poems?

Pass about the cute quip, the jest, the smart repartee,

Honoring, one and all, the memory of old Walt,

Revolver, tribune of body as well as soul,

Facing neither backward nor forward but straight out,

Canadianos, Liberstad affectionate, with Fellowship aflame,

For you a programme of chants.

—REUBEN BUTCHART.

Toronto.