



# Walt Whitman: Selected Poems 1855-1892

*Walt Whitman*

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## Walt Whitman: Selected Poems 1855-1892 Walt Whitman

A century after his death, Whitman is still celebrated as America's greatest poet. In this startling new edition of his work, Whitman biographer Gary Schmidgall presents over two hundred poems in their original pristine form, in the chronological order in which they were written, with Whitman's original line breaks and punctuation. Included in this volume are facsimilies of Whitman's original manuscripts, contemporary-- and generally blistering-- reviews of Whitman's poetry (not surprisingly Henry James hated it), and early pre-*Leaves of Grass* poems that return us to the physical Whitman, rejoicing-- sometimes graphically-- in homoerotic love.

Unlike the many other available editions, all drawn from the final authorized or "deathbed" *Leaves of Grass*, this collection focuses on the exuberant poems Whitman wrote during the creative and sexual prime of his life, roughly between 1853 and 1860. These poems are faithfully presented as Whitman first gave them to the world-- fearless, explicit, and uncompromised-- before he transformed himself into America's respectable, mainstream Good Gray Poet through thirty years of revision, self-censorship, and suppression.

Whitman admitted that his later poetry lacked the "ecstasy of statement" of his early verse. Revealing that ecstasy for the first time, this edition makes possible a major reappraisal of our nation's first great poet.

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