

Whitman Songs (soprano and piano)  
Texts by Walt Whitman

## **I. A Song of Joys**

O to make the most jubilant song!  
Full of music- full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!  
Full of common employments- full of grain and trees.

O for the voices of animals- O for the swiftness and balance of fishes!  
O for the dropping of raindrops in a song!  
O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song!

O the joy of my spirit- it is uncaged- it darts like lightning!  
It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time,  
I will have thousands of globes and all time.

O to go back to the place where I was born,  
To hear the birds sing once more,  
To ramble about the house and barn and over the fields once more,  
And through the orchard and along the old lanes once more.

O the farmer's joys!  
Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's, Iowan's, Kansian's,  
Missourian's,  
    Oregonese' joys!  
To rise at peep of day and pass forth nimbly to work,  
To plough land in the fall for winter-sown crops,  
To plough land in the spring for maize,  
To train orchards, to graft the trees, to gather apples in the fall.

O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place along the shore,  
To splash the water! to walk ankle-deep, or race naked along the shore.

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!  
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on!  
To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports,  
A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun and air,)  
A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joy.

## **II. The Sobbing of the Bells (Midnight, Sept. 19-20, 1881)**

The sobbing of the bells, the sudden death-news everywhere,  
The slumberers rouse the rapport of the People,  
(Full well they know that message in the darkness,  
Full well return, respond within their breasts, their brains the sad  
reverberations,)  
The passionate toll and clang- city to city, joining sounding, passing,  
Those heartbeats of a Nation in the night.  
(Whitman wrote this poem on receiving the news of President  
Garfield's assassination.)

## **III. Joy, Shipmate, Joy**

Joy, shipmate, joy!  
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)  
Our life if closed, our life begins,  
The long, long anchorage we leave,  
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!  
She swiftly courses from the shore,  
Joy, shipmate, joy.

## **IV. As I Watch'd the Ploughman Ploughing**

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing,  
Or sower sowing in the fields, or the harvester harvesting,  
I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies;  
(Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest according.)

Nor Do I Forget You Departed

(text taken from The Return Of The Heroes)

But on these days of brightness,  
On the far-stretching beauteous landscape, the roads and lanes, the  
high-piled  
farm-wagons, and the fruits and barns,  
Should the dead intrude?

Ah the dead to me mar not, they fit well in Nature,  
They fit very well in the landscape under the trees and grass,  
And along the edge of the sky in the horizon's far margin.

**V. Nor do I forget you Departed,**

Nor do I forget you Departed,  
Nor in winter or summer my lost ones,  
But most in the open air as now when my soul is rapt and at peace, like  
pleasing phantoms,  
Your memories rising glide silently by me.