

# Leaves of Grass

Walt Whitman

**DIRECTIONS:** The poem below is the opening of Walt Whitman's poem "Song of Myself," which is the opening poem in his book of poetry *Leaves of Grass*. Read the lines carefully.

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,  
lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil,  
this air,  
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and  
their parents the same,  
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,  
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,  
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never  
forgotten,  
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,  
Nature without check with original energy.



Based on this opening, what do you expect from this volume of poetry? What is Whitman's intention with these poems?

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