O Captain! My Captain!

BY [WALT WHITMAN](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/walt-whitman)

1 O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

5 But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

10 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

15 It is some dream that on the deck,

You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

20 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

“I Hear America Singing”

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe

 and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off

 work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the

 deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing

 as he stands,

The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the

 morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at

 work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young

 fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

1. List all the common people Whitman catalogs in the poem. Why does he list so many people? What, if anything, do they all have in common?
2. How would you describe Whitman’s style? What is his tone?

**“Song of Myself” Walt Whitman Section 1**

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,

I 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.

1. How does the speaker connect himself with other people in the section? How does the speaker connect himself to nature?
2. How does one “invite [their] soul”? (What do you think that means?)
3. This section has a setting. What is it, and why is it important?
4. How does “I harbor for good or bad” recall transcendental ideals?
5. What is the speaker’s mood in the section? How does he describe himself?
6. What is the tone of the section? How is the mood different than the tone?

“Song of Myself” Walt Whitman 52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my

   loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,

I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,

It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,

It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,

I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,

If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,

But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,

And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,

Missing me one place search another,

I stop somewhere waiting for you.

1. How does the speaker compare himself to a hawk?

2. How is the speaker “barbaric” (3)?

3. How does the speaker join nature?

4. How is parallelism used in this section?

5. How does the speaker feel about dying (TONE)?