

COMMON
FEATURE

Leaves of Grass
passage

*Tupper's complete poetical
works*

Tupper, Martin Farquhar, 1810-1889.
(Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1851.)

MIMIC

ORIGINAL

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves
are crowded with
perfumes,
I breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall
not let it.

-- chambers filled with
vapour / glance
conquers --

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of
the
distillation, it is odorless,
It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,

"Song of Myself," section 2

And to **glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod**
confounds the
learning of all times....
"Song of Myself," section 48

We breathe the **wholesome atmosphere** about ungarbled
truth:
Pictures of fact are painted on the eye, to decorate the house
of intellect,
Rather than visions of fancy, **filling all the chambers with a
vapour...**

...Yet, aided by the varnish of society, things may serve for
thoughts,
Till many dullards that have seen the world shall pass for
scholars:
Because **one single glance will conquer** all descriptions...
Tupper, "Of Things," 220

-- death quickens life
--

What do you think has become of the young and old
men?
And what do you think has become of the women and
children?

They are alive and well somewhere,
The **smallest sprout shows there is really no death**,
And if ever there was **it led forward life**, and does not
wait at the
end to arrest it,

... The rotting jungle **reeds scatter fertility** around;
The buffalo's dead carcass hath quickened life in millions...
...So, **is death an end,-but it breedeth an infinite beginning;**

Limits are for time, and **death killed time**;
Eternity's beginning is for ever.
Ambition, hath it any goal indeed? is not all fruition,
disappointment?
A step upon the ladder, and another, and another, —
we start from every end...

And **ceas'd the moment life appear'd.**

All **goes onward and outward**, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed,
and luckier.

"Song of Myself," section 3

Tupper, "Of Immortality," 207.

-- **I live, move, am
conscious... shall X? --**

I am satisfied - I see, dance, laugh, sing...
Shall I postpone my acceptance and realization and
scream at my
eyes ...?

"Song of Myself," section 3

...I live, move am conscious: what shall bar my being?
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 208.

-- **What is this? God's
uniform writing --**

What is the grass?...

...I guess it is a **uniform hieroglyphic**,
And **it means**, Sprouting alike in broad zones and
narrow zones...

"Song of Myself," section 6

What is this? the recognition of a standard, **unwritten,
natural, uniform;**
Telling of one common source, **the root of Good and True.**
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 206.

-- **Use of catalogue --**

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles,
talk of
the promenaders,
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating
thumb, the
clank of the shod horses on the granite floor,
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of
snow-balls,
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd
mobs,
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne
to the
hospital,

That glorious burst of winged words!-how bound they from
his tongue!
The full expression of the mighty thought, the strong
triumphant argument,
The rush of native eloquence, resistless as Niagara,
The keen demand, the clear reply, the fine poetic image,
The nice analogy, the clenching fact, the metaphor bold and
free,
The grasp of concentrated intellect, wielding the omnipotence
of truth,
The grandeur of his speech, in his majesty of mind!
Tupper: "Of Speaking", p, 77.

"Song of Myself," section 8

-- **things teach the eye; immediately, directly** --
All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it...
"Song of Myself," section 13

Things teach with double force; through the anima eye, and through the mind,
And the eye catcheth in an instant, what the ear shall not learn within an hour...
Tupper, "Of Things," 220

-- **thy spiritual inmate shall have swelled to the giant** --

I chant the chant of **dilation** or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that **size** is only development.
Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one,
and still pass on.
"Song of Myself," section 21

For thought shall strengthen thinking, and imagery speed imagination
Until **thy spiritual inmate shall have swelled to the giant** of Otranto.

Nevertheless, heed well, that this Athlete, growing in thy brain,
Be a wholesome Genius, not a cursed Afrite:
And see thou discipline his strength, and point his aim discreetly;
Feed him on humility and holy things, weaned from covetous desires...
....
And win, by gradual allurements, **the still expanding soul,**
To rise from a contemplated universe, even to the Hand that made it.
Tupper, "Of Ideas," 214.

-- **sentinels for the fortress body** --

The **sentries** desert every other **part** of me,
They have left me helpless to a red marauder,
They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.
"Song of Myself," section, 28

Mind is like a volatile essence, flitting hither and thither,
A solitary **sentinel of the fortress body**, to show himself every where by turns:
Mind is indivisible and instant, with neither **parts nor organs**...

Tupper, "Of Ideas," 212

-- **Equal role for all natural objects** --

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of the

Search out the wisdom of nature, there is depth in all her doings;

stars,
And the **pismire is equally perfect**, and a grain of
sand, and the egg
of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of
heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all
machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses
any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of
infidels.
"Song of Myself," section 31

...There is use in the prisoned air, that swelleth the pods of the
laburnum;
Design in the venom'd thorns, that sentinel the leaves of the
nettle;
A final cause for the aromatic gum, that congealeth the moss
around a rose:
**A reason for each blade of grass, that reareth its small
spire.**
....
...O, frozen is thy heart, if it glow not with gratitude for all
things:
In the **perfect circle of creation** not an atom could be
spared...
Tupper: "Of compensation", p, 18.

-- **credo : x is no more**
/ **less than y --**
smallness --

I believe **a leaf of grass is no less than the journey
work of the stars**,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and **a grain of
sand**, and the egg
of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of
heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all
machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses
any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of
infidels.
"Song of Myself," section 31

I believe in those wing'd purposes,
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within
me,
And consider green and violet and the tufted crown
intentional,
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is
not something else,

As in the spiritual, so in the material, man must rest with
patience,
And wait for other eyes wherewith to read the books of God.
Men have talked learnedly of atoms, as if matter could be ever
indivisible.
They talk, but ill are skilled to teach, and darken truth by
fancies:
An atom by our grosser sense was never yet conceived,
And **nothing can be thought so small**, as not to be divided:
For an atom runneth to infinity, and never shall be caught in
space,
And **a molecule is no more indivisible than Saturn's belted
orb...**
...
And the building up of atoms into matter is but a **silly**
sophism...
Tupper, "Of Things," 219

And the in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills
pretty well to me,
And the look of the bay mare shames **silliness** out of
me.
"Song of Myself," section 13

-- speeding to the stars --
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, **my thoughts
gone from me a
long while,**
Walking the old hills of Judaea with the beautiful
gentle **God** by my
side,
**Speeding through space, speeding through heaven
and the stars,
Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad
ring, and the
diameter of eighty thousand miles,
Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls
like the rest,**
"Song of Myself," section 33

-- revelations of
several thousand
years --
I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
Enclosing **worship ancient and modern and all
between ancient and modern,**
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after **five
thousand years,**
Waiting responses from **oracles,** honoring the gods,
saluting the sun...
"Song of Myself," section 43

-- catalogue of exotic
worship --
Waiting responses from **oracles, honoring the gods,
saluting the sun,
Making a fetich of the first rock or stump,**

...All we seem to know demand a longer learning,
History, and science, and prophecy, and art, are workings all
of **God:**
**And there are galaxies of globes, millions of unimagined
beings,**
Other senses, wondrous sounds, and **thoughts of thrilling
fire,**
Powers of strange might, quickening unknown elements,
And attributes and energies of **God,** which man may never
guess.

...Thou shalt roam where road is none, a traveller
untrammelled,
**Speeding at a wish, emancipate, to where the stars are
suns!**
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 211.

Darkling child of knowledge, **commune with Socrates and
Cicero:**
They had no prejudice of birth, no dull parental warpings;
See, those lustrous minds **anticipate the dawning day,**--
Whilst thou, poor mole, art burrowing back to darkness from
the light.
I will not urge a **revelation,** mercies, miracles, and martyrs,
But, after **twice a thousand years,** go learn thou of the
pagan...
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 207.

**Egypt opened on the theme, dressing up her gods in
qualities;
Horns of power, feathers of the swift, mitres of catholic**

**powowing with sticks in
the circle of obis,
Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps
of the idols,
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic
procession, rapt and
austere in the woods a gymnosophist,
Drinking mead from the skull-cap, to Shastas and
Vedas admirant,
minding the Koran,
Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the
stone and knife,
beating the serpent-skin drum...**
"Song of Myself," section 43

**dominion,
The sovereign asps, the circle everlasting, the crook and
thong of justice,
By many mystic shapes and sounds displayed the idol's
name.
Thereafter, high-plumed warriors, the chieftains of
Etruria and Troy,
And Xerxes, urging on his millions to the tomb of pride,
Thermopylae...**
Tupper, "Of Things," 219

**-- what have I to do
with dread ? ... the
end is the beginning --**

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my
brother, my sister?
I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous
upon me,
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with
lamentation,
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

**I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an
encloser of things to be..**
"Song of Myself," section 44

What have I to do with dread? my taper must go out!--
I nurse no silly hopes, and therefore feel no fears:
I am hastening to an End...

...
...Consider every end, that it is but the end of a beginning.
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 207.

**-- footsteps of infinity,
guided through
worlds,
progress never stops --**

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser
of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the **apices of the stairs**,
On every step bunches of **ages**, and larger bunches
between the steps,
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

And hive not in thy thoughts the vain and wordy notion,
That nothing which was born in time, can tire out the
footsteps of Infinity.
**Reckon up a sum in numbers; where shall progression
stop?**
The starting-post is definite and fixed, but what is the goal of
numeration?
So begin upon a moment, and **when shall being end?**
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 204

....
Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like
cheerful boatmen,
For room to me **stars kept aside in their own rings,**
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

**Before I was born out of my mother generations
guided me,**
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could
overlay it.
"Song of Myself," section 44.

And I said to my spirit **When we become the
enfolders of those orbs,**
and the pleasure and knowledge of every thing in them,
**shall we
be fill'd and satisfied then?**
**And my spirit said No, we but level that lift to pass
and continue
beyond.**
"Song of Myself," section 46.

Shall nature preach in vain?-- **thy casualty, guided in its
orbit,**
Though less than a mote upon the sunbeam, **sailleth in a fleet
of worlds...**
Tupper, "Of Immortality," 205

-- the independent
travellers --

◇ **Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine,
and let us hasten forth,
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as
we go.**

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of
your hand on my hip,
And in due time you shall repay the same service to
me,
For after we start we never lie by again.

"Song of Myself," section 46

But minds of nobler stamp, and chiefest the mint-marked of
heaven,
Walk independent by themselves, freely manumitted of
externals:
**They carry viands with them, and need no refreshment by
the way,**
Nor drink of other wells than their own inner fountain. ...
Tupper, "Of Names," 214

-- A shadow that
departs, but the
writing is eternal --

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.
"Song of Myself," 52.

Idea is a **shadow that departeth**, speech is fleeting **as the
wind**,

Reading is an unremembered pastime; but a **writing is
eternal...**

So the symbolled thoughts tell of a **departed soul**:

The plastic hand hath its witness in a statue, and exactitude of
vision in a picture,

And so, the mind, that was among us, in its writings is
embalmed.

Tupper, "On Speaking," 82.

For death is merely absent life, as darkness absent light:

Not even a suspension, for **the life hath sailed away, steering
gladly somewhere.**

And corruption, closely noted, **is but a dissolving of the
parts,**

The parts remain, and nothing lost, to build a better whole.

Tupper, "Of Immortality," 209

It is I too, **the sleepless widow** looking out on the **winter midnight**,
I see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid earth...

I see a beautiful gigantic swimmer swimming naked through the eddies of the sea...

-- mourning / drowned man --

What are you doing you ruffianly red-trickled waves?

Will you kill the courageous giant? will you kill him in the prime of his middle age?

Steady and long he struggles, He is baffled, bang'd, bruise'd, he holds out while his strength holds out,

...Swiftly and ought of sight is borne **the brave corpse**.
"The Sleepers," sections 2 and 3

A mother had an only son, and sent him out to sea: She was a widow, and in penury; and he must seek his fortunes.

How often **in the wintry nights, when waves and winds were howling**,
Her heart was torn with **sickening dread, and bled to see her boy**.

And on one sunny morn, when all around was comfort,
News came that, weeks ago, the vessel had been wrecked;
Yea, wrecked, and he was dead! **they had seen him perish in his agony:**

Oh then, what agony was like to hers,-for she believed the tale?

She was bowed and broken down with sorrow, and uncomforted in prayer;
Many nights she mourned, and pined, and had no hope but death....

Tupper, "Of Faith," 221

-- Astral projection in dreams --

I descend my western course, my sinews are flaccid,

Perfume and youth course through me, and I am their wake.

It is **my face yellow and wrinkled, instead of the old woman's**,

I sit low in a straw-bottom chair, and carefully darn my grandson's stockings.

It is I too, the **sleepless** widow, looking out on the **winter midnight**,
I see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid earth.

A shroud I see, and **I am the shroud—I wrap a body, and lie in the coffin**,

In a dream thou mayst be mad, and feel the fire within thee;
In a dream thou mayst **travel out of self**, and **see thee with the eyes of another**;

Or sleep in thine own corpse; or wake as in many bodies:
Or swell, as expanded to infinity; or shrink, as **imprisoned to a point**;

Or among moss-grown ruins may wander with **the sullen disembodied**,
And gaze upon their glassy eyes until thy heart-blood **freeze**.
Tupper: "Of Speaking", p, 74.

It is dark here under ground—it is not evil or pain here
—it is blank here, for reasons.

It seems to me that everything in the light and air **ought to be happy**,
Whoever is not in his **coffin and the dark grave**, let
him know he has enough
"The Sleepers," section 9

-- use of parallel
infinitives --

To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it
and pass it,
To conceive no time, however distant, but what you
may reach it
and pass it,
To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits
for you—however long, but it stretches and waits for
you;
To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go
thither,
To see no possession but you may possess it—enjoying
all without labor or purchase—abstracting the feast, yet
not abstracting one particle of it;
To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich
man's elegant villa, and the chaste blessings of the
well-married couple, and the fruits of orchards and
flowers of gardens,
To take to your use out of the compact cities as you
pass through,
To carry buildings and streets with you afterward
wherever you go,
To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you
encounter them—to gather the love out of their hearts,

**To take your lovers on the road with you, for all
that you leave them behind you,**
To know the universe itself as a road—as many roads
—as roads for traveling souls.

**Gentle comrades, kind advisers; friends, comforts,
treasures;**

Helps, governments, diversities of tongues; who can weigh
your worth?--

To walk no longer with the just; to be driven from the porch
of science;

**To bid long adieu to those intimate ones, poets,
philosophers, and teachers;**

To see no record of the sympathies which bind thee in
communion with the good;

To be thrust from the feet of Him, who spake as never man
spake;

To have no avenue to heaven but the dim aisle of superstition;

To live as an Esquimaux, in lethargy; to die as the Mohawk,
in ignorance:

O what were life, but a blank? what were death, but a terror?
What were man, but a burden to himself? what were mind, but
misery?

Tupper, "On Speaking," 79.

-- have all these
a soul ?--

**Was somebody asking to see the soul?
See, your own shape and countenance, persons,
substances, beasts,
the trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands.**

**All hold spiritual joys and afterwards loosen them;
How can the real body ever die and be buried?**
"Starting from Paumanok," section 13

**The lion, and the gnat, —yea, the mushroom, and the
crystal, —have all these a soul?**

...
Who told thee they die at dissolution? boldly think it out,--

Tupper, "Of Immortality," 209.