

**CALAMUS: A SERIES OF
LETTERS WRITTEN
DURING THE YEARS 1868-
1880 TO A YOUNG FRIEND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649467440

Calamus: A Series of Letters Written During the Years 1868-1880 to a Young Friend by Walt Whitman

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WALT WHITMAN

**CALAMUS: A SERIES OF
LETTERS WRITTEN
DURING THE YEARS 1868-
1880 TO A YOUNG FRIEND**



WALT WHITMAN AND PETER DOYLE
DRAWN BY H. O. YOUNG FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY RICE AT WASHINGTON D. C. IN 1860.

CALAMUS ✧ A SERIES OF LETTERS WRITTEN
DURING THE YEARS 1868-1880 BY WALT
WHITMAN TO A YOUNG FRIEND (PETER DOYLE)
✧ EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD
MAURICE BUCKE M.D. ONE OF WHITMAN'S
LITERARY EXECUTORS ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

"Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of
the tenderest lover,
The friend, the lover's portrait of whom his friend his
lover was fondest,
Who was not proud of his songs but of the measureless
ocean of love within him and freely poured it forth."
Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 102.

STANFORD LIBRARY

PUBLISHED BY LAURENS MAYNARD AT 237 CONGRESS
STREET IN BOSTON MDCCCXCVII ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

11

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name had been
receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a
happy night for me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd,
still I was not happy,
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health,
refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of Autumn,
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in
the morning light,
When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed,
laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way
coming, O then I was happy,
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food
nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening
came my friend,
And that night when all was still I heard the waters roll slowly
continually up the shores,
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to
me whispering to congratulate me,
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover
in the cool night,
In the stillness in the Autumn moonbeams his face was inclined
toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast — and that night I was
happy.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892) pp. 102-103.

I have been privileged to read a series of letters addressed by Whitman to a young man, whom I will call P., and who was tenderly beloved by him. They throw a flood of light upon "Calamus," and are superior to any commentary. It is greatly to be hoped that they may be published. Whitman, it seems, met P. at Washington not long before the year 1869 when the lad was about eighteen years of age. They soon became attached, Whitman's friendship being returned with at least equal warmth by P. The letters breathe a purity and simplicity of affection, a naïveté and reasonableness, which are very remarkable considering the unmistakable intensity of the emotion. Throughout them, Whitman shows the tenderest and wisest care for his young friend's welfare, helps him in material ways, and bestows upon him the best advice, the heartiest encouragement, without betraying any sign of patronage or preaching. Illness soon attacked Walt. He retired to Camden, and P., who was employed as "baggage-master on the freight trains" of a railway, was for long unable to visit him. There is something very wistful in the words addressed from a distance by the aging poet to this "son of responding kisses." I regret that we do not possess P.'s answers. Yet, probably, to most readers, they would not appear highly interesting; for it is clear he was only an artless and uncultured workman.—JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS in *Walt Whitman — A Study*. pp 78, 79.

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions,
But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
(What indeed have I in common with them? or what with
the destruction of them?)
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of these
States inland and seaboard,
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large
that dents the water,
Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
The institution of the dear love of comrades.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892) p. 107