

**WALT WHITMAN'S DRUM-
TAPS; WHEN
LILACS LAST IN THE
DOOR-YARD BLOOM'D**

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Walt Whitman's Drum-taps; When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd by Walt Whitman

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WALT WHITMAN

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WALT WHITMAN'S

DRUM-TAPS.

New-York.

—
1865.

ENTERED according to act of Congress, in the year 1865, by WALT
WHITMAN, in the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court of
the Southern District of New York.

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DRUM-TAPS.

- 1 First, O songs, for a prelude,
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum, pride and joy
in my city,
How she led the rest to arms — how she gave the cue,
How at once with lithe limbs, unwaiting a moment, she
sprang ;
(O superb! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless!
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis! O
truer than steel!)
- How you sprang! how you threw off the costumes of
peace with indifferent hand ;
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and
fife were heard in their stead ;
How you led to the war, (that shall serve for our pre-
lude, songs of soldiers,)
- How Manhattan drum-taps led.
- 2 Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading ;
Forty years as a pageant — till unawares, the Lady of
this teeming and turbulent city,
Sleepless, amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable
wealth,
With her million children around her — suddenly,
At dead of night, at news from the south,
Incens'd, struck with clench'd hand the pavement.
- 3 A shock electric — the night sustain'd it ;
Till with ominous hum, our hive at day-break, pour'd
out its myriads.

From the houses then, and the workshops, and
through all the doorways,
Leapt they tumultuous — and lo! Manhattan arming.

To the drum-taps prompt,
The young men falling in and arming;
The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the
blacksmith's hammer, tost aside with precipi-
tation;)

The lawyer leaving his office, and arming — the judge
leaving the court;

The driver deserting his wagon in the street, jumping
down, throwing the reins abruptly down on the
horses' backs;

The salesman leaving the store — the boss, book-keeper,
porter, all leaving;

Squads gathering everywhere by common consent, and
arming;

The new recruits, even boys — the old men show them
how to wear their accoutrements — they buckle
the straps carefully;

Outdoors arming — indoors arming — the flash of the
musket-barrels;

The white tents cluster in camps — the arm'd sentries
around — the sunrise cannon, and again at sunset;

Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the
city, and embark from the wharves;

(How good they look, as they tramp down to the river,
sweaty, with their guns on their shoulders!

How I love them! how I could hug them, with their
brown faces, and their clothes and knapsacks cover'd
with dust!)

The blood of the city up — arm'd! arm'd! the cry
everywhere;

The flags flung out from the steeples of churches, and
from all the public buildings and stores;

The tearful parting — the mother kisses her son — the
son kisses his mother;

(Loth is the mother to part — yet not a word does she
speak to detain him;)

The tumultuous escort — the ranks of policemen preceding,
 clearing the way ;
 The unpent enthusiasm — the wild cheers of the crowd
 for their favorites ;
 The artillery — the silent cannons, bright as gold, drawn
 along, rumble lightly over the stones ;
 (Silent cannons — soon to cease your silence !
 Soon, unlimber'd, to begin the red business ;)
 All the mutter of preparation — all the determin'd
 arming ;
 The hospital service — the lint, bandages, and medi-
 cines ;
 The women volunteering for nurses — the work begun
 for, in earnest — no mere parade now ;
 War ! an arm'd race is advancing ! — the welcome for
 battle — no turning away ;
 War ! be it weeks, months, or years — an arm'd race is
 advancing to welcome it.

* Mannahatta a-march ! — and it's O to sing it well !
 It's O for a manly life in the camp !

† And the sturdy artillery !
 The guns, bright as gold — the work for giants — to
 serve well the guns :
 Unlimber them ! no more, as the past forty years, for
 salutes for courtesies merely ;
 Put in something else now besides powder and wadding.

* And you, Lady of Ships ! you Mannahatta !
 Old matron of the city ! this proud, friendly, turbulent
 city !
 Often in peace and wealth you were pensive, or covertly
 frown'd amid all your children ;
 But now you smile with joy, exulting old Mannahatta !