

## Whitman Questions

### ***Song of Myself-1 p. 517***

1. Section 1 of *Song of Myself* celebrates the poet's individuality or self. How do these lines make it clear that this self is also representative and universal, sharing its being with all others?
2. In *Nature*, Emerson said that the present generation should enjoy an original relationship with the universe, seeing nature with fresh sight rather than relying in other authorities. How do lines 10-13 reflect this theme?

### ***Song of Myself-6 p. 518***

3. To what does the poet compare the grass in this section of the poem?
4. What idea is introduced by describing the grass as "the beautiful uncut hair of graves"?
5. How do sections 1 and 6 reflect the idea of humanities connection to nature?

### ***Song of Myself-21 WS***

6. In section 21, the poet erases the usual distinctions that we make in life—between the body and the soul—by resolving all parts into the whole of the poet's being and his poem. "The pleasures of heaven are with me," he tells us, "I graft and increase upon myself...." How does he deal with the miseries of life—"the pains of hell?"
7. Having praised men and women equally, the poet chants of the pride that all should share in their common humanity. What does the poet think of pride based upon size or accomplishments or high office?
8. Lines 12-13 portray the poet as a companion of the earth and sea. How does this image reinforce the theme of the poet as an all-inclusive presence?

### ***Song of Myself-52 p. 525***

9. What qualities does the poet say he shares with the spotted hawk?
10. Beginning with line 9, the poet makes one of his most direct addresses to his reader. What, in your own words, is his parting message?
11. What do you think the poet means when he says in line 10, "If you want me again look for me under your boot-sole"?
12. In this last section *Song of Myself* the poet uses the present tense. How would the meaning have changed has he spoken in the past tense?

## **Song of Myself—21**

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,  
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,  
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,  
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man, 5  
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,  
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,  
I show that size is only development. 10  
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.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,  
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.