



Leaves of Grass (Little Humanist Classics Series, No. 9)

Walt Whitman

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For the college bookstore discount, apply to for the discount code. The original edition of Leaves of Grass had just 95 pages of poetry, and a lengthy introduction. The only titles were “Leaves of Grass” or a marker, indicating a new poem. The original book listed no author, with a small engraving of himself in a loose open shirt and tipped hat, one hand on hip, the other in his pocket (to “loafe” at that time meant to be seen idling stylishly about town). The engraving by Samuel Hollyer was based on a photo by Gabriel Harrison (a common printing conversion by skilled professionals in the pre-digital age). Whitman’s experience as editor of the Brooklyn Eagle observing the American scene and his patroitc bombast of, for example, the “America” essay that opens this book, led him to use the longest breath-line in poetry until Allen Ginsberg and Bob Dylan. This poetic line allowed him to speak as a visionary poet of Biblical stature with remarkable candor, and he continues to stand at the center of American literature a hundred years after his death. Why should we read the first edition, long before the famous Lincoln and Civil War poetry? This edition shows the freshness of Whitman’s creative breakthrough—for the first time he finds/invents an appropriate form, and he gets a handle on his true subject. This book marks his emergence from the wilderness. Whitman himself designed the book and set the type for the first edition. He set no poem titles other than the phrase “Leaves of Grass,” placed at the heads of major sections, and we follow that design. Teachers and serious readers may be interested in the Supplement Edition of Leaves of Grass (wwwcreatespace.com/3675901). This volume contains a wealth of information, critical comments and background on Whitman. Also, a freebie: A Backward Glance over Traveled Roads, in which Whitman remembers how he came to write and publish Leaves of Grass. Download from www.bandannabooks.com/free/whitmanglance.zip

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Michael Davis:

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Leroy Ange:

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