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Carmen Joseph Dello Buono, editor. *Rare Early Essays on Walt Whitman.* Darby, Penna.: Norwood Editions, 1980. 202 pp. $22.50.

As a volume of reprinted essays in the Rare Early Essays Series, which includes only American authors (Emerson, Hawthorne and Poe, in addition to Whitman), this collection contains seven essays, reproduced photographically from their original sources. There is no preface, introduction, or index, and bibliographical information is in the table of contents. The seven pieces are: "Walt Whitman," by Mrs. Mary E. Wager-Fisher (although her name is not given), from *Poets' Homes,* edited by Arthur Gilman (Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1879), pp. 35–59; "Walt Whitman," by Clarence Stedman, reprinted from *Scribner's,* 21 (November 1880), 47–64, in his *Poets of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1885), pp. 349–395; "The Poetry of Democracy: Walt Whitman," by Edward Dowden, reprinted from *Westminster Review,* 40 (July 1871), 16–32, in his *Studies in Literature 1789–1877* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1878), pp. 468–523 (although the date is given as 1892); "Walt Whitman," by Leslie A. St. L. Toke, from *Prophets of the Century,* edited by Arthur Rickett (London: Ward Lock and Co., Ltd., 1898), pp. 227–249; "Walt Whitman," by Dixon Scott, reprinted from *The Bookman* (London), 46 (May 1914), 81–82, 85, in his *Men of Letters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), pp. 307–313; "Drum-Taps," by Walter De La Mare, reprinted from *The Times Literary Supplement,* 1 April 1915, pp. 105–106, as the Introduction to Walt Whitman, *Drum-Taps* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1915), pp. 1–12 (although the author's name is given as Anon.); and *Walt Whitman and the World Order,* by J. W. Wallace (Manchester: The National Labour Press, Ltd., 1920), pp. 1–26.

Except for the Dowden essay (reprinted in anthologies edited by Milton Hindus, Edwin H. Miller, and Francis Murphy), all the essays are indeed rare; whether they are worth reprinting is another matter. Mary E. Wager-Fisher's piece is really for children and says very little for 1980s readers; we could well skip the Toke essay, and Wallace prophesies how Whitman's Democracy, based on Religion, is supplanting Europe's 1920 political forms—its value is marginal. The two longest and most probing studies, by Stedman and Dowden, are good to have; yet best of all I liked what De La Mare had to say about Whitman—all too brief. What we do see here so well, on the whole, is the contrast between the American essayist Stedman and all the others (except Wager-Fisher), who express early British views of Walt Whitman.

The book, stoutly clothbound for the library trade, is not necessarily expensive, as books go these days; its format is rather unattractive; and its usefulness is rather more historical than critical.

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