



Errata: "The Celebration of Nativity: 'Broad-Axe Poem,'" by Dorothy M-T. Gregory, in *WWQR*, 2 (Summer 1984)

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Errata: “The Celebration of Nativity: ‘Broad-Axe Poem,’” by Dorothy M-T. Gregory, in *WWQR*, 2 (Summer 1984), contained an error in the notes. Note #21 on p. 11 was incorrect, and notes #22 and #23 were omitted. Here are the correct three notes:

21 By twentieth-century standards, phrenology is considered a popular pseudo-science of the 19th century; in its own time, however, phrenology was taken seriously by many scientists and educated people. It professed that the mind is composed of independent faculties, which were localized in different regions of the brain. The degree of each person’s endowment of each faculty could be determined by an examination of one’s cranium. Whitman had a phrenological examination by Lorenzo Fowler in 1849, which showed a high degree of endowment in most of the faculties. Whitman published his phrenological chart five times starting with an anonymous review he published in *The Brooklyn Daily Times*, on 29 September 1855. See, also, Edward Hungerford, “Walt Whitman and His Chart of Bumps,” *American Literature*, 2 (January 1931), 350–384, and Arthur Wrobel, “Whitman and the Phrenologists: The Divine Body and the Sensuous Soul,” *PMLA*, 89 (January 1974), 17–23. For a detailed history of phrenology, consult John D. Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science: A 19th-Century American Crusade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

22 Whitman must have understood this because in post-1860 editions he removed his “shape” (that of the man) from the train. In doing that, he also reinforced the significance of the woman as an idealized embodiment of the spirit of the United States.

23 I suppose the pink nipples of the breasts of women with whom I shall sleep will
taste the same to my lips,
But this is the nipple of a breast of my mother, always near and always divine
to me, her true child and son. (p. 250, stanza 6)

The above stanza from “Clef Poem,” another 1856 poem, was removed from post-1860 editions of *Leaves of Grass*. “Clef Poem” has, in fact, undergone considerable transformation since its first appearance. Reduced to half of its original length and retitled “On the Beach at Night Alone,” it no longer allows us to see the symbiotic aspect of its original inspiration. Consult *Leaves of Grass: A Textual Variorum* for the step-by-step changes between the first and the final form of this poem (pp. 241–242).