



Whitman, Walt. Foglie d'Erba [review]

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school education in the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Yugoslavia, where it is "included in the reading list for secondary school pupils" in an edition of 5000 copies.*

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*In this connection, an earlier translation of selections from *Leaves of Grass* into Slovene, *Travne bilke*, mainly by Peter Levec (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1962), was also "intended primarily for secondary schools." Another translation of *Leaves* into Slovene is being prepared by Dr. Uroš Muzetić of Ljubljana. All translations into English for this review were provided by Marija Bolta.

WALT WHITMAN. *Foglie d'Erba*, ed. with an introduction and notes by Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli, and an introduction by Giorgio Manganelli. Translation by Ariodante Marianni. Milan: Rizzoli Libri, 1988, 507 pp.

This bilingual edition of a judicious selection from *Leaves of Grass* will probably supplant Enzo Giachino's complete translation which first appeared in 1950 and was reprinted in 1965. The present translation by Ariodante Marianni, an experienced translator of W.B. Yeats and Dylan Thomas, is more vigorous, more expressive and more nervous than Giachino's. It is superior, too, to Franco de Poli's short bilingual selection published in 1967, which completely ignored "Song of Myself" and thus gave a badly truncated and lop-sided image of *Leaves of Grass*. Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli, on the contrary, has included all the major poems except for "Passage to India," "The Sleepers," and "To Think of Time." But these regrettable omissions were unavoidable, since she had to make a selection. Her notes on the poems at the end of the book and the footnotes are precise and well documented, and she has had the good idea of adding to her introduction her translations of six poems on Whitman by Ezra Pound, Jorge Luis Borges, Rubén Darío, Pedro Mir, Pablo Neruda and Allen Ginsberg.

Walt Whitman has been well served by his Italian translators, but this is not surprising, for, generally speaking, the Italians are excellent translators of poetry. Julien Green, the American novelist (who writes in French) recently declared in an interview (*Magazine Littéraire*, June 1989, p. 100) that "the finest translations [of poetry] are in Italian. . . . [Some] are also masterpieces in this language."

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