The Poets Continue to Respond: More Citations of Whitman as Poetic Subject

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As Edward Malone's preceding list suggests, there is no end to the poems that deal in some essential way with Whitman. In my lengthy list, "The Poets Respond: A Bibliographic Chronology" (in Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song), I attempted to trace the century-old tradition of poets who talked back to Whitman in their own poems or essays. Since that list was published, I have found many more poems and essays that should be included—some that I overlooked, some that have appeared recently. I have, however, given up on trying to make an exhaustive bibliography: new poems about Whitman are appearing all the time, and old ones from many languages keep turning up. The following list contains what seem to me the most significant poems to and about Whitman that were not included in my original bibliography. There are about two hundred additional poems here; it can serve to supplement and amplify Malone's list, and perhaps to inspire others to keep searching for poems that insist on Whitman's continuing presence. I would like to thank Jim Perlman, co-editor of Measure of His Song, for his help in identifying several of these poems.


L. Miller, “Ikh her dayn kol, volt vitman,” Amerike in yidishn vort, 435–436. [Yiddish.]


Many poems relating to Whitman appear in the annual issues of the *Mickle Street Review* and *West Hills Review*; some are reprints and others are inspired by Whitman rather than about or to him. Following is a list of poems about or to Whitman that either first appeared in *MSR* or are reprinted but not easily available elsewhere. I have not included poems that are in the above list or in my *Measure of His Song* bibliography:


Poems about or to Whitman originally appearing in the West Hills Review, volumes 1 and 2, were included in the bibliography in Measure of His Song; relevant poems in subsequent volumes include:


Additional Whitman Allusions in Harper’s Monthly

Daniel A. Wells covered a lot of ground in assembling his annotated bibliography of references to Whitman in Harper’s from 1860 to 1896 (WWQR 4 [Summer 1986], 16–23). However, if he had consulted my Walt Whitman, 1838–1939: A Reference Guide (G. K. Hall, 1981), he would have discovered four more, which I present here for completion’s sake:

67 (October 1883), 798. Henry Mills Alden, writing anonymously here (as in the January 1882 item that Wells lists), reviews Sidney Lanier’s posthumous The English Novel and the Principle of Its Development (1883), noting his “refutation of the crude theories of imaginative art advanced by Walt Whitman and Emile Zola.”

77 (November 1888), 967. W. D. Howells in “Editor’s Study” anonymously reviews volumes of poetry by Charles Leonard Moore and W. E. Henley, which “have the same claim through the same divine art—the art of John Keats, the art of Walt Whitman—to the world’s attentive regard.”