

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

*G*IVE me the splendid silent sun, with all his beams
full-dazzling;
Give me juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red from
the orchard;
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape;
Give me fresh corn and wheat—give me serene-moving
animals, teaching content;
Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high plateaus west
of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars;
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers,
where I can walk undisturb'd;
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman, of whom
I should never tire;

DRUM TAPS

Give me a perfect child—give me, away, aside from the
noise of the world, a rural, domestic life;
Give me to warble spontaneous songs, reliev'd, recluse by
myself, for my own ears only;
Give me solitude—give me Nature—give me again, O
Nature, your primal sanities!
—These, demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless
excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife;)
These to procure, incessantly asking, rising in cries from
my heart,
While yet incessantly asking, still I adhere to my city;
Day upon day, and year upon year, O city, walking your
streets,
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time, refusing to
give me up;
Yet giving to make me glutted, enrich'd of soul—you give
me forever faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing
my cries;
I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid, silent sun;
Keep your woods, O Nature, and the quiet places by the
woods;
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-
fields and orchards;
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields, where the Ninth-
month bees hum;
Give me faces and streets! give me these phantoms inces-
sant and endless along the trottoirs!

. DRUM TAPS

Give me interminable eyes! give me women! give me comrades and lovers by the thousand!

Let me see new ones every day! let me hold new ones by the hand every day!

Give me such shows! give me the streets of Manhattan! Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!

(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some, starting away, flush'd and reckless;

Some, their time up, returning, with thinn'd ranks—
young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)

—Give me the shores and the wharves heavy-fringed with the black ships!

O such for me! O an intense life! O full to repletion, and varied!

The life of the theater, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!

The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torch-light procession!

The dense brigade, bound for the war, with high piled military wagons following;

People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants;

Manhattan streets, with their powerful throbs, with the beating drums, as now;

The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets, (even the sight of the wounded;)

Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus—
with varied chorus, and light of the sparkling eyes;

Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

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