After all, not to create only, or found only,
But to bring, perhaps from afar, what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free;
To fill the gross, the torpid bulk with vital religious fire;
Not to repel or destroy, so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate;
To obey, as well as command—to follow, more than to lead;
These also are the lessons of our New World;
—While how little the New, after all—how much the Old, Old World!

Long, long, long, has the grass been growing,
Long and long has the rain been falling,
Long has the globe been rolling round.

Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia;
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts,
That matter of Troy, and Achilles’ wrath, and Eneas’, Odysseus’ wanderings;
Placard “Removed” and “To Let” on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus;
Repeat at Jerusalem—place the notice high on Jaffa’s gate, and on Mount Moriah;
The same on the walls of your Gothic European Cathedrals, and German, French and Spanish Castles;
For know a better, fresher, busier sphere—a wide, untried domain awaits, demands you.

Responsive to our summons,
Or rather to her long-nurs’d inclination,
Join’d with an irresistible, natural gravitation,

She comes! this famous Female—as was indeed to be expected;
(For who, so-ever youthful, ’cute and handsome, would wish to stay in mansions such as those,
When offer’d quarters with all the modern improvements,
With all the fun that ’s going—and all the best society?)
She comes! I hear the rustling of her gown;  
I scent the odor of her breath’s delicious fragrance;  
I mark her step divine—her curious eyes a-turning, rolling,  
Upon this very scene.

The Dame of Dames! can I believe, then,  
Those ancient temples classic, and castles strong and feudalistic,  
could none of them restrain her?  
Nor shades of Virgil and Dante—nor myriad memories, poems, old associations, magnetize and hold on to her?  
But that she’s left them all—and here?

Yes, if you will allow me to say so,  
I, my friends, if you do not, can plainly see Her,  
The same Undying Soul of Earth’s, activity’s, beauty’s, heroism’s Expression,  
Out from her evolutions hither come—submerged the strata of her former themes,  
Hidden and cover’d by to-day’s—foundation of to-day’s;  
Ended, deces’d, through time, her voice by Castaly’s fountain;  
Silent through time the broken-lipp’d Sphynx in Egypt—silent those century-baffling tombs;  
Closed for aye the epics of Asia’s, Europe’s helmeted warriors;  
Calliope’s call for ever closed—Clio, Melpomene, Thalia closed and dead;  
Seal’d the stately rhythmus of Una and Oriana—ended the quest of the Holy Graal;  
Jerusalem a handful of ashes blown by the wind—extinct;  
The Crusaders’ streams of shadowy, midnight troops, sped with the sunrise;  
Amadis, Tancred, utterly gone—Charlemagne, Roland, Oliver gone,  
Palmerin, ogre, departed—vanish’d the turrets that Usk reflected,  
Arthur vanish’d with all his knights—Merlin and Lancelot and Galahad—all gone—dissolv’d utterly, like an exhalation;  
Pass’d! pass’d! for us, for ever pass’d! that once so mighty World—now void, inanimate,  
phantom World!

Embroider’d, dazzling World! with all its gorgeous legends, myths,  
Its kings and barons proud—its priests, and warlike lords, and courtly dames;  
Pass’d to its charnel vault—laid on the shelf—coffin’d, with Crown and Armor on,  
Blazon’d with Shakspeare’s purple page,  
And dirged by Tennyson’s sweet sad rhyme.

I say I see, my friends, if you do not, the Animus of all that World,  
Escaped, bequeath’d, vital, fugacious as ever, leaving those dead remains, and now this spot approaching, filling:  
—And I can hear what maybe you do not—a terrible aesthetical commotion,  
With howling, desperate gulp of “flower” and “bower,”  
With “Sonnet to Matilda’s Eyebrow” quite, quite frantic;  
With gushing, sentimental reading circles turn’d to ice or stone;  
With many a squeak, (in metre choice,) from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, London;  
As she, the illustrious Emigré, (having, it is true, in her day, although the same, changed,  
journey’d considerable,)
Making directly for this rendezvous—vigorously clearing a path for herself—striding through the confusion,
By thud of machinery and shrill steam-whistle undismay’d,
Bluff’d not a bit by drain-pipe, gasometers, artificial fertilizers,
Smiling and pleased, with palpable intent to stay,
She’s here, install’d amid the kitchen ware!

4

But hold—don’t I forget my manners?
To introduce the Stranger (what else indeed have I come for?) to thee, Columbia:
In Liberty’s name, welcome, Immortal! clasp hands,
And ever henceforth Sisters dear be both.

Fear not, O Muse! truly new ways and days receive, surround you,
(I candidly confess, a queer, queer race, of novel fashion,)
And yet the same old human race—the same within, without,
Faces and hearts the same—feelings the same—yearnings the same,
The same old love—beauty and use the same.

5

We do not blame thee, Elder World—nor separate ourselves from thee:
(Would the Son separate himself from the Father?)
Looking back on thee—seeing thee to thy duties, grandeurs, through past ages bending,
We build to ours to-day.

M mightier than Egypt’s tombs,
Fairer than Grecia’s, Roma’s temples,
Prouder than Milan’s statued, spired Cathedral,
More picturesque than Rhenish castle-keeps,
We plan, even now, to raise, beyond them all,
Thy great Cathedral, sacred Industry—no tomb,
A Keep for life for practical Invention.

As in a waking vision,
E’en while I chant, I see it rise—I scan and prophesy outside and in,
Its manifold ensemble.

6

Around a Palace,
Loftier, fairer, ampler than any yet,
Earth’s modern Wonder, History’s Seven outstripping,
High rising tier on tier, with glass and iron façades.

Gladdening the sun and sky—enhued in cheerulest hues,
Bronze, lilac, robin's-egg, marine and crimson,
Over whose golden roof shall flaunt, beneath thy banner, Freedom,
The banners of The States, the flags of every land,
A brood of lofty, fair, but lesser Palaces shall cluster.

Somewhere within the walls of all,
Shall all that forwards perfect human life be started,
Tried, taught, advanced, visibly exhibited.

Here shall you trace in flowing operation,
In every state of practical, busy movement,
The rills of Civilization.

Materials here, under your eye, shall change their shape, as if by magic;
The cotton shall be pick'd almost in the very field,
Shall be dried, clean'd, ginn'd, baled, spun into thread and cloth, before you:
You shall see hands at work at all the old processes, and all the new ones;
You shall see the various grains, and how flour is made, and then bread baked by the bakers;
You shall see the crude ores of California and Nevada passing on and on till they become bullion;
You shall watch how the printer sets type, and learn what a composing stick is;
You shall mark, in amazement, the Hoe press whirling its cylinders, shedding the printed leaves steady and fast:
The photograph, model, watch, pin, nail, shall be created before you.

In large calm halls, a stately Museum shall teach you the infinite, solemn lessons of Minerals;
In another, woods, plants, Vegetation shall be illustrated—in another Animals, animal life and development.

One stately house shall be the Music House;
Others for other Arts—Learning, the Sciences, shall all be here;
None shall be slighted—none but shall here be honor'd, help'd, exampled.

This, this and these, America, shall be your Pyramids and Obelisks,
Your Alexandrian Pharos, gardens of Babylon,
Your temple at Olympia.

The male and female many laboring not,
Shall ever here confront the laboring many,
With precious benefits to both—glory to all,
To thee, America—and thee, Eternal Muse.

And here shall ye inhabit, Powerful Matrons!
In your vast state, vaster than all the old;
Echoed through long, long centuries to come,
To sound of different, prouder songs, with stronger themes,
Practical, peaceful life—the people’s life—the People themselves,
Lifted, illumin’d, bathed in peace—ebrate, secure in peace.

8

Away with themes of war! away with War itself!
Hence from my shuddering sight, to never more return, that show of blacken’d, mutilated corpses!
That hell unpent, and raid of blood—fit for wild tigers, or for lop-tongued wolves—not reasoning men!
And in its stead speed Industry’s campaigns!
With thy undaunted armies, Engineering!
Thy pennants, Labor, loosen’d to the breeze!
Thy bugles sounding loud and clear!

Away with old romance!
Away with novels, plots, and plays of foreign courts!
Away with love-verses, sugar’d in rhyme—the intrigues, amours of idlers,
Fitted for only banquets of the night, where dancers to late music slide;
The unhealthy pleasures, extravagant dissipations of the few,
With perfumes, heat and wine, beneath the dazzling chandeliers.

9

To you, ye Reverent, sane Sisters,
To this resplendent day, the present scene,
These eyes and ears that like some broad parterre bloom up around, before me,
I raise a voice for far supererogatory themes for poets and for Art,
To exalt the present and the real,
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade,
To sing, in songs, how exercise and chemical life are never to be baffled;
Boldly to thee, America, to-day! and thee, Immortal Muse!
To practical, manual work, for each and all—to plough, hoe, dig,
To plant and tend the tree, the berry, the vegetables, flowers,
For every man to see to it that he really do something—for every woman too;
To use the hammer, and the saw, (rip or cross-cut,)
To cultivate a turn for carpentering, plastering, painting,
To work as tailor, tailoress, nurse, hostler, porter,
To invent a little—something ingenious—to aid the washing, cooking, cleaning,
And hold it no disgrace to take a hand at them themselves.

I say I bring thee, Muse, to-day and here,
All occupations, duties broad and close,
Toil, healthy toil and sweat, endless, without cessation,
The old, old general burdens, interests, joys,
The family, parentage, childhood, husband and wife,
The house-comforts—the house itself, and all its belongings,
Food and its preservations—chemistry applied to it;
Whatever forms the average, strong, complete, sweet-blooded Man or Woman—the perfect, longeved Personality,
And helps its present life to health and happiness—and shapes its Soul,
For the eternal Real Life to come.

With latest materials, works,
Steam-power, the great Express lines, gas, petroleum,
These triumphs of our time, the Atlantic’s delicate cable,
The Pacific Railroad, the Suez canal, the Mont Cenis tunnel;
Science advanced, in grandeur and reality, analyzing every thing,
This world all spanned with iron rails—with lines of steamships threading every sea,
Our own Rondure, the current globe I bring.

10

And thou, high-towering One—America!
Thy swarm of offspring towering high—yet higher thee, above all towering,
With Victory on thy left, and at thy right hand Law;
Thou Union, holding all—fusing, absorbing, tolerating all,
Thee, ever thee, I bring.

185

Thou—also thou, a world!
With all thy wide geographies, manifold, different, distant,
Rounding by thee in One—one common orbic language,
One common indivisible destiny and Union.

11

190

And by the spells which ye vouchsafe,
To those, your ministers in earnest,
I here personify and call my themes,
To make them pass before ye.

Behold, America! (And thou, ineffable Guest and Sister!)
For thee come trooping up thy waters and thy lands:
Behold! thy fields and farms, thy far-off woods and mountains,
As in procession coming.

195

Behold! the sea itself!
And on its limitless, heaving breast, thy ships:
See! where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue!
See! thy steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port!
See! dusky and undulating, their long pennants of smoke!

200

Behold, in Oregon, far in the north and west,
Or in Maine, far in the north and east, thy cheerful axemen,
Wielding all day their axes!
Behold, on the lakes, thy pilots at their wheels—thy oarsmen!
Behold how the ash writhes under those muscular arms!

There by the furnace, and there by the anvil,
Behold thy sturdy blacksmiths, swinging their sledges;
Overhand so steady—overhand they turn and fall, with joyous clank,
Like a tumult of laughter.

Behold! (for still the procession moves,)
Behold, Mother of All, thy countless sailors, boatmen, coasters!
The myriads of thy young and old mechanics!
Mark—mark the spirit of invention everywhere—thy rapid patents,
 Thy continual workshops, foundries, risen or rising;
See, from their chimneys, how the tall flame-fires stream!

Mark, thy interminable farms, North, South,
Thy wealthy Daughter-States, Eastern, and Western,
The varied products of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Georgia, Texas, and the rest;
Thy limitless crops—grass, wheat, sugar, corn, rice, hemp, hops,
Thy barns all fill’d—thy endless freight-trains, and thy bulging store-houses,
The grapes that ripen on thy vines—the apples in thy orchards,
Thy incalculable lumber, beef, pork, potatoes—thy coal—thy gold and silver,
The inexhaustible iron in thy mines.

All thine, O sacred Union!
Ship, farm, shop, barns, factories, mines,
City and State—North, South, item and aggregate,
We dedicate, dread Mother, all to thee!

Protectress absolute, thou! Bulwark of all!
For well we know that while thou givest each and all, (generous as God,)
Without thee, neither all nor each, nor land, home,
Ship, nor mine—nor any here, this day, secure,
Nor aught, nor any day secure.

And thou, thy Emblem, waving over all!
Delicate beauty! a word to thee, (it may be salutary;)
Remember, thou hast not always been, as here to-day, so comfortably ensovereign’d;
In other scenes than these have I observ’d thee, flag;
Not quite so trim and whole, and freshly blooming, in folds of stainless silk;
But I have seen thee, bunting, to tatters torn, upon thy splinter’d staff,
Or clutch’d to some young color-bearer’s breast, with desperate hands,
Savagely struggled for, for life or death—fought over long,
'Mid cannon's thunder-crash, and many a curse, and groan and yell—and rifle-volleys cracking sharp,
And moving masses, as wild demons surging—and lives as nothing risk'd,
For thy mere remnant, grimed with dirt and smoke, and sopp'd in blood;
For sake of that, my beauty—and that thou might'st dally, as now, secure up there,
Many a good man have I seen go under.

14

Now here, and these, and hence, in peace all thine, O Flag!
And here, and hence, for thee, O universal Muse! and thou for them!
And here and hence, O Union, all the work and workmen thine!
The poets, women, sailors, soldiers, farmers, miners, students thine!
None separate from Thee—henceforth one only, we and Thou;
(For the blood of the children—what is it only the blood Maternal?
And lives and works—what are they all at last except the roads to Faith and Death?)

While we rehearse our measureless wealth, it is for thee, dear Mother!
We own it all and several to-day indissoluble in Thee;
—Think not our chant, our show, merely for products gross, or lucre—it is for Thee, the Soul,
electric, spiritual!
Our farms, inventions, crops, we own in Thee! Cities and States in Thee!
Our freedom all in Thee! our very lives in Thee!
Movement I
Song for All Seas, All Ships
(text set in its entirety)

1

TO-DAY a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the Seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal;
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—Of waves spreading and spreading, far as the eye can reach;
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing;
And out of these a chant, for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.

Of Sea-Captains young or old, and the Mates—and of all intrepid Sailors;
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise, nor death dismay,
Pick’d sparingly, without noise, by thee, old Ocean—chosen by thee,
Thou Sea, that pickest and cullest the race, in Time, and unitest Nations!
Suckled by thee, old husky Nurse—embracing thee!
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes, on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing,
Ever the stock preserv’d, and never lost, though rare—enough for seed preserv’d.)

2

Flaunt out O Sea, your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out, visible as ever, the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself, and for the soul of man, one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven Signal, for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains, and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty;
Reminiscent of them—twined from all intrepid captains, young or old;
A pennant universal, subtly waving, all time, o’er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

Movement II
On the Beach at Night, Alone

ON the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro, singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining—I think a thought of the clef of the universes, and of the future.

A VAST SIMILITUDE interlocks all,
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons, planets, comets, asteroids,
All the substances of the same, and all that is spiritual upon the same,
All distances of place, however wide,
All distances of time—all inanimate forms,
All Souls—all living bodies, though they be ever so different, or in different worlds,
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes—the fishes, the brutes,
All men and women—me also;
All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages;
All identities that have existed, or may exist, on this globe, or any globe;
All lives and deaths—all of the past, present, future;
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann’d, and shall forever span them, and compactly hold them, and enclose them.

Movement III

After the Sea-Ship
(text set in its entirety)

AFTER the Sea-Ship—after the whistling winds;
After the white-gray sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves, hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship:
Waves of the ocean, bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves—liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great Vessel, sailing and tacking, displaced the surface;
Larger and smaller waves, in the spread of the ocean, yearnfully flowing;
The wake of the Sea-Ship, after she passes—flashing and frolicsome, under the sun,
A motley procession, with many a fleck of foam, and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid Ship—in the wake following.
Movement IV
Passage to India

1

SINGING my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong, light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World, the east, the Suez canal,
The New by its mighty railroad spann’d,
The seas inlaid with eloquent, gentle wires,
I sound, to commence, the cry, with thee, O soul,
The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past! the dark, unfathom’d retrospect!
The teeming gulf! the sleepers and the shadows!
The past! the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile, form’d, impell’d, passing a certain line, still keeps on,
So the present, utterly form’d, impell’d by the past.)

2

Passage, O soul, to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic—the primitive fables.

Not you alone, proud truths of the world!
Nor you alone, ye facts of modern science!
But myths and fables of eld—Asia’s, Africa’s fables!
The far-darting beams of the spirit!—the unloos’d dreams!
The deep diving bibles and legends;
The daring plots of the poets—the elder religions;
—O you temples fairer than lilies, pour’d over by the rising sun!
O you fables, spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known, mounting to heaven!
You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish’d with gold!
Towers of fables immortal, fashion’d from mortal dreams!
You too I welcome, and fully, the same as the rest;
You too with joy I sing.

3

Passage to India!
Lo, soul seest thou not God’s purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann’d, connected by net-work,
The people to become brothers and sisters,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
The oceans to be cross’d, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together.

(A worship new, I sing;
You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours!
You engineers! you architects, machinists, your!
You, not for trade or transportation only,
But in God’s name, and for thy sake, O soul.)

Passage to India!
Lo, soul, for thee, of tableaus twain,
I see, in one, the Suez canal initiated, open’d,
I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie’s leading the van;
I mark, from on deck, the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in the distance;
I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather’d,
The gigantic dredging machines.

In one, again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same,)
I see over my own continent the Pacific Railroad, surmounting every barrier;
I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte, carrying freight and passengers;
I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle,
I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world;
I cross the Laramie plains—I note the rocks in grotesque shapes—the buttes;
I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions—the barren, colorless, sage-deserts;
I see in glimpses afar, or towering immediately above me, the great mountains—I see the Wind River and the Wahsatch mountains;
I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle’s Nest—I pass the Promontory—I ascend the Nevadas;
I scan the noble Elk mountain, and wind around its base;
I see the Humboldt range—I thread the valley and cross the river,
I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe—I see forests of majestic pines,
Or, crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold enchanting mirages of waters and meadows;
Marking through these, and after all, in duplicate slender lines,
Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel,
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese, thy dream! thy dream!
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream!)

Passage to India!
Struggles of many a captain—tales of many a sailor dead!
Over my mood, stealing and spreading they come,
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach’d sky.

Along all history, down the slopes,
As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to the surface rising,
A ceaseless thought, a varied train—Lo, soul! to thee, thy sight, they rise,
The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions:
Again Vasco de Gama sails forth;
Again the knowledge gain’d, the mariner’s compass,
Lands found, and nations born—thou born, America, (a hemisphere unborn,)
For purpose vast, man’s long probation fill’d,
Thou, rondo of the world, at last accomplish’d.

O, vast Rondo, swimming in space!
Cover’d all over with visible power and beauty!
Alternate light and day, and the teeming, spiritual darkness;
Unspeakable, high processions of sun and moon, and countless stars, above;
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, mountains, trees;
With inscrutable purpose—some hidden, prophetic intention;
Now, first, it seems, my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia, descending, radiating,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, curious—with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish—with never-happy hearts,
With that sad, incessant refrain, Wherefore, unsatisfied Soul? and Whither, O mocking Life?

Ah, who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive Earth?
Who bind it to us? What is this separate Nature, so unnatural?
What is this Earth, to our affections? (unloving earth, without a throb to answer ours; Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet, soul, be sure the first intent remains—and shall be carried out;
(Perhaps even now the time has arrived.)

After the seas are all cross’d, (as they seem already cross’d,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish’d their work,
After the noble inventors—after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet, worthy that name;
The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs.

Then, not your deeds only, O voyagers, O scientists and inventors, shall be justified,
All these hearts, as of fretted children, shall be sooth’d,
All affection shall be fully responded to—the secret shall be told;
All these separations and gaps shall be taken up, and hook’d and link’d together;
The whole Earth—this cold, impassive, voiceless Earth, shall be completely justified;
Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish’d and compacted by the the Son of God, the poet,
(He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the mountains,
He shall double the Cape of Good Hope to some purpose;)  
Nature and Man shall be disjoin’d and diffused no more,
The true Son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

110

Year at whose open’d, wide-flung door I sing!
Year of the purpose accomplish’d!
Year of the marriage of continents, climates and oceans!
(No mere Doge of Venice now, wedding the Adriatic;)
I see, O year, in you, the vast terraqueous globe, given, and giving all,
Europe to Asia, Africa join’d, and they to the New World;
The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding a festival garland,
As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

120

Passage to India!
Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man,
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

Lo, soul, the retrospect, brought forward;
The old, most populous, wealthiest of Earth’s lands,
The streams of the Indus and the Ganges, and their many affluents;
(I, my shores of America walking to-day, behold, resuming all,)  
The tale of Alexander, on his warlike marches, suddenly dying,
On one side China, and on the other side Persia and Arabia,
To the south the great seas, and the Bay of Bengal;
The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions, castes,
Old occult Brahma, interminably far back—the tender and junior Buddha,
Central and southern empires, and all their belongings, possessors,
The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe,
The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians, Byzantium, the Arabs, Portuguese,
The first travelers, famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta the Moor,
Doubts to be solv’d, the map incognita, blanks to be fill’d,
The foot of man unstay’d, the hands never at rest,
Thyself, O soul, that will not brook a challenge.

135

The medieval navigators rise before me,
The world of 1492, with its awaken’d enterprise;
Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of the earth in spring,
The sunset splendor of chivalry declining.

And who art thou, sad shade?
Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,
With majestic limbs, and pious, beaming eyes,
Spreading around, with every look of thine, a golden world,
Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

As the chief histrion,
Down to the footlights walks, in some great scena,
Dominating the rest, I see the Admiral himself,
(History’s type of courage, action, faith;)
Behold him sail from Palos, leading his little fleet;
His voyage behold—his return—his great fame,
His misfortunes, calumniators—behold him a prisoner, chain’d,
Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious, in time, I stand, noting the efforts of heroes;
Is the deferment long? bitter the slander, poverty, death?
Lies the seed unreck’d for centuries in the ground? Lo! to God’s due occasion,
Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms,
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

Passage indeed, O soul, to primal thought!
Not lands and seas alone—thy own clear freshness,
The young maturity of brood and bloom;
To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee, and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin;
Of man, the voyage of his mind’s return,
To reason’s early paradise,
Back, back to wisdom’s birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair Creation.

O we can wait no longer!
We too take ship, O soul!
Joyous, we too launch out on trackless seas!
Fearless, for unknown shores, on waves of extasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,) Caroling free—singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.
With laugh, and many a kiss,
(Let others deprecate—let others weep for sin, remorse, humiliation;)
O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee.

Ah, more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in God;
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee;
Sailing these seas, or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time, and Space, and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me, indeed, as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear—love me all over;
Bathe me, O God, in thee—mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendant!
Nameless—the fibre and the breath!
Light of the light—shedding forth universes—thou centre of them!
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving!
Thou moral, spiritual fountain! affection’s source! thou reservoir!
(O pensive soul of me! O thirst unsatisfied! waitest not there?
Waitest not haply for us, somewhere there, the Comrade perfect?)
Thou pulse! thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space!

How should I think—how breathe a single breath—how speak—if, out of myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo! thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full, the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding, O soul, thou journeyest forth;
—What love, than thine and ours could wider amplify?
What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours, O soul?
What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity, perfection, strength?
What cheerful willingness, for others’ sake, to give up all?
For others’ sake to suffer all?

Reckoning ahead, O soul, when thou, the time achiev’d,
(The seas all cross’d, weather’d the capes, the voyage done.)
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain’d,
As, fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,  
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

12

Passage to more than India!  
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?  
O Soul, voyager'st thou indeed on voyages like these?  
Disportest thou on waters such as these?  
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?  
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

225

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas!  
Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling problems!  
You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that, living, never reach'd you.

230

Passage to more than India!  
O secret of the earth and sky!  
Of you, O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and rivers!  
Of you, O woods and fields! Of you, strong mountains of my land!  
Of you, O prairies! Of you, gray rocks!  
O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!  
O day and night, passage to you!

235

O sun and moon, and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!  
Passage to you!

O sun and moon, and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!  
Passage to you!  
Passage—immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!  
Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!  
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!

240

Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?  
Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere brutes?  
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?

245

Sail forth! steer for the deep waters only!  
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me;  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!  
O farther, farther sail!  
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail!