

# Salut au Monde

By Walt Whitman

1

O TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman!  
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!  
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next!  
Each answering all—each sharing the earth with all.

What widens within you, Walt Whitman?  
What waves and soils exuding?  
What climes? what persons and lands are here?  
Who are the infants? some playing, some slumbering?  
Who are the girls? who are the married women?  
Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their arms about each other's necks?  
What rivers are these? what forests and fruits are these?  
What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the mists?  
What myriads of dwellings are they, fill'd with dwellers?

2

Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens;  
Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east—America is provided for in the west;  
Banding the bulge of the earth winds the hot equator,  
Curiously north and south turn the axis-ends;  
Within me is the longest day—the sun wheels in slanting rings—it does not set for months;  
Stretch'd in due time within me the midnight sun just rises above the horizon, and sinks again;  
Within me zones, seas, cataracts, plants, volcanoes, groups,  
Malaysia, Polynesia, and the great West Indian islands.

3

What do you hear, Walt Whitman?

I hear the workman singing, and the farmer's wife singing;  
I hear in the distance the sounds of children, and of animals early in the day;  
I hear quick rifle-cracks from the riflemen of East Tennessee and Kentucky, hunting on hills;  
I hear emulous shouts of Australians, pursuing the wild horse;  
I hear the Spanish dance, with castanets, in the chestnut shade, to the rebeck and guitar;  
I hear continual echoes from the Thames;  
I hear fierce French liberty songs;  
I hear of the Italian boat-sculler the musical recitative of old poems;  
I hear the Virginia plantation-chorus of negroes, of a harvest night, in the glare of pine-knots;  
I hear the strong baritone of the 'long-shore-men of Mannahatta;  
I hear the stevedores unlading the cargoes, and singing;

I hear the screams of the water-fowl of solitary north-west lakes;  
I hear the rustling pattering of locusts, as they strike the grain and grass with the showers of their terrible clouds; I hear the Coptic refrain, toward sundown, pensively falling on the breast of the black venerable vast mother, the Nile; I hear the bugles of raft-tenders on the streams of Kanada;  
I hear the chirp of the Mexican muleteer, and the bells of the mule;  
I hear the Arab muezzin, calling from the top of the mosque;  
I hear the Christian priests at the altars of their churches—I hear the responsive bass and soprano;  
I hear the wail of utter despair of the white-hair'd Irish grandparents, when they learn the death of their grandson;  
I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice, putting to sea at Okotsk;  
I hear the wheeze of the slave-coffle, as the slaves march on—as the husky gangs pass on by twos and threes, fasten'd together with wrist-chains and ankle-chains;  
I hear the entreaties of women tied up for punishment—I hear the sibilant whisk of thongs through the air;  
I hear the Hebrew reading his records and psalms;  
I hear the rhythmic myths of the Greeks, and the strong legends of the Romans;  
I hear the tale of the divine life and bloody death of the beautiful God—the Christ;  
I hear the Hindoo teaching his favorite pupil the loves, wars, adages, transmitted safely to this day, from poets who wrote three thousand years ago.

4

What do you see, Walt Whitman?  
Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?

I see a great round wonder rolling through the air;  
I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, grave-yards, jails, factories, palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads, upon the surface;  
I see the shaded part on one side, where the sleepers are sleeping—and the sun-lit part on the other side,  
I see the curious silent change of the light and shade,  
I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants of them, as my land is to me.

I see plenteous waters;  
I see mountain peaks—I see the sierras of Andes and Alleghanies, where they range;  
I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays, Ghauts;  
I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,  
I see the Rocky Mountains, and the Peak of Winds;  
I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps;  
I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians—and to the north the Dofrafields, and off at sea Mount Hecla;  
I see Vesuvius and Etna—I see the Anahuacs;  
I see the Mountains of the Moon, and the Snow Mountains, and the Red Mountains of Madagascar;  
I see the Vermont hills, and the long string of Cordilleras;  
I see the vast deserts of Western America;  
I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts;  
I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs;  
I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones—the Atlantic and Pacific, the sea of Mexico, the Brazilian sea, and the sea of Peru,  
The Japan waters, those of Hindostan, the China Sea, and the Gulf of Guinea,  
The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British shores, and the Bay of Biscay,  
The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to another of its islands,

The inland fresh-tasted seas of North America,  
The White Sea, and the sea around Greenland.

I behold the mariners of the world;  
Some are in storms—some in the night, with the watch on the look-out;  
Some drifting helplessly—some with contagious diseases.

I behold the sail and steamships of the world, some in clusters in port, some on their voyages;  
Some double the Cape of Storms—some Cape Verde,—others Cape Guardafui, Bon, or Bajadore;  
Others Dondra Head—others pass the Straits of Sunda—others Cape Lopatka—others Behring's Straits;  
Others Cape Horn—others sail the Gulf of Mexico, or along Cuba or Hayti—others Hudson's Bay or Baffin's Bay;  
Others pass the Straits of Dover—others enter the Wash—others the Firth of Solway—others round Cape Clear—others the Land's End;  
Others traverse the Zuyder Zee, or the Scheldt;  
Others add to the exits and entrances at Sandy Hook;  
Others to the comers and goers at Gibraltar, or the Dardanelles;  
Others sternly push their way through the northern winter-packs;  
Others descend or ascend the Obi or the Lena;  
Others the Niger or the Congo—others the Indus, the Burampooter and Cambodia;  
Others wait at the wharves of Manhattan, steam'd up, ready to start;  
Wait, swift and swarthy, in the ports of Australia;  
Wait at Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marseilles, Lisbon, Naples, Hamburg, Bremen, Bordeaux, the Hague, Copenhagen;  
Wait at Valparaiso, Rio Janeiro, Panama;  
Wait at their moorings at Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Galveston, San Francisco.

5

I see the tracks of the rail-roads of the earth;  
I see them welding State to State, city to city, through North America;  
I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe;  
I see them in Asia and in Africa.

I see the electric telegraphs of the earth;  
I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths, losses, gains, passions, of my race.

I see the long river-stripes of the earth; I  
I see where the Mississippi flows—I see where the Columbia flows;  
I see the Great River and the Falls of Niagara;  
I see the Amazon and the Paraguay;  
I see the four great rivers of China, the Amour, the Yellow River, the Yiang-tse, and the Pearl;  
I see where the Seine flows, and where the Danube, the Loire, the Rhone, and the Guadalquiver flow;  
I see the windings of the Volga, the Dnieper, the Oder;  
I see the Tuscan going down the Arno, and the Venetian along the Po;  
I see the Greek seaman sailing out of Egina bay.

6

I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that of Persia, and that of India;  
I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of Saukara.

I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by avatars in human forms;  
I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth—oracles, sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, lamas, monks,  
muftis, exhorters;  
I see where druids walked the groves of Mona—I see the mistletoe and vervain;  
I see the temples of the deaths of the bodies of Gods—I see the old signifiers.

I see Christ once more eating the bread of his last supper, in the midst of youths and old persons;  
I see where the strong divine young man, the Hercules, toil'd faithfully and long, and then died;  
I see the place of the innocent rich life and hapless fate of the beautiful nocturnal son, the full-limb'd Bacchus;  
I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown of feathers on his head;  
I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-beloved, saying to the people, Do not weep for me,  
This is not my true country, I have lived banish'd from my true country—I now go back there,  
I return to the celestial sphere, where every one goes in his turn.

7

I see the battle-fields of the earth—grass grows upon them, and blossoms and corn;  
I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.

I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of the unknown events, heroes, records of the earth.

I see the places of the sagas;  
I see pine-trees and fir-trees torn by northern blasts;  
I see granite boulders and cliffs—I see green meadows and lakes;  
I see the burial-cairns of Scandinavian warriors;  
I see them raised high with stones, by the marge of restless oceans, that the dead men's spirits, when they  
wearied of their quiet graves, might rise up through the mounds, and gaze on the tossing billows, and be  
refresh'd by storms, immensity, liberty, action.  
I see the steppes of Asia;  
I see the tumuli of Mongolia—I see the tents of Kalmucks and Baskirs;  
I see the nomadic tribes, with herds of oxen and cows;  
I see the table-lands notch'd with ravines—I see the jungles and deserts;  
I see the camel, the wild steed, the bustard, the fat-tail'd sheep, the antelope, and the burrowing wolf.

I see the high-lands of Abyssinia;  
I see flocks of goats feeding, and see the fig-tree, tamarind, date,  
And see fields of teff-wheat, and see the places of verdure and gold.

I see the Brazilian vaquero;  
I see the Bolivian ascending Mount Sorata;  
I see the Wacho crossing the plains—I see the incomparable rider of horses with his lasso on his arm;  
I see over the pampas the pursuit of wild cattle for their hides.

8

I see little and large sea-dots, some inhabited, some uninhabited;  
I see two boats with nets, lying off the shore of Paumanok, quite still;  
I see ten fishermen waiting—they discover now a thick school of mossbonkers—they drop the join'd seine-ends  
in the water,  
The boats separate—they diverge and row off, each on its rounding course to the beach, enclosing the  
mossbonkers;  
The net is drawn in by a windlass by those who stop ashore,  
Some of the fishermen lounge in their boats—others stand negligently ankle-deep in the water, pois'd on strong  
legs;  
The boats are partly drawn up—the water slaps against them;  
On the sand, in heaps and winrows, well out from the water, lie the green-back'd spotted mossbonkers.

9

I see the despondent red man in the west, lingering about the banks of Moingo, and about Lake Pepin;  
He has heard the quail and beheld the honey-bee, and sadly prepared to depart.

I see the regions of snow and ice;  
I see the sharp-eyed Samoiede and the Finn;  
I see the seal-seeker in his boat, poising his lance;  
I see the Siberian on his slight-built sledge, drawn by dogs;  
I see the porpoise-hunters—I see the whale-crews of the South Pacific and the North Atlantic;  
I see the cliffs, glaciers, torrents, valleys, of Switzerland—I mark the long winters, and the isolation.

I see the cities of the earth, and make myself at random a part of them;  
I am a real Parisian;  
I am a habitan of Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Constantinople;  
I am of Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne;  
I am of London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Limerick;  
I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brussels, Berne, Frankfort, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence;  
I belong in Moscow, Cracow, Warsaw—or northward in Christiania or Stockholm—or in Siberian Irkutsk—or  
in some street in Iceland;  
I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them again.

10

I see vapors exhaling from unexplored countries;  
I see the savage types, the bow and arrow, the poison'd splint, the fetish, and the obi.

I see African and Asiatic towns;  
I see Algiers, Tripoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuctoo, Monrovia;  
I see the swarms of Pekin, Canton, Benares, Delhi, Calcutta, Yedo;  
I see the Kruman in his hut, and the Dahoman and Ashanteeman in their huts;  
I see the Turk smoking opium in Aleppo;  
I see the picturesque crowds at the fairs of Khiva, and those of Herat;  
I see Teheran—I see Muscat and Medina, and the intervening sands—I see the caravans toiling onward;  
I see Egypt and the Egyptians—I see the pyramids and obelisks;  
I look on chisel'd histories, songs, philosophies, cut in slabs of sand-stone, or on granite-blocks;  
I see at Memphis mummy-pits, containing mummies, embalm'd, swathed in linen cloth, lying there many

centuries;

I look on the fall'n Theban, the large-ball'd eyes, the side-drooping neck, the hands folded across the breast.

I see the menials of the earth, laboring;

I see the prisoners in the prisons;

I see the defective human bodies of the earth;

I see the blind, the deaf and dumb, idiots, hunchbacks, lunatics;

I see the pirates, thieves, betrayers, murderers, slave-makers of the earth;

I see the helpless infants, and the helpless old men and women.

I see male and female everywhere;

I see the serene brotherhood of philosophers;

I see the constructiveness of my race;

I see the results of the perseverance and industry of my race;

I see ranks, colors, barbarisms, civilizations—I go among them—I mix indiscriminately,

And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.

11

You, whoever you are!

You daughter or son of England!

You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires! you Russ in Russia!

You dim-descended, black, divine-soul'd African, large, fine-headed, nobly-form'd, superbly destin'd, on equal terms with me!

You Norwegian! Swede! Dane! Icelander! you Prussian!

You Spaniard of Spain! you Portuguese!

You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France!

You Belge! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands!

You sturdy Austrian! you Lombard! Hun! Bohemian! farmer of Styria!

You neighbor of the Danube!

You working-man of the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Weser! you working-woman too!

You Sardinian! you Bavarian! Swabian! Saxon! Wallachian! Bulgarian!

You citizen of Prague! Roman! Neapolitan! Greek!

You lithe matador in the arena at Seville!

You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or Caucasus!

You Bokh horse-herd, watching your mares and stallions feeding!

You beautiful-bodied Persian, at full speed in the saddle, shooting arrows to the mark!

You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China! you Tartar of Tartary!

You women of the earth subordinated at your tasks!

You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk, to stand once on Syrian ground!

You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!

You thoughtful Armenian, pondering by some stream of the Euphrates! you peering amid the ruins of Nineveh!  
you ascending Mount Ararat!

You foot-worn pilgrim welcoming the far-away sparkle of the minarets of Mecca!

You sheiks along the stretch from Suez to Bab-el-mandeb, ruling your families and tribes!

You olive-grower tending your fruit on fields of Nazareth, Damascus, or Lake Tiberias!

You Thibet trader on the wide inland, or bargaining in the shops of Lassa!

You Japanese man or woman! you liver in Madagascar, Ceylon, Sumatra, Borneo!

All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of place!

All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes of the sea!

And you of centuries hence, when you listen to me!  
And you, each and everywhere, whom I specify not, but include just the same!  
Health to you! Good will to you all—from me and America sent.

Each of us inevitable;  
Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth;  
Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth;  
Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

12

You Hottentot with clicking palate! You woolly-hair'd hordes!  
You own'd persons, dropping sweat-drops or blood-drops!  
You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive countenances of brutes!  
I dare not refuse you—the scope of the world, and of time and space, are upon me.

You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look down upon, for all your glimmering language and spirituality!  
You low expiring aborigines of the hills of Utah, Oregon, California!  
You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!  
You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive lip, grovelling, seeking your food!  
You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!  
You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd, Bedowee!  
You plague-swarms in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!  
You bather bathing in the Ganges!  
You benighted roamer of Amazonia! you Patagonian! you Fejee-man!  
You peon of Mexico! you slave of Carolina, Texas, Tennessee!  
I do not prefer others so very much before you either;  
I do not say one word against you, away back there, where you stand;  
(You will come forward in due time to my side.)

My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination around the whole earth;  
I have look'd for equals and lovers, and found them ready for me in all lands;  
I think some divine rapport has equalized me with them.

13

O vapors! I think I have risen with you, and moved away to distant continents, and fallen down there, for reasons;  
I think I have blown with you, O winds;  
O waters, I have finger'd every shore with you.

I have run through what any river or strait of the globe has run through;  
I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas, and on the high embedded rocks, to cry thence.

*Salut au monde!*

What cities the light or warmth penetrates, I penetrate those cities myself;  
All islands to which birds wing their way, I wing my way myself.

Toward all,  
I raise high the perpendicular hand—I make the signal,  
To remain after me in sight forever,  
For all the haunts and homes of men.