

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean,
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,

We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of
 sight of the land,
 Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,
 Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,
 Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths, 455
 Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd yet always-ready
 graves,
 Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,
 I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation,
 Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each others' arms. 460

I am he attesting sympathy,
 (Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house
 that supports them?)

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the
 poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
 Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand 465
 indifferent,
 My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
 I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?
 Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and
 rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side a balance, 470
 Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine,
 Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions,
 There is no better than it and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well to-day is not
 such a wonder, 475
 The wonder is always and always how there can be a mean
 man or an infidel.⁸

8. In their reconciliation of apparent opposites, lines 464–76 suggest the influence of Hegel, in whose dialectic WW was much interested. For more on the possible significance of the German philosopher for WW, see the entry on Hegel in J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds., *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1998), 271–72.