

Name: _____ Class: _____

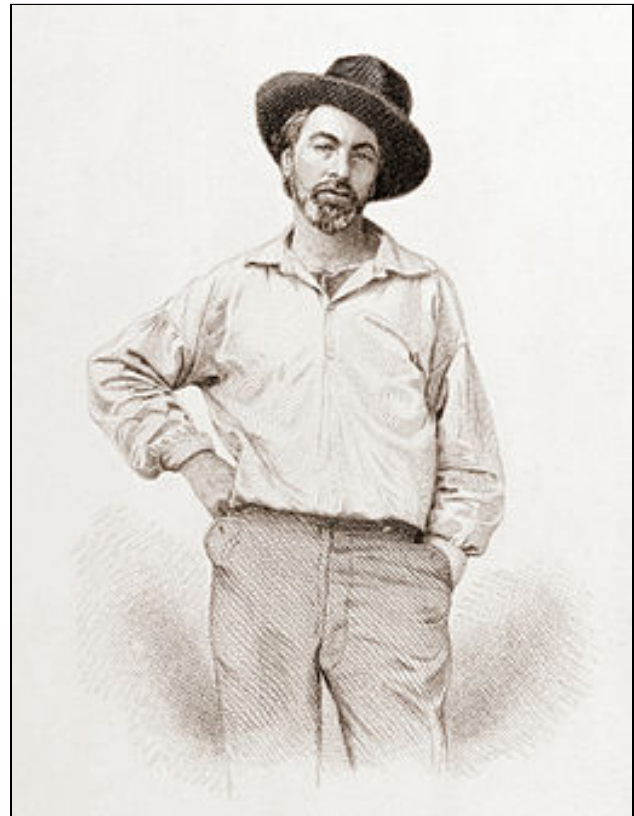
I Hear America Singing

By Walt Whitman

From "Leaves Of Grass" Via Project Gutenberg • 1855

Walt Whitman is a famous American poet, often called the father of "free verse," who wrote during the time of urbanization in America. As you read, consider the images in the poem and the effect they have on the mood.

- [1] I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it
 should be blithe¹ and strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his
 plank or beam,
 The mason² singing his as he makes ready for
 work, or leaves off work,
- [5] The boatman singing what belongs to him in his
 boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat
 deck,
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench,
 the hatter singing as he stands,
 The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy³'s on his
 way in the morning, or at noon intermission
 or at sundown,
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the
 young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or
 washing,
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to
 none else,
- [10] The day what belongs to the day—at night the
 party of young fellows, robust⁴, friendly,
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious
 songs.



"Walt Whitman Steel Engraving" is in the public domain.

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1. **Blithe (adjective):** carefree, joyous
2. Someone who builds with stone
3. A boy who guides work animals across a farm, drawing a plough
4. **Robust (adjective):** strong and healthy; vigorous

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. How do the images in the poem contribute to overall theme? Cite at least two pieces of specific evidence from the text in your response. [RL.2]

2. PART A: In the final line, what does the phrase "Singing with open mouths" suggest about what it means to be American? [RL.3]

- A. that they are diverse, open-minded, tolerant people.
- B. that they want to be heard.
- C. that they are generous and benevolent people.
- D. that they are bold and proud people.

3. PART B: Which phrase provides the best support for the answer to Part A? [RL.1]

- A. "varied carols"
- B. "blithe and strong"
- C. "what belongs to him or her and to none else"
- D. "delicious singing of the mother"

4. Walt Whitman has been called the father of the free verse. What effect does this poetic form have on the poem overall? [RL.5]
