

ON COMPARING WHITMAN'S LEAVES
WITH UNCLE NICK GRINDSTAFF'S TOMBSTONE
MILE 398, APPALACHIAN TRAIL

both monuments in the wilderness
raise eyebrows of passersby
music in the leaves

songbirds, wildflower dance
think of walt wandering naked
along the fern crowded timber creek

"lived alone, suffered alone, and died alone"
claims nick's tombstone. consider it not so.
consider a romantic nick, laughing, shouting,

"allons, after the great companions!"
and we with our backpacks
"to belong to them!"