A STUDENT APOLOGIZES

It is the end of the week, and all day
I have had things my way;
and it's spring --
the sky flies open over everything!
The air is humming, my cat pines
by the open window: how, then, turn my mind
to sober thought, when my song so
wants to be sung, but it's yours I'll need to
know
come Monday--

the hell with you, Walt Whitman!

No--forgive me, old mother, old man--
it's work my wiliness curses. Blessed old
bard, I'll set
my vagrant song aside a while, and rest
in the wilderness of your beard, learn your song
instead.
My own can be nothing but the better for it.

ON STUDYING WHITMAN INDOORS

Come into this classroom, Walt.
Turn us all out of doors. Take us
To the long beaches to read your poems.
Shout your words against the breakers,
The cry of gulls and the sea's wind.
Fling your arms about us
Where we sit huddled over your books,
Timid, in glasses.
Teach us new laughter, lust.
Point us toward miracles.
Show us our city and the open road.

Barefoot in the grass,
Stretched out, breathing hard,
And touching one another,
We could believe you:
We are your children and comrades.
We know how to walk in this or any weather.