

INTRODUCING *THE MICKLE STREET REVIEW*

Walt Whitman lived for nearly twenty years in Camden, the last eight of them--from 1884 to 1892--in his own house on Mickle Street. From this house he rode out to Timber Creek, where he basked in the sun, and to the ferry dock on the Delaware River, where he crossed and recrossed to Philadelphia and back. Here he wrote many of his last poems, including the collections called "Sands at Seventy" and "Goodbye My Fancy," and made the final revisions in his "Deathbed Edition" of *Leaves of Grass*. Here he designed his tomb in Harleigh Cemetary, suffered his last illness, and died. His home on Mickle Street remains his memorial, preserved much as it was when he lived there.

But of course, the most important memorial to a poet is the continuing influence exercised by his work on the poets who come after him. This volume, published from the poet's home by the Walt Whitman Association, clearly demonstrates the breadth and vitality of that influence. In fact, the process of putting the volume together has taught the editors that the poem in homage to Whitman has become a sub-genre of American poetry. Established poets and newer poets alike feel a need to recognize in print the place Whitman occupies in their lives. From James Dickey's narrative of his discovery of Whitman on a night flight, to Whitman House Curator Eleanor Ray's narrative of a childhood trip through Whitman's cellar, the writers in this volume make a start toward describing the presence--often felt as a *physical* presence--of the poet in the world around them. Others, such as Richard Eberhart, Robert Creeley, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, remark the ability of Whitman's work to remain relevant to the evolving concerns of poets through the years. Still others, such as Philip Dacey in his extraordinary dialogue between Whitman and Hopkins, probe aspects of Whitman's personal and poetic character that have never previously been explored.

But this volume is only a start. *The Mickle Street Review* is intended as an annual publication of the best poems, stories, or essays honoring Whitman or explicitly manifesting his influence on American letters, and some outstanding contributions to the second volume have already been received. Further contributions are invited. Meanwhile, the editors would like to acknowledge with gratitude the sponsors of *The Mickle Street Review*, Doris Kellogg Neale and Dr. Harold Barnshaw, as well as the assistance of Camden College of Arts and Sciences and University College, Rutgers University, Camden.

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