is said to have been taken in Woodbury, New York, in the summer of 1840, when Whitman was teaching school there. According to Professor Allen that date is improbable, though not impossible. Though the Woodbury daguerreotype has been lost, another taken around the same time, the earliest known, is in the Whitman House in Camden, New Jersey. This portrait of Whitman taken before his "metamorphosis" shows "a supercilious young man with a neat beard—without moustache—wearing a fashionable coat and hat, a foulard tie, fondling a walking cane. He himself is obviously impressed by his natty appearance." (p. 130)

One of the more famous daguerreotypes is the engraved frontpiece of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. This was probably taken in 1854 by Gabriel Harrison. Taken outside on a hot July day, Allen speculates how difficult it must have been to have held such a rigid pose without support for the length of time it took the image to impress, and yet this engraving from the Harrison daguerreotype "would become known as the first Whitman icon." (p. 131)

By 1860 photography replaced daguerreotypography and Mathew Brady's gallery on Broadway in New York became a showplace of photographs of famous people collected as a tribute to social history. Brady also had a gallery in Washington by 1862 and photographed Whitman at the height of his Civil War service.

In 1869 the famous "Moses picture" was taken by Frank Pearsall and later became one of the most widely published photos of Whitman. Allen comments on the mystical suggestion of this photo and several others taken about the same time by apparently the same artist.

Allen retells the story of the Philadelphia firm of Phillip and Taylor's legendary shot of Whitman in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, with a butterfly perched on his finger. This was used as a frontpiece for his 1889 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, much to the delight of the romantic minded, who saw a "poet so close to nature, butterflies landed on his outstretched arms." The truth became apparent when Esther Shepard discovered a cardboard butterfly in one of the poet's notebooks in the Library of Congress.

George C. Cox took the portrait Whitman called "the laughing philosopher" on April 15, 1887, in New York. Cox was one of America's great photographers of the 19th century, and photographed many famous people, though he only copyrighted two photos, both of Whitman. These he later sold to raise money for the sick and aging poet.

In trying to publicize Whitman in the early 1900's, several sculptures, murals and other artifacts were created. The Walt Whitman Hotel, built in Camden, New Jersey in 1926, commissioned two Philadelphia artists to paint the murals. The largest in the main lobby was created by Robert E. Johnson and was a highly symbolic portrayal of Whitman charging men and women with his spiritual power. This mural has since been destroyed.

Allen mentions the commercialized versions of Whitman that have appeared in the mid and later 1900's. Along with several caricatures, Allen feels a gross misrepresentation is produced by commercial art, and cites the cover of Signet's *Leaves of Grass* as an example. Several of Whitman's poems have been illustrated, the most famous being Jacob Epstein's illustrations of the "Calamus" poems.

The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman is completed with a bibliography of Gay Wilson Allen which includes a listing of books, chapters or reprinted selections in books, articles and reviews.

— Jessica Chielli

WALT WHITMAN: A LIFE, by Justin Kaplan. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980.

Justin Kaplan's sympathetic biography, *Walt Whitman: A Life*, attempts to trace those forces which shaped Whitman, forces which made him the foremost of all American poets. Kaplan, admittedly, fails to isolate the creative surge that fueled *Leaves of Grass* in the 1850's. He does, however, realize a portrait of Whitman as very much the quintessential American who sought to purge his poetic style and poetic subject matter of European trappings. Still, Kaplan judges Whitman as the "Supreme American inheritor of Romanticism," and he makes this judgment despite Whitman's having skinned his poetry of readily identifiable influences. Whitman, like the Romantics, concentrated upon self, the celebration and reenactment of the process "of becoming." Kaplan writes that "*Leaves of Grass* was to celebrate

the conquest of loneliness through the language of common modern speech'' (189).

Kaplan sees Whitman's journalistic sojourn in New Orleans in 1848 as vital to the development of *Leaves of Grass*, for it was in New Orleans that Whitman, apparently, had a significant homosexual experience. This experience probably helped Whitman to realize his true sexual identity, and Whitman, echoing Emanuel Swedenborg, perceived '''a close connection . . . between the state we call religious ecstasy and the desire to copulate' '' . . . (192-93). Kaplan remarks that ''Regardless of whatever romances he did or did not have there, New Orleans stood for a heightened recognition of the self and its needs'' (143). Kaplan also sees the seeds of *Leaves of Grass* as sprouting within the political ferment of the Free Soil movement, and Whitman, himself, used his various newspaper positions as a forum for Free Soil views. Kaplan emphasizes that Whitman straddled both the era of post-Revolutionary War America and the era of the Civil War. (Whitman saw Lafayette and once delivered legal documents to a resurrected Aaron Burr.) Whitman incisively saw the Civil War as the litmus test of the fledgling American democracy; as that pivotal event that would make or break the union. Therefore, Kaplan is quite correct when he interprets Whitman's views of the war as not preoccupied with the slavery issue, but rather as preoccupied with the survival of the union. Abraham Lincoln, then, becomes Whitman's hero—the savior of the union.

Kaplan also effectively charts the economic vagaries of Whitman and his family. The fortunes of the Whitman family were mostly on a downward slide, and Whitman, himself, went through a battery of jobs, and for stretches of his adulthood he barely scraped out a living. Whitman, remarkably, once launched with *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, stuck with his poetry, even though financial support was spasmodic at best. (I am not sure that Kaplan decisively comes to grips with Whitman's determination to write in the face of severe financial pressures. Soft government jobs in Washington during and after the Civil War did cushion Whitman's livelihood for a number of years.) What Kaplan does effectively focus upon is Whitman's uneven intercourse with the New England literary establishment. Whitman audaciously grafted Ralph Waldo Emerson's laudatory letter about *Leaves of Grass* upon that book's second edition, but in subsequent years Emerson

sought to distance himself from Whitman, and when Emerson edited a poetry anthology, *Parnassus*, in 1874, Whitman's poetry was not included. Kaplan does qualify Emerson's stunning omission by noting that Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville were also left out, and by further observing that Emerson's daughter Edith, who had no love for Whitman, guided the nearly senile Emerson in his endeavor. Whitman ''was at the end of his rope'' in the mid-1870's and it was actually a coterie of English admirers who bailed him out. He acknowledged his financial debt to his English supporters, and Kaplan justifiably quotes him: ''The blessed gales from the British Islands . . . plucked me like a brand from the burning, and gave me life again . . . I do not forget it, . . . and if I ever have a biographer I charge him to put it in the narrative'' (358).

The most moving sections of Kaplan's book deal with the poet's relationship with his mother. Kaplan writes that ''For a long time he thought of himself as his mother's child. Louisa Whitman was not a reader like her husband, but she was 'strangely knowing' '' (63). Whitman said that *Leaves of Grass* was the infusion of his mother's temperament inside of him, and when she died Whitman ''slept in her bed, . . . read at her table, sat in the mahogany armchair he gave her a few years before *Leaves of Grass* came out'' (348). Whitman's tender relationship with his mother was, perhaps, the only satisfactory one that he had with a woman, for his sexual preference was decidedly male, and this preference finds expression in his Calamus poems and in his Civil War experience as a volunteer nurse. It was after the Civil War that Whitman had perhaps his most sustained relationship with a male, and that was with Peter Doyle, an ex-Confederate soldier who, at the time of his meeting Whitman, was a Washington street car conductor. Like the mysterious undocumented New Orleans liaison, the Doyle affair indicates Whitman's homosexuality, and this becomes significant when one considers the stigma attached to homosexuality in 19th Century America. Part of Whitman struggled to forge a poetry that was unadulterated Americana, while another part of him struggled to get out what seethed inside of him. The terrific tension in his work reflects the conflict between his public self and his private self, and Kaplan's portrait explores both of the poet's selves, although I'm not sure that he reconciles them. Kaplan does, however, see Whitman as his mother's son, and he places him squarely in the turbulent New York City of pre-Civil War America.

— William R. Kanouse