

English 8: Reading: Module 2: Lesson 5: Section 4

Poetic Forms

Conventions

Instructions: Using the space provided in the blank text boxes, respond to each question about the poem.

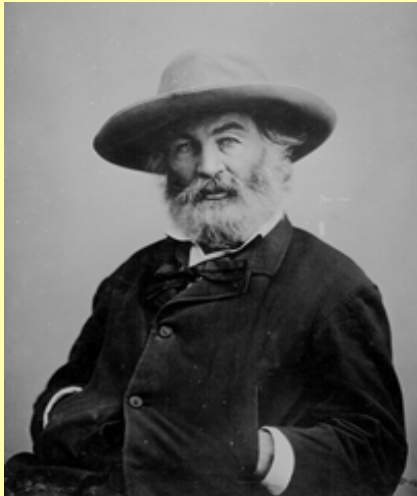
CONVENTIONS

Epic Poetry

- Figure of national importance
- Deeds of great valor
- Supernatural intervention
- Lofty style
- In medias res
- Invocation of the muse
- Epic similes

Lyric Poetry

- Imagination
- Emotion
- Melody
- Meter



Source: Walt Whitman, Marion Doss, Flickr

Walt Whitman, who lived from 1819 to 1892, is considered one of America’s most original authors. When he wrote his famous poem “Song of Myself,” he chose not only to include some conventions of the traditional epic poem but also to go beyond the conventions to create a new statement about America. While ancient epic poems celebrate the long held values of a society, “Song of Myself” represents Whitman’s belief that America was still in the process of creating itself and that new ideas were as valuable as old ones. In this excerpt, he invites himself and other Americans to celebrate themselves in their own ways. You will notice that the language has qualities of lyric poetry as well.

From **Song of Myself** by Walt Whitman

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
 And what I assume you shall assume,
 For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

1. How does Whitman express emotion in this passage? Write your answer in the box and mouse over the button to see a sample response to this question.

Sample Response



Source: Idlewild 1 MontCo PA, Smallbones, Wikimedia

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.
My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,

2. When the speaker is relaxing delightfully, “observing a spear of summer grass,” what does he think about? Write your answer in the box and mouse over the button to see a sample response to this question.

Sample Response



Source: Walt Whitman, steel engraving, July 1854, Samuel Hollyer, Wikimedia

I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

3. What quality does the speaker now enjoy that he hopes to hang onto for the rest of his life? Write your answer in the box and mouse over the button to see a sample response to this question.

Sample Response

4. **Your Turn:** Now, write your own version of “Song of Myself.” Begin with the first line below, and then add lines that (1) express your own emotions, (2) show a realization, and (3) indicate a wish you have for the rest of your life. Since answers will vary, no sample response is provided.

Song of Myself by:

I celebrate my own life, a sing a song about myself,