

***The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair – Realism in Literature**

Not since Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had there been a book that would affect such a large part of the American public and move them to action. In some of the most harrowing scenes ever written in modern literature, Upton Sinclair vividly depicted factory life in Chicago in the first years of the 20th century. The horrors of the slaughterhouse, their barbarous working conditions...the crushing poverty, the disease and the despair—he revealed all through the eyes of Jurgis Rudkus, a young Lithuanian immigrant who came to the New World to build a home for himself and his family. Published in 1906, *The Jungle* not only aroused the indignation of the public, but forced a government investigation that led to the passage of pure food laws. It also established its young author as one of the world's leading spokesmen for the rights of the workingman.

Excerpt from Chapter 5

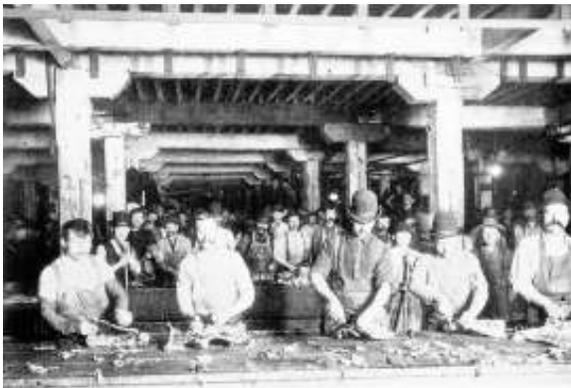
Now Antanas Rudkus was the meekest man that God ever put on earth; and so Jurgis found it a striking confirmation of what the men all said, that his father had been at work only two days before he came home as bitter as any of them, and cursing Durham's with all the power of his soul. For they had set him to cleaning out the traps; and the family sat round and listened in wonder while he told them what that meant. It seemed that he was working in the room where the men prepared the beef for canning, and the beef had lain in vats full of chemicals, and men with great forks speared it out and dumped it into trucks, to be taken to the cooking-room. When they had speared out all they could reach, they emptied the vat on the floor, and then with shovels scraped up the balance and dumped it into the truck. This floor was filthy, yet they set Antanas with his mop slopping the "pickle" into a hole that connected with a sink, where it was caught and used over again forever; and if that were not enough, there was a trap in the pipe, where all the scraps of meat and odds and ends of refuse were caught, and every few days it was the old man's task to clean these out, and shovel their contents into one of the trucks with the rest of the meat!

Excerpt from Chapter 9

Jurgis heard of these things little by little, in the gossip of those who were obliged to perpetrate them. It seemed as if every time you met a person from a new department, you heard of new swindles and new crimes. There was, for instance, a Lithuanian who was a cattle-butcher for the plant where Marija had worked, which killed meat for canning only; and to hear this man describe the animals which came to his place would have been worth while for a Dante or a Zola. It seemed that they must have agencies all over the country, to hunt out old and crippled and diseased cattle to be canned. There were cattle which had been fed on "whisky-malt," the refuse of the breweries, and had become what the men called "steerly"— which means covered with boils. It was a nasty job killing these, for when you plunged your knife into them they would burst and splash foul-smelling stuff into your face; and when a man's sleeves were smeared with blood, and his hands steeped in it, how was he ever to wipe his face, or to clear his eyes so that he could see? It was stuff such as this that made the "embalmed beef" that had killed several times as many United States soldiers as all the bullets of the Spaniards; only the army beef, besides, was not fresh canned, it was old stuff that had been lying for years in the cellars.

Excerpt from Chapter 15

It was only when the whole ham was spoiled that it came into the department of Elzbieta. Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions-a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make any difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was mouldy and white—it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shovelled into carts, and the man who did the shovelling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit. There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the plants, that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the waste-barrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails and stale water—and cart load after cart load of it would be taken up and dumped into the hoppers with fresh meat, and sent out to the public's breakfast. Some of it they would make into “smoked” sausage—but as the smoking took time, and was therefore expensive, they would call upon their chemistry department, and preserve it with borax and color it with gelatine to make it brown. All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it “special,” and for this they would charge two cents more a pound.



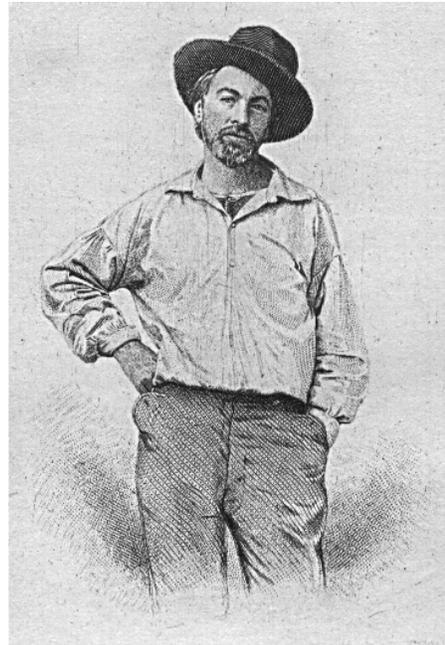
Walt Whitman

Born on May 31, 1819, Walt Whitman was the second son of Walter Whitman, a housebuilder, and Louisa Van Velsor. The family, which consisted of nine children, lived in Brooklyn and Long Island in the 1820s and 1830s.

At the age of twelve, Whitman began to learn the printer's trade, and fell in love with the written word. Largely self-taught, he read voraciously, becoming acquainted with the works of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and the Bible.

Whitman worked as a printer in New York City until a devastating fire in the printing district demolished the industry. In 1836, at the age of 17, he began his career as teacher in the one-room school houses of Long Island. He continued to teach until 1841, when he turned to journalism as a full-time career.

He founded a weekly newspaper, *Long-Islander*, and later edited a number of Brooklyn and New York papers. In 1848, Whitman left the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* to become editor of the New Orleans *Crescent*. It was in New Orleans that he experienced at first hand the viciousness of slavery in the slave markets of that city. On his return to Brooklyn in the fall of 1848, he founded a "free soil" newspaper, the *Brooklyn Freeman*, and continued to develop the unique style of poetry that later so astonished Ralph Waldo Emerson.



**Engraving of Walt Whitman from 1854
that appeared on the inside cover of
*Leaves of Grass***

In 1855, Whitman took out a copyright on the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which consisted of twelve untitled poems and a preface. He published the volume himself, and sent a copy to Emerson in July of 1855. Whitman released a second edition of the book in 1856, containing thirty-three poems, a letter from Emerson praising the first edition, and a long open letter by Whitman in response. During his subsequent career, Whitman continued to refine the volume, publishing several more editions of the book.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Whitman vowed to live a "purged" and "cleansed" life. He wrote freelance journalism and visited the wounded at New York-area hospitals. He then traveled to Washington, D.C. in December 1862 to care for his brother who had been wounded in the war.

Overcome by the suffering of the many wounded in Washington, Whitman decided to stay and work in the hospitals and stayed in the city for eleven years. He took a job as a clerk for the Department of the Interior, which ended when the Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan, discovered that Whitman was the author of *Leaves of Grass*, which Harlan found offensive. Harlan fired the poet.

Whitman struggled to support himself through most of his life. In Washington, he lived on a clerk's salary and modest royalties, and spent any excess money, including gifts from friends, to buy supplies for the patients he nursed. He had also been sending money to his widowed mother and an invalid brother. From time to time writers both in the states and in England sent him "purses" of money so that he could get by.

In the early 1870s, Whitman settled in Camden, NJ, where he had come to visit his dying mother at his brother's house. However, after suffering a stroke, Whitman found it impossible to return to Washington. He stayed with his brother until the 1882 publication of *Leaves of Grass* gave Whitman enough money to buy a home in Camden. In the simple two-story clapboard house, Whitman spent his declining years working on additions and revisions to a new edition of the book and preparing his final volume of poems and prose, *Good-Bye, My Fancy* (1891). After his death on March 26, 1892, Whitman was buried in a tomb he designed and had built on a lot in Harleigh Cemetery.

O Captain! My Captain! By Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 The arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

“I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter’s song—the ploughboy’s, on his way in the morning, or at the noon
intermission, or at sundown;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

“I Sit and Look Out” by Walt Whitman

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame,
 I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done,
 I see in low life the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate,
 I see the wife misused by her husband, I see the treacherous seducer of young women,
 I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love attempted to be hid, I see these sights on earth,
 I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs and prisoners,
 I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon
 Negroes, and the like;
 All these—all the meanness and agony without end I sitting look out upon,
 See, hear, and am silent.

Vs.

“Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea;
 But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee;
 With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;
 So that her highborn kinsman came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
 Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we,
 Of many far wiser than we;
 And neither the angels in heaven above,
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams without bringing me
 dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

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From *Song of Myself*

1

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

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

Creeds and schools in abeyance¹,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night,
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams reflected,
And debouch to the steady and central from the offspring great or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes,
I sleep—I sleep long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me.
Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is Happiness.

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,

It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.
I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.
I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.
You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

“Because I could not stop for Death” by Emily
Dickenson (1862)

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;
The dews grew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

“I heard a Fly buzz by” Emily Dickenson (1896)

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset - when the King
Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable - and then it was
There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -
Between the light - and me -
And then the Windows failed - and then
I could not see to see -

“Dare you see a Soul at the White Heat?” by Emily
Dickenson (1862)

Then crouch within the door—
Red—is the Fire's common tint—
But when the vivid Ore
Has vanquished Flame's conditions,
It quivers from the Forge
Without a color, but the light
Of unanointed Blaze.
Least Village has its Blacksmith
Whose Anvil's even ring
Stands symbol for the finer Forge
That soundless tugs—within—
Refining these impatient Ores
With Hammer, and with Blaze
Until the Designated Light
Repudiate the Forge—

“Before I got my eye put out” by Emily
Dickenson (1862)

Before I got my eye put out –
I liked as well to see
As other creatures, that have eyes –
And know no other way –

But were it told to me, Today,
That I might have the Sky
For mine, I tell you that my Heart
Would split, for size of me –

The Meadows – mine –
The Mountains – mine –
All Forests – Stintless stars –
As much of noon, as I could take –
Between my finite eyes –

The Motions of the Dipping Birds –
The Morning’s Amber Road –
For mine – to look at when I liked,
The news would strike me dead –

So safer – guess – with just my soul
Upon the window pane
Where other creatures put their eyes –
Incautious – of the Sun –

I’m Nobody! Who are you? by Emily
Dickenson (1858)

I’M Nobody! Who are you?
Are you--Nobody--too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Dont tell! they'd advertise--you know!
How dreary--to be--Somebody!
How public--like a Frog--
To tell your name--the livelong June--
To an admiring Bog!

“Faith is a fine invention” by Emily Dickenson
(1860)

Faith” is a fine invention
For Gentlemen who *see!*
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency!

“Hope is the thing with feathers” by Emily
Dickenson (1860)

"HOPE" is the thing with feathers--
That perches in the soul--
And sings the tune without the words--
And never stops--at all--
And sweetest--in the Gale--is heard--
And sore must be the storm--
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm--
I've heard it in the chilliest land--
And on the strangest Sea--
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb--Of Me.

“

"The Story of An Hour"
Kate Chopin (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul. She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window. She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under hte breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.