

This Compost

Behold this compost! behold it well!

Perhaps every mite was once form'd part of a sick person - yet behold!

The grass of spring covers the prairies,

The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden,

The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,

The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,

The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves.

What chemistry!

That the winds are really infectious,

That all is clean forever and forever,

That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,

That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,

That the fruits of the apple-orchard and the orange-orchard, that melons, grapes, peaches,

plums, will none of them poison me,

That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease

Now I am terrified at the Earth, it is that calm and patient,

It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,

It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless succession of diseased corpses,

It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,

It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last.

—Walt Whitman (1819-1892)