"I Hear America Singing" offers a chance to observe and analyze Whitmanian free verse in microcosm. In eleven lines, Whitman offers a hymn of praise to the many different people in his nation and the various songs they sing. I hear America singing, the varied carols 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 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. him or 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. Leaves of Grass could not have been written in England.

WHITMAN AND SAROYAN: SINGING THE SONG ~F AMERICA

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Abstract

Argues for the importance of Whitman in the work of William Saroyan and compares these writers' lives, examining Saroyan's statements about Whitman, especially in the essay "What Makes American Writing American."

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Recommended Citation


"WHEN WAS THE BEGINNING OF AMERICAN WRITING?" William Saroyan asked in an essay of 1956. at thirteen Saroyan. America was his limitless arena. Scotland. and anybody with sufficient intelligence, like Whitman. Wales. Although Whitman is describing actual songs in this poem, there are instances earlier in the collection where he uses the word "sing" to stand in for "write" when referring to his poetry. This is because of Whitman's belief that poetry was strongest as an oral medium. Whitman wanted his poems to be spoken aloud because the words became more powerful when they can transcend the page. Ultimately, "I Hear America Singing" is a love poem to the nation. Whitman uses the small variations in individual experiences to crafts a wholesome, honest, and hardworking American identity. Next Section "To You" (Book I) Summary and Analysis. Previous Section "For Him I Sing" Summary and Analysis. Buy Study Guide.