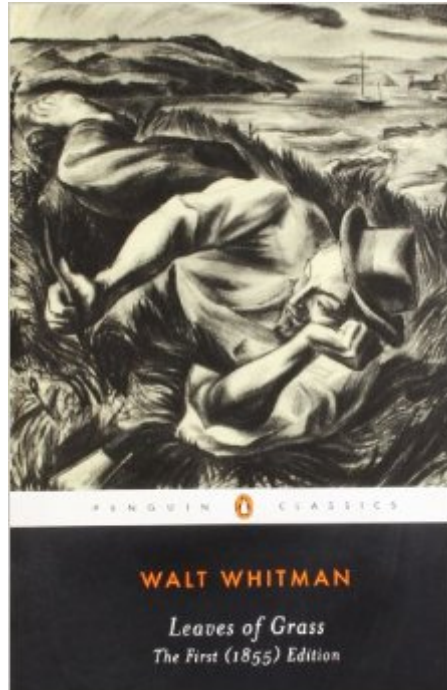


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Leaves Of Grass: The First (1855) Edition (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

“I am large, I contain multitudes.” When Walt Whitman self-published his *Leaves of Grass* in July 1855, he altered the course of literary history. One of the greatest masterpieces of American literature, it redefined the rules of poetry while describing the soul of the American character. Throughout his great career, Whitman continuously revised, expanded, and republished *Leaves of Grass*, but many critics believe that the book that matters most is the 1855 original. Penguin Classics proudly presents that text in its original and complete form, with an introductory essay by the writer and poet Malcolm Cowley. “I celebrate myself, and sing myself, And what I assume you shall assume, For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.” For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

The 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* was the first and the best. When I was young I bought the big deathbed edition, not knowing about the 1855 one. I became a Whitman disciple. Either version is a

good place to start, but the 1855 is the best version of the early poems and a fine introduction to W.W. The 1855 version was ignored for quite a long time in Whitman studies, but started receiving critical attention after Malcolm Cowley worked to revive it in the 1950's. It was his version that used to be available, until recently, as a Penguin Classic. So what's the difference between 1855 and the Deathbed one? Throughout his lifetime, Whitman not only expanded LOG, his only book, with gobs of inferior-- and sometimes truly awful-- poems (especially when he was older) but he also revised many of his early poems for later editions-- revising them almost always for the worse. The 1855 edition is relatively short and reflects the diminutive, obscure quality of the original. The poems are full of Whitman's original fire before he tinkered with them. Bloom, the author of the introduction, is in the estimation of many America's best living literary critic. He profoundly knows and adores Walt Whitman. If you have the slightest interest in reading American Poetry, drop whatever you are reading (unless it is perhaps Dickinson or Emerson) and get this book. It's still America's best. Nothing since has been (and nothing will ever be) better. The only American poets after Whitman who mattered were deep readers of LOG: Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens, TS Eliot, John Ashbury. (A Ginsberg, C. Sandberg, and O. Paz resemble him superficially but they are works).

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