

## Poets to Come – Summary and Analysis

*Leaves of Grass* is a volume that holds the greatest philosophies and theories carefully impregnated into verses by Walt Whitman. He kept on adding poems to the 'Leaves' until it became a standard for many young poets to come. Poets to Come is a part of the 'Leaves' and is a message to the future poets and artists asking them to tell the world about his principles.

### Summary of the poem

The nine lined lyric poem is a very straight forward piece by Whitman. The poet calls out poets, orators, singers and musicians of the future to justify his writings. Whitman says that he is not going to justify his principles but expects the new generation to understand them and propagate his principles. The poet living in his era has done what he could with all the restrictions and historical events happening around him. But, they have only made him to present an inadequate explanation of thoughts.

His principles are left to the future as a theory which needs to be understood and explained. In addition, Whitman says that a poet or an artist should seek Universal knowledge, look forward and not dwell into the past often. That is the only way one can become "greater than before known". So, he expects his successors to arise and do greater things which he could only dwell into a few times.

### Analysis of the poem

Walt Whitman witnessed a lot of turbulence in America during his time. There was Civil War, anti-slavery movements, immigration conflicts, etc. which challenged the perspectives of many people in the country. Then there was religious turmoil and Whitman himself learnt a lot of religious philosophies during this time. However, all this change and new information according to him was inadequately put as poetry in his *Leaves of Grass*.

'Poets to come' is a call to arms poem asking the American poets and artists to come to look at all the possibilities presented in the world. He states that he can only write a few indicatives for the future and expects the future generations to prove his principles. There is no secrecy in lines when Whitman states, "Poets to come... must justify me. I am a man... expecting the main thing from you."

### Whitman's mind

Walt Whitman's thoughts are complex because he showed interest in transcendental philosophy, theory of evolution, deterministic theory, concepts of Democracy, Platonic ideology, Karmic theory, Vedantic thought, etc. The *Leaves of Grass* in all its editions can be considered as his reflection of these interests and is not easy for everyone to understand the hidden intent expressed by the poet. As it takes a great mind to understand another great mind, he urges his successors in 'Poets to come' to analyze his writings and expand his principles which could be useful to make his country great.

# Classical Arts Universe

## Poets to Come Poem

“Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!

Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,

But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than  
before known,

Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,

I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the  
darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a  
casual look upon you and then averts his face,

Leaving it to you to prove and define it,

Expecting the main things from you.”