



# **Leaves of Grass, 1860: The 150th Anniversary Facsimile Edition (Iowa Whitman Series)**

*Walt Whitman*

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Walt Whitman

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In May 1860, Walt Whitman published a third edition of *Leaves of Grass*. His timing was compelling. Printed during a period of regional, ideological, and political divisions, written by a poet intimately concerned with the idea of a United States as “essentially the greatest poem,” this new edition was Whitman’s last best hope for national salvation. Now available in a facsimile edition, *Leaves of Grass, 1860* faithfully reproduces Whitman’s attempt to create a “Great construction of the New Bible” to save the nation on the eve of civil war and, for the first time, frames the book in historical rather than literary terms.

In his third edition, Whitman added 146 new poems to the 32 that comprised the second edition, reorganized the book into a bible of American civic religion that could be cited chapter and verse, and included erotic poetry intended to bind the nation in organic harmony. This 150th anniversary edition includes a facsimile reproduction of the original 1860 volume, a thought-provoking introduction by antebellum historian and Whitman scholar Jason Stacy that situates Whitman in nineteenth-century America, and annotations that provide detailed historical context for Whitman’s poems.

A profoundly rich product of a period when America faced its greatest peril, this third edition finds the poet transforming himself into a prophet of spiritual democracy and the Whitman we celebrate today—boisterous, barbaric, and benevolent. Reprinting it now continues the poet’s goal of proclaiming for “the whole of America for each / individual, without exception . . . uncompromising liberty and equality.”

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