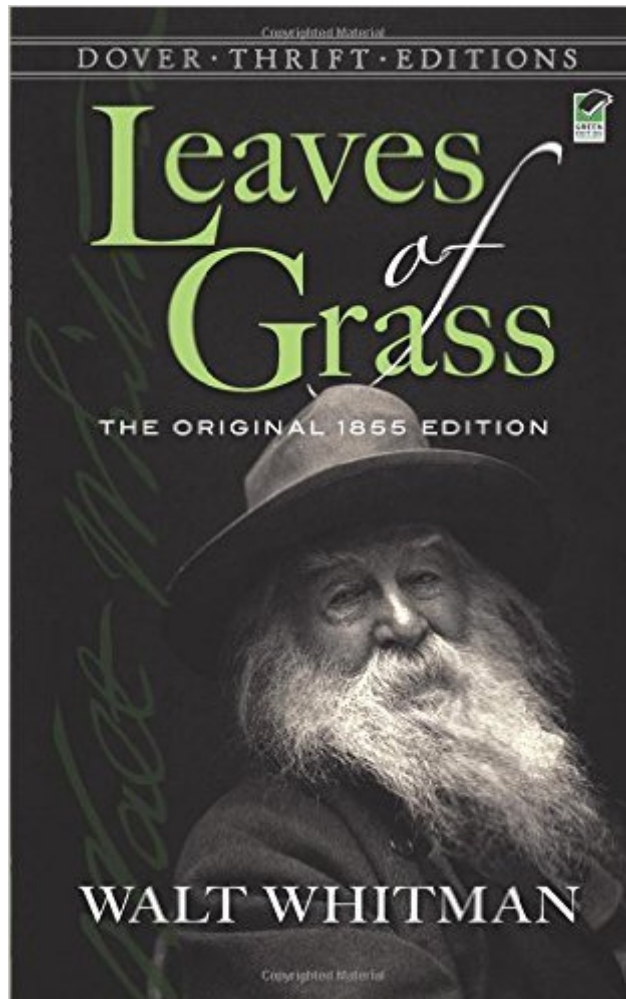


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Leaves Of Grass: The Original 1855 Edition (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

In 1855, Walt Whitman published "at his own expense" the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, a visionary volume of twelve poems. Showing the influence of a uniquely American form of mysticism known as Transcendentalism, which eschewed the general society and culture of the time, the writing is distinguished by an explosively innovative free verse style and previously unmentionable subject matter. Exalting nature, celebrating the human body, and praising the senses and sexual love, the monumental work was condemned as "immoral." Whitman continued evolving *Leaves of Grass* despite the controversy, growing his influential work decades after its first appearance by adding new poems with each new printing. This edition presents the original twelve poems from Whitman's premier 1855 publication of *Leaves of Grass*. Included are some of the greatest poems of modern times: "Song of Myself," "I Sing the Body Electric," and "There Was a Child Went Forth," works that continue to upset conventional notions of beauty and originality even today.

Book Information

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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 winks).

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