



When I heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Walt WHITMAN (1819 - 1892)

Whitman claimed that after years of competing for "the usual rewards", he determined to become a poet. He first experimented with a variety of popular literary genres which appealed to the cultural tastes of the period. As early as 1850, he began writing what would become *Leaves of Grass*, a collection of poetry which he would continue editing and revising until his death. Whitman intended to write a distinctly American epic and used free verse with a cadence based on the Bible. At the end of June 1855, Whitman surprised his brothers with the already-printed first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman paid for the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* himself. (Wikipedia)

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