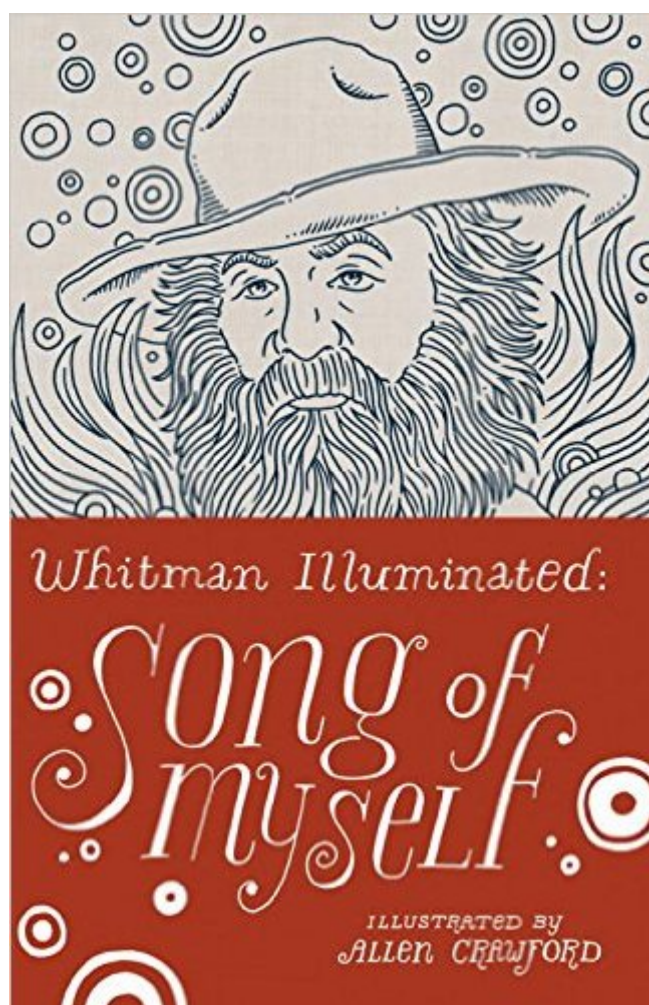


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# Whitman Illuminated: Song Of Myself



## Synopsis

Whitman's most beloved poem, "Song of Myself," illustrated, illuminated, and presented like never before. Walt Whitman's iconic collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, has earned a reputation as a sacred American text. Whitman himself made such comparisons, going so far as to use biblical verse as a model for his own. So it's only appropriate that artist and illustrator Allen Crawford has chosen to illuminate "like medieval monks with their own holy scriptures" Whitman's masterpiece and the core of his poetic vision, "Song of Myself." Crawford has turned the original sixty-page poem from Whitman's 1855 edition into a sprawling 234-page work of art. The handwritten text and illustrations intermingle in a way that's both surprising and wholly in tune with the spirit of the poem—they're exuberant, rough, and wild. *Whitman Illuminated: Song of Myself* is a sensational reading experience, an artifact in its own right, and a masterful tribute to the Good Gray Poet.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a fan of the graphic novel I was immediately drawn to this project and began to follow it in its nascent stages. The author would post pictures of his large, two page illustrations and typographical efforts on social media and I was hooked. Having the book in my hands, well it's damned near erotic. In an age of the ephemeral this manuscript feels almost illicit in its bold sensuality. This is not a poetry book for the shelves - it's for slipping under the pillow or into the napsack for a hike out to the hill or the park to read choice passages aloud to friends, passed around like a good bottle of wine or a joint. If you've read Scott McCloud's work than you'll realize something special is happening here with the interplay between the illustration, typography and the text itself. The

image-forming pathways of the brain must interact with the language pathways - it makes the poem shimmer and dance on the edges of a realm I've usually reserved for graphic novels (Chris Ware comes to mind). I'm grateful to the author for rekindling my love of Whitman with this work - the poem is soulful. It's like sharing a peach with a partner on a warm summer day, under the shade of an oak tree by an expansive river. This is something to be treasured - it makes the heart soar, the mind wander, the face blush... and if you're a sharp knucklehead like me, it'll sneak you a few finely-tuned LOLs.

This is an amazingly gorgeous book. The illustrations are absolutely lovely. The text is formatted around and with the illuminations, so this is not necessarily a good copy to use if you just want to read the poem straight through. I will be reading it with another copy of "Song of Myself" so that I can make sure not to mix up the lines.

We are in a golden age of independent presses like Tin House Books, that are not only the lifeblood of American poetry and fiction, but the preservationists of our national heritage of letters. This book, a tour de force for Allen Crawford, should be on every shelf. Charles Bane, Jr. Author of The Chapbook and Love Poems, creator of The Meaning Of Poetry Series for The Gutenberg Project and current nominee as Poet Laureate of Florida.

I firmly believe that the publishing world must always adapt, evolve, and break new ground. This book does just that. Yes, it is Walt Whitman's Song of Myself, unaltered and unabridged. However, Allen Crawford blended art and text to create something entirely new, all while still honoring the original poem. Each page progresses the poem and integrates it with art. At times, the text is virtually unreadable because it twists and turns, but it always serves a purpose, it always works in tandem with the illustration. This book is like a riddle in that you must reposition it in order to read every page, you must study the illustration on each page to decipher its relevance to the text; in short, you must pause and ponder. That's not a bad thing. If you only want a copy of Song of Myself, this book probably isn't for you. Like I said, it is at times virtually unreadable. Rest assured you can find thousands of versions of the original poem in bookstores, online, or in any English textbook beginning at the seventh grade level. But, if you appreciate Song of Myself and want to see it in a new light, this book will delight. If you desire to see something a little different from the publishing industry, this is a superb example. If you love art, text, and any combination of the two, this book is for you. Or maybe you just want to see an item that exemplifies blood, sweat,

and tears, and you want to reward the creator's hard work by saying, "You did something unique, honorable, and interesting. I want to support your efforts by purchasing the book." •Whatever the case may be, if you fall into any of the previous categories, I truly think you'll enjoy this book.

I had not knowingly read this poem in decades... but as I pored over the pages, I found many sections familiar. The work is truly iconic. I absolutely love reading / deciphering / admiring the poems as interpreted through Allen Crawford's inspired lettering and illustrations. It's the sort of book you can get lost in for an hour, or just pick up for a few minutes. I'm very happy to own this edition, and hope Mr. Crawford takes on other great works with his unique style.

Illustrations and text are beautiful. The layout on most pages is complex, but causes you to slow down and think about what you're reading. The illustrations are also lovely. The printing is good quality and the cover of the book is classic and well done.

I bought this as a gift purchase for a graphic designer friend. I wanted to read it but it was too hard for me to follow. Lovely drawings. Maybe a page a day would be best for me as a reader, with this obvious labor of love. It's not meant to be rushed through :)

A unique volume. I particularly love the fact that the text wanders and turns, like the author's thoughts. A very meditative read... coaxing you to take time to think about the words and let Whitman's meaning wash over you. I too hope Mr. Crawford turns his sights to other literary favorites.

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