

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

### I. Life

- born in rural Long Island, NY
- left school at age eleven
- by twelve he was working in a printing office
- by fifteen, his family returned to Long Island, leaving him on his own.
- at 17, he moved back to Long Island
- by 23, he was back in Manhattan - editor of a paper
- he worked many different jobs - enjoyed art, opera, and loved reading and began writing poetry
- worked in the hospitals during the civil war



### II. Poetry

- Published Leaves of Grass in 1855 -- revised many times
- he was concerned with new forms and subject matter for poetry
- rhyme was not primary -- neither was uniformed stanzas
- wanted poetry to be about and for the common man
- he was censored due to the sensual contents of some poems and had trouble finding publishers
- Whitman was a true poet -- an individualist
- he was immersed in the world of the senses and emotion
- "poet of democracy"



- uses lots repetition, alliteration, assonance, simile, metaphor