

One song america
before i go



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

One of the most disturbing things in today's culture is a loss of originality and nationality. People are no longer proud to be Americans and instead of pushing for new heights people follow in the footsteps of others. People today need heir sense of self back and need to start taking pride in what they do and where they're from. In " One Song, America, Before I Go" by Walt Whitman and " I Too" by Langston Hughes, the speakers celebrated the concepts of individuality, originality, and nationality. People of all kinds are influenced by their everyday life and it shows in their work.

Walt Whitman is no exception to this rule. Whitman was born in 1819 on Long Island, New York. From there he was a free spirit. He worked many different jobs including working as a printer, political campaigner, writer, editor, freelance journalist, house builder, newspaper, publisher, hospital volunteer, office clerk, lecturer, teacher, and official in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Folsom). This seems to have directly translated into his writing as he is often referred to as the father of free verse poetry.

While he was clearly a spark plug in the work place he didn't start out as a huge sensation of a poet. In fact he at least partially taught himself how to read and write (Shepard). Writing first became a big portion of his life when he began to work with the Long Island Patriot newspaper. Here he was hired as an apprentice to a printer but began editing and really becoming involved with the act of writing literature. Even though this opportunity came at the very young age of twelve, his career as a writer never got its footing until 1855 when he released Leaves of Grass.

From there he continued to show influence from his surroundings in his poems. For example when the Civil War broke out he volunteered in a hospital that his brother was in from being wounded in the war, he wrote a handful of poems relating to the Civil War and even an elegy on Abraham Lincoln's assassination (Folsom). Whitman also seems to have loved to add little twists into his poems to make his readers think and help them understand what he was implying. He often would insert seemingly random capitalizations that actually add insight to words that he wants to increase emphasis on.

These little details are what make Whitman such an amazing author. The poem "One Song, America, Before I Go" is a beautiful poem. While there may be more elegantly written poems and poems that have beautiful rhyme techniques, a deeper look into the meaning this poem can reveal its beauty. Whitman preaches the ideas of individuality and nationality. He begins this idea when he writes "I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality" (Whitman Line 4). This is a great example of Whitman using his creative writing techniques to draw attention towards the word nationality.

Whitman continues speaking positively not only about being nationality but also consistently speaks for the future and how American will always be great. He reiterates this idea when he writes "As Life and Nature are not great with reference to the Present only/But greater still from what is yet to come" (Whitman Lines 10-11). The speaker uses more capitalized letters with present, life and nature here. I believe with life he is saying that every individual person has a chance to be something great and that is it up to them to accomplish it.

While the speaker may have only touched on individualism briefly, the message he is sending is strong. Also I believe Whitman is also referring to the natural resources America has. The United States is blessed with more natural resources and more beautiful natural creations than almost any country in the world. I think he is saying that not only will there always be the Grand Canyon and the crystal clear beaches but the fertile land will last seemingly forever and bring great things to America for centuries to come.

He backs up this idea when he sings, " I'd sing o'er all the rest, with trumpet sounds / For thee- the Future" (Whitman Lines 2-3). I believe he is saying he wants to get up and sing for the future because he knows what wonderful things it should hold. Finally Whitman backs up everything he's stated by saying " Belief I sing" which shows that he actually does believe in what he is saying. Just as Walt Whitman's literature was influenced by what he experienced in life, Langston Hughes' literature shows direct relationships with what he was going through in his everyday life.

While racism may have shaped Hughes' everyday life, Walt Whitman shaped Hughes as we know him today. Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes have a connection that not many people come to realize. It is obvious that Langston Hughes stood for equal rights but it's commonly overlooked that Whitman stood his ground for equal rights as well. Whitman commonly voiced his strong opinions on abolishing slavery and promoting equal rights for all men. I believe this played at least a small role in some of Hughes' poems and stories in his lifetime.