

Top Ten Facts about Whitman's *Song of Myself*

Walt Whitman's overall writings serve as a means of promoting the American version of Transcendentalism.

1. The entire poem is divided into 52 sections, 1,346 lines.
2. His style mirrors traditional verses translated from biblical texts.
3. His main theme is a celebration of the diversity in life, the diversity of God.
4. God is shown as an abstract principle of energy that exists in every creature, in every product on Earth.
5. This long poem is another example of Whitman's use of free verse.
6. It is believed he sat down and wrote the full poem, all 52 sections, in a burst of inspiration.
7. Despite the title, the theme is not limited to an ego-centric self, a solo-being; the theme is in constant transformation:
 - a. motioning from the poet-narrator
 - b. to encompassing all of pre-Civil War America
 - c. focusing then on the world as a whole
 - d. and then closing off with the full Universe
8. The poet-speaker therefore becomes the perfect example of a transcendental being and offers the reader to follow his ways of life.
9. Overall, the full text is optimistic, offers a positive look at the history of humankind—unlike the Puritans, who were often negative and scornful towards other people in the world.
10. Whitman's full poem is a love poem to humanity, demonstrating in a complex, metaphysical fashion that the poet-narrator does not belong to himself, any more than you the reader can exist to yourself.