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Walt Whitman's Memoranda During the War

Walt Whitman

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Walt Whitman's Memoranda During the War Walt Whitman
In December of 1862, having read his brother's name in a casualty list, Walt Whitman rushed from Brooklyn to the war front, where he found his brother wounded but recovering. But Whitman also found there a "new world," a world dense with horror and revelation.
Memoranda During the War is Whitman's testament to the anguish, heroism, and terror of the Civil War. The book consists of journal entries extending from Whitman's arrival on the front in 1862 through to the war's conclusion in 1865. Whitman details his encounters with soldiers and doctors, meditates on particular battles and on the meanings of the war for the nation, and recounts his wordless though peculiarly intimate public exchanges with President Lincoln, a man Whitman saw often on the streets of Washington and by whom he was deeply fascinated. The book offers an astounding amalgam of death portraits, anecdotes of battle, last words, messages to distant loved ones, and remarkably restrained and muted descriptions of pain, dismemberment, and dying--all of it, however grim, suffused with Whitman's undiminished enthusiasm and affection for these young soldiers. And throughout, we find Whitman laboring with heroic determination to sustain and nourish his once-ardent faith in America and American life, even as the nation unleashed unprecedented violence upon itself.

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