

# “What Will Your Verse Be?”

## O Me! O Life!

BY WALT WHITMAN

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,  
of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,  
of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and  
who more faithless?)  
of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever  
renew'd,  
of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around  
me,  
of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,  
the question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O  
life?

*Answer.*

That you are here—that life exists and identity,  
that the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

Source: *Leaves of Grass* (1892)

You've read this poem & heard bits of it in *Dead Poet's Society* and iPad commercials. It asks deep questions we all ask when we're not feeling worthy, and it provides a profound answer: That you are here, and that you get to contribute a "verse" to this powerful play we call life.

So, what will your verse be? What will your contribution be? Will you heal people? Build bridges? Write computer code? Teach children? Create brilliant art? Serve others? Something else?

Write a poem to answer this question. Begin with "Oh me! Oh Life!" Use repetition of words at the beginning of lines and long, flowing lists like Whitman does. Use as many lines as years you have lived. If you're sixteen, then use sixteen lines. Other than that, write in free verse – no need for rhyming or rules.

Oh, and include a "selfie" pic (or one taken by a friend) with a visual representing your "verse". For example, if you wish to be a TV producer, include a pic of you and a television. Make it artful. Make it poetic. Make it something you (and I) would like to keep and remember.

**Points: 40 points**

**Due:** \_\_\_\_\_