

Texts:

I. from “I Sing the Body Electric” (originally published untitled in *Leaves of Grass*, First Edition, July 4 1855; text adapted from section 7 of the poem with some omissions by the composer):

A man’s body at auction

Gentlemen look on this wonder,
Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough for it,
For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years without one animal or plant,
For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll’d.

Examine these limbs, red, black, or white, they are cunning in tendon and nerve,
They shall be stript that you may see them.

Within there runs blood,
the same red-running blood!
There swells and jets a heart, there all passions, desires, reachings, aspirations

This is not only one man, this the father of those who shall be fathers in their turns,
Of him countless immortal lives

How do you know who shall come from the offspring of his offspring through the centuries?
(Who might you find you have come from yourself)

II. from “A Christmas Garland in Prose and Verse” (originally published in the *Christmas Graphic: A Special Number of the New York Daily Graphic*, from December 25th, 1874, p. 5; italics added by the composer):

AS IF we had not strained our democracy enough, AS IF we had not strained the voting and digestive calibre of American Democracy to the utmost for the last fifty years with the millions of ignorant foreigners, we have now infused a powerful percentage of blacks, with about as much intellect and calibre (in the mass) as so many baboons. But we stood the former trial—solved it—and, though this is much harder, will, I doubt not, triumphantly solve this. (*A man’s body at auction*)