

With Emily Dickinson as Walt Whitman Walks in the Bar

by Con Chapman

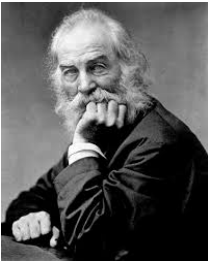
You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his Book-but was told it was disgraceful.

Emily Dickinson, letter to Thomas

Higginson



*Oh no, here is that Whitman man
I've heard he is a bounder.
Don't look his way or catch his eye-
Just get another round, dear.*



I hear America drinking, the varied drinks I hear-
Those of stockbrokers, each one ordering his vodka,
straight and strong,
The lawyer with his gin and tonic as he gauges his odds of

winning his case,
The advertising man, with his first of three martinis, as he
thinks of jingles to sing.
The venture capitalist, singing as he contemplates his
carried interest in a risky start-up—
Drinking with open mouths their staunch reviving drinks.

*How dreary to be so full of one's self.
Concentered on one's soul.
I'd rather be a can on a shelf,
Or underground like a mole.*

I speak of pineapple in the bartender's fruit caddy!
I am the poet of the lemon and the lime!
Of the maraschino cherry sublime-
Of the pearl onion, and the celery stalk that graces
the Mary that is Bloody,
And the olive, a mere surplusage perhaps,
but without it, the martini is too modest, too plain,
Put on your adornment, o drink of gin and very little vermouth—
vile no more, your brothers and sisters approach you!



*He drinks and talks too freely—
A downspout in the rain.
I do not like this bar and grille-
I shall not come again.*

*Available in Kindle and print format on amazon.com as part of
"The Girl With the Cullender on Her Head (and Other Wayward
Women)."*

