



# Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography

*David S. Reynolds*

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**Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography** David S. Reynolds

In his poetry Walt Whitman set out to encompass all of America and in so doing heal its deepening divisions. This magisterial biography demonstrates the epic scale of his achievement, as well as the dreams and anxieties that impelled it, for it places the poet securely within the political and cultural context of his age.

Combing through the full range of Whitman's writing, David Reynolds shows how Whitman gathered inspiration from every stratum of nineteenth-century American life: the convulsions of slavery and depression; the raffish dandyism of the Bowery "b'hoys"; the exuberant rhetoric of actors, orators, and divines. We see how Whitman reconciled his own sexuality with contemporary social mores and how his energetic courtship of the public presaged the vogues of advertising and celebrity. Brilliantly researched, captivatingly told, **Walt Whitman's America** is a triumphant work of scholarship that breathes new life into the biographical genre.

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