

Letter to the Walt Whitman Fellowship (May 31, 1907)

Friends and Comrades:—

The invitation to join you in Walt Whitman fellowship tempts me sorely, but prior duties hold me fast in the Far West.¹ Notwithstanding my enforced absence, however, I shall feast with soulful relish and with you refresh myself at old Walt's flowing fountain of inspiration.

The fellowship that you celebrate is the finest that ever filtered through the ages. It is the quintessence of human kinship, born in freedom, consecrated to brotherhood, and expressed in love. It is immortal and eternal. Its power is omnipotent. It changes beasts into gods and hells of anguish and despair into heavens of peace and joy.

In grateful, loyal, loving memory of dear old Walt, I am yours,

Eugene V. Debs.

Published in *New York Times*, vol. 66, whole no. 18,025 (June 1, 1907), p. 9.

¹ The Walt Whitman Fellowship met in a dinner held at the Hotel Brevoort in New York City the night of May 31, 1907. The meeting was attended by about 150 people, including Whitman's literary executor, Horace Traubel, and Gaylord Wilshire, publisher of *Wilshire's Magazine*, a socialist periodical.