

"Memories of Lincoln" Worksheet

"Memories of Lincoln"
Composer: William Neidlinger
Poetry: Walt Whitman

This song is a composite of excerpts from three poems: "Beat! Beat! Drums!," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," and "O Captain! My Captain!"; the words in italics are not included in the sung text.

Beat! Beat! Drums!

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!

**Through the windows - through the doors - burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,**

Into the school where the scholar is studying;

Leave not the bridegroom quiet - no happiness must he have now with his bride,

Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his grain,

So fierce you whirr and pound you drums - so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities - over the rumble of wheels in the streets;

Are beds prepared for the sleepers at night in the houses?

No sleepers must sleep in those beds,

No bargainers' bargains by day - no brokers or speculators - would they continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?

Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?

*Then rattle quicker, heavier drums - **you bugles wilder blow.***

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley - stop for no expostulation,

Mind not the timid - mind not the weeper or prayer,

Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,

Let not the child's voice be heard nor the mother's entreaties,

Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,

So strong you thump O terrible drums - so loud you bugles blow.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

**When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.**

**Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.**

*O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night - O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd - O black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless - O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.*

O Captain! My Captain!

**O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:**

**But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.**

*O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up - for you the flag is flung - for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths - for you the shores a crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning,
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.*

*My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arms, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,*

*Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.*

*"Whitman [...] loved the wide range of orchestral instruments
and used them as images to people his poems."*

~ Thomas Hampson and Carla Maria Verdino-Süllwold, PBS "I Hear America Singing"

For more information, please reference the *Song of America* essay on Walt Whitman:
<http://songofamerica.net/writer/whitman-walt>

Instruments/ Sounds	Whitman's meaning
Drums	The march of nations
Bugles	Calls to valor or funeral taps

Notes: