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# Walt Whitman: When I heard at the close of the day

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*With the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," this excerpt from Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass feels right. In this poem, Whitman imagines consummating his relationship with his friend; at the same time, they consummate their human relationship with the natural world.*

When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd
with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for
me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still
I was not happy,
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health,
refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,
When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and disappear in the
morning light,
When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing bathed,
laughing with the cool waters, and saw the sun rise,
And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was on his way
coming, O then I was happy,
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my food
nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day pass'd well,
And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at evening came
my friend,
And that night while all was still I heard the waters roll slowly
continually up the shores,
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as directed to me
whispering to congratulate me,
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in
the cool night,
In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was inclined toward me,
And his arm lay lightly around my breast–and that night I was happy.

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