

## *Calamus* Bibliography:

Books and Essays that Illuminate the *Calamus* poems and the Wider Meaning of *Calamus*

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The history of reading the “Calamus” cluster of poems in *Leaves of Grass* has changed dramatically over the more than 150 years since they first appeared in the 1860 edition of *Leaves*. This bibliography offers some of the most illuminating writing on “Calamus” over the last 60 years, from the most recent pieces on back to those written in the years just after the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, which marked a cultural moment when the discussion of homosexuality and gay identity began to fundamentally change in the United States. Part of that change was a shift in the way that the “Calamus” poems began to be read. There were certainly many pieces written about “Calamus” before the Stonewall Uprising, but they often were couched in terms of what was then usually called Whitman’s homosexual (or homoerotic) “abnormality.” The earlier writings on “Calamus” are available on the Bibliography on the *Walt Whitman Archive*. I have included in this list articles that look at cluster and at individual poems in detail as well as articles that explore what has come to be a more general application of what Whitman meant by the term “Calamus” and “Calamus Relationships.” There has been a long and ongoing debate among readers of Whitman about whether the “Calamus” poems are essentially his most personal poems or whether they are in fact his most political—or whether they are both simultaneously. Another ongoing critical debate is about the relationship of Whitman’s original manuscript sequence of “Live Oak with Moss” poems to the various published versions of “Calamus.”

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Magavern, Sam. “Freedom and Joy: Walt Whitman’s ‘We Two Boys Together Clinging.’” *Commonplace* (March 2022), [commonplace.online](http://commonplace.online). [Offers a reading of “We Two Boys Together Clinging” as “a moving embodiment of love and rebellion” and as a poem of “uncanny depth.”]

Rebrovick, Tripp. “A Queer Politics of Touching: Walt Whitman's Theory of Comrades.” *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 16 (June 2020), 313-331. [Develops the concept of “political and legal regimes of touching” as a means of reading the “Calamus” poems, arguing that Whitman's notion of comradeship—“a distinct kind of friendship characterized by physical intimacy”—demonstrates that “touching is a political act” and that the “anachronistic” labeling of Whitman as “homosexual” needs to be revised to view his comradeship as “a model of queerness that can challenge the recent anti-social turn in queer theory”; examines the idea of comradeship in *Democratic Vistas*, where it “relates to politics but is not itself political,” unlike in “Calamus,” where “comrades create their own political institutions, even though those institutions lack anything resembling legislation, voting, or representation,” but where comradeship nonetheless “establishes a new social formation, and the source of its cohesion lies in intimate, physical touch rather than personality and character.”]

Wolf, Naomi. *Outrages: Sex, Censorship, and the Criminalization of Love*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2020. [Offers a wide-ranging examination of John Addington Symonds' "quest for freedom and equality for men who loved men," and analyzes in detail Whitman's influence on Symonds: "After reading *Leaves of Grass* as a young man, Symonds would spend the rest of his life trying to respond to the book's provocative themes"; Whitman, his work, and his relationship with Symonds are addressed throughout, including in Chapter 3 ("1855: Leaves of Grass"), Chapter 8 ("Calamus: 'Paths Untrodden'"), Chapter 12 ("I Will Go with Him I Love"); Chapter 17 ("My Constant Companions"), Chapter 24 ("Pilgrimage to Camden"), Chapter 27 ("The Life-Long Love of Comrades"), and Chapter 30 ("All Goes Onward and Outward, Nothing Collapses").]

Whitman, Walt. *Live Oak, with Moss*. Art by Brian Selznick. New York: Abrams Comic Arts, 2019. [Reprints Whitman's manuscript sequence of "Live Oak, with Moss" poems (both a facsimile of the manuscripts and a full transcription), accompanied by a "visual narrative" by Brian Selznick, with a preface by Selznick and an afterword, "Remember Now Remember Then" (136-167), by Karen Karbiener, offering a detailed history of the composition of the sequence and examining the poems as Whitman's "first intense, sustained reflections on the love and attraction he felt for other men."]

Noble, Marianne. *Rethinking Sympathy and Human Contact in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: Hawthorne, Douglass, Stowe, Dickinson*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. [Chapter 1, "Transcendental Approaches to Human Contact" (38-85), has a section on Whitman (68-85) that distinguishes Whitman's notions of sympathy and human contact from other Transcendentalists like Emerson, Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott; argues that Whitman "questions Emersonian metaphysics, reporting an epiphanic realization that physical reality is reality" ("for Whitman, spirit is a body-animating energy" and so "it is a fool's errand to seek human contact by trying to remove masks to reveal underlying spiritual truths") and that, in Calamus, Whitman "rethinks the approach to human contact described in 'Song of Myself,'" as "he affirms that . . . homoerotic sexual contact is the crucial means of invalidating dualism and experiencing human contact," developing an "erotic conception of human contact [that] is promiscuous and unabashedly sexual . . . [as] he loves impersonally and sequentially."]

Schmidgall, Gary. "'O You Singer Solitary': Walt Whitman on the Closet," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Spring 2019), 241-260. [Examines how and why Whitman was so "drawn to the hermit thrush" and associates "the pathos Whitman invested in that hermit thrush" with "the pathos of a life lived in the Closet"; goes on to probe "how much the habits of a closeted life pervade his poems, other writings, and manuscripts," how "even in the 1855 *Leaves* Walt was beginning to show his resentment at having to present a fake self in public and conceal his real self," and how in the 1860 edition, with the Calamus poems, he began "escaping from the suffocating urban Closet into nature" but still "concealed a forbidden love in his poems"; observes how Whitman "was writing simultaneously for both a respectable, mainstream audience (what he called 'civilians') and a niche audience (what he called 'loving comrades')," thus "hiding in plain sight," and argues that "Whitman never weaned himself from the instinct to retreat to the

Closet for safety and self-preservation"; concludes by analyzing how Whitman nonetheless often saw the Closet as "a claustrophobic and suffocating place," "a prison" that was "no place to live," and "clearly hoped for and foresaw" a "Closet-less future," thus becoming "a political activist and futurist"; Schmidgall's essay is based on a talk presented at the Whitman Birthplace on the fiftieth anniversary of Stonewall, June 28, 2019.]

Schneider, Bethany. "Whitman's Cane: Disability, Prosthesis, and Whitman's Leaning Poise." *Common-place* 19 (Spring 2019), common-place.org. [Describes a visit to Whitman's Camden, New Jersey, home, where the poet—"increasingly disabled by strokes and, unknown to anyone until the epic autopsy of his body performed in his dining room, tuberculosis"—lived his final years and died; evokes Whitman's bedroom with its "systems [his friends put] in place to maintain health, hygiene, comfort, labor, leisure, and rest . . . to support and make as beautiful as possible the long work of dying," and focuses on Whitman's cane, describing it in detail; considers the many purposes a cane served in the nineteenth century, and considers how Whitman used a cane as a young man as "an adjunct to gentlemanly attire" but then portrayed it in the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*—when he becomes "the wounded person" and "lean[s] on a cane and observe[s]"—"as a prop or crutch to a body in need of its support, a disabled body"; examines how his 1873 stroke made Whitman "dependent on a cane for the rest of his life"; and argues that the cane's association for Whitman with the act of "leaning" is crucial, since leaning ("the need and longing for support") served Whitman as the attitude of adhesiveness and same-sex desire found at the heart of the "Calamus" poems (so that "what-will-come-to-be-called disability and what-will-come-to-be-called homosexuality rhyme, if only in prosthesis for and propped up against one another"); looks at how the genus *calamus* "refers to many different varieties of palm, plants that are often called 'cane,'" some of which are used to make "light walking canes," and suggests that the title "Calamus" can be read as "Cane"; concludes by examining Whitman's various canes, including the "Calamus cane" that John Burroughs gave him, and especially the "cane with a crook in it" given to him by Peter Doyle, the one Whitman used most in his final years, when he called Doyle "always a good stay and support," someone who "understood" him in the root sense of "stood under" him.]

Skal, David J. *Something in the Blood: The Untold Story of Bram Stoker, the Man Who Wrote Dracula*. New York: Liveright, 2016. [Chapter 3, "Songs of Calamus, Songs of Sappho" (85-140), traces how Stoker had one of "his life-changing epiphanies" at first encountering Whitman's work in William Michael Rossetti's 1868 *Selected Poems of Walt Whitman*, and how "his Whitman epiphany coincided with the height of his athletic obsession with his own body and the bodies of other competitive young men"; transcribes and analyzes Stoker's February 18, 1872, letter to Whitman, written when Stoker was in his mid-20s but not sent until four years later, in which he poured out his confused sexual feelings to the poet: "The letter remains the most personal and passionate document Stoker ever wrote" and "raises as many questions as it seems to answer."]

Blalock, Stephanie. "'Tell what I meant by Calamus': Walt Whitman's Vision of Comradeship from Fred Vaughan to the Fred Gray Association." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds.,

*Whitman among the Bohemians* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 172-191. [Provides significant new information on the members of the "Fred Gray Association" of young male companions of Whitman who gathered at Pfaff's beer hall and who seem to have replaced Fred Vaughan as Whitman's "'Calamus'-comrades"; offers an overview of Whitman's relationship to Vaughan and provides "an overview of the [Fred Gray] association and specific information about individual members" (including Gray, Hugo Fritsch, Benjamin Knower, Nathaniel Bloom, Charles S. Kingsley, Edward F. Mullen, Samuel M. Raymond, and Dr. Charles Porter Russell), all of whom were "attracted by the literary fame of Pfaff's," "were accomplished men with promising careers ahead of them," "came to the cellar during the Civil War," and "were drawn to Whitman"; argues that Whitman saw the association as "both an extension of 'adhesiveness' to a larger group of men and a step toward the 'City of Friends' he imagined in the 'Calamus' poems."]

Hicks, John. "Whitman's Lyrics?" *Thinking Verse* 4 no. 1 (2014), 79-109. [Examines whether or not Whitman wrote lyrics and "takes the poems in 'Calamus' . . . as rhetorical performances that relate to the traditions and conventions of lyric . . . in order to test the usefulness of a more comparative, lyric context for Whitman's poetry"; reviews the critical reception of the 'Calamus' cluster, examines "modes of poetic address and rhetorical structure in these poems that exceed or complicate the customary biographical understanding of the group," and concludes by analyzing "the methodological challenges posed by historical poetics," seeking to discover how the 'Calamus' poems "work in ways that might not be available without the category of lyric."]

Olsen-Smith, Steven. "The Inscription of Walt Whitman's 'Live Oak, with Moss' Sequence: A Restorative Edition." *Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing* 33 (2012), <http://www.scholarlyediting.org/2012/editions/intro.liveoakwithmoss.html>. [Offers a new edition of Whitman's twelve-poem sequence "Live Oak, with Moss," based on a textual analysis that restores the poet's original version of the poems; argues that Fredson Bowers' influential 1953 edition of the sequence is flawed, since his "editorial focus on the final versions of the sundered manuscripts was not well suited for 'Live Oak, with Moss,' and it resulted in his incorporation of changes that Whitman made to the poems after breaking the sequence apart"; goes on to detail "the transmission of the sequence in the manuscript" and demonstrates that the "restorative edition more accurately conveys the themes and intentions that inform 'Live Oak, with Moss,' and more clearly illustrates its significance in the development of Whitman's thought"; concludes with "an edition of 'Live Oak, with Moss' that restores the sequence to its original, integrated state."]

Son, Hyesook. "Homosexuality and Utopia: A Reading of Whitman's Calamus." *Journal of English Language and Literature* [Korea] 58, no. 1 (2012), 43-67. [Sets out to illustrate "Whitman's homosexual vision of utopia with a close reading of his representative homosexual text, Calamus," arguing that "his ideal of America is not a deferred wish for the future, but a concrete vision that can be achieved here and now, realized by the spontaneous bonding and instant attraction among free men"; goes on to indicate that "Whitman has inspired many later poets, showing a possibility of infusing homosexual identity into a radical imaging of the nation and its future"; in Korean.]

Blalock, Stephanie Michelle. "Walt Whitman at Pfaff's Beer Cellar: America's Bohemian Poet and the Contexts of 'Calamus.'" PhD Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2011. [Focuses on the period of 1859 to 1862 when "Whitman frequented Pfaff's Beer Cellar on Broadway in New York" and "examines how the barroom and its unique clientele shaped the poet's life and writings"; shows how his affiliation with the "Fred Gray Association" at Pfaff's "influenced his writing and revision of his homoerotic Calamus poems . . . and served as a foreground for his volunteer work in Washington's wartime hospitals"; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global,10181773.]

Erkkila, Betsy. "Songs of Male Intimacy and Love: An Afterword." In Walt Whitman, *Walt Whitman's Songs of Male Intimacy and Love: "Live Oak, with Moss" and "Calamus,"* ed. Betsy Erkkila (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011), 99-162. [Traces the history of critical response to "Live Oak, with Moss" and to "Calamus," and argues "against the traditional and potentially limited critical frames for reading Whitman's man-loving life and the relations among his man-loving poems," suggesting that "the story Whitman tells in 'Live Oak, with Moss' may not be simple, single, or self-coherent; it may be multiple, poetic, and not a simple or single narrative at all; and it may lead not to either 'reconstitution' or 'accommodation' but to irresolution and proliferation," as Whitman "gives voice to a full range of fluid and ever-shifting states of body, mind, and feeling in the everyday life of a working-class man who loves men in mid-nineteenth-century America"; goes on to examine the ways "Calamus" does not disguise, fracture, or "corrupt" the "Live Oak" sequence but instead develops ideas originated in the manuscript poems as "Whitman tells 'the secret' of his 'nights and days' not for sensation or sublimation but as an emancipatory act of sexual, political, artistic, and spiritual liberation," and analyzes the "erotic mingling of sex and death" in the poems, as well as the ways that Whitman sounds "his call of manly love as the very condition of the political growth of the United States"; tracks Whitman's revisions and rearrangements in the various versions of "Calamus," culminating in the 1881 arrangement, where "Calamus" is moved "front and center, following directly from 'Children of Adam' for the first time," allowing "these clusters to bleed into each other, blurring the distinctions and boundaries between amative and adhesive love"; concludes by exploring the divided responses to "Calamus" from Whitman's time to the present. Erkkila's book reprints in facsimile Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss" manuscripts, the 1860 "Calamus" cluster, and the 1881 "Calamus" cluster; with a preface ("Manly Love in All Its Moods," xi-xiii) and a selected bibliography ("Calamus' and Whitman's Man Love," 163-167), all by Erkkila.]

Reynolds, David S. "'Affection shall solve every one of the problems of freedom': Calamus Love and the Antebellum Political Crisis." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73 (2010), 629-642. [Proposes that Whitman "directed every aspect of the 1860 edition—typography, binding, and contents—toward his overriding goal of moving the public," thus making this edition "the most conventional of the six major editions of Whitman's poems," despite its inclusion of "Enfans d'Adam" and "Calamus"; analyzes the "deep political significance" that "same-sex affection" took on for Whitman at this time as he sought to forge "national unity through magnetic, passionate friendship"; argues that "Whitman's expressions of Calamus love, far from being

shockingly transgressive or out of step with his era, were in fact a main means of his gaining widespread acceptance and veneration among the mainstream readers he had long sought to attract," because "passionate intimacy between people of the same sex was common in pre-Civil War America," where "it was common among both men and women to hug, kiss, and express love for people of the same sex," and where "friends could [even] have genital contact without necessarily feeling different."]

Thomas, M. Wynn. "'Till I hit upon a name': 'Calamus' and the Language of Love." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73 (2010), 643-657. [Argues that in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* we can see "the emergence of a new Whitmanian poetry—an authentic poetry of love," a poetry that reveals "the 'demonic' side of love," evident most clearly in "A Word Out of the Sea" and "Calamus," where the speaker is "haunted by passion," and in which "Whitman may be regarded . . . as attempting to establish a male-male socio-erotic axis to offset the heavily heterosexual American society of his own time," creating "a language for recognizing, comprehending, and sharing the deepest, the richest, and in some ways, too, the darkest ranges of same-sex relationship," extending "the existing language of love to make possible the full recognition of the whole continuum of male-male relationships," reworking Wagner's "liebested theme," and extending that language of complex love to address "the political crisis of the period."]

Bradley, Jonathan. "Whitman's Calamus." *Explicator* 67 (Summer 2009), 263-267. [Argues that Whitman's change of title from "Live Oak, with Moss" to "Calamus" "reflects his desire to have his homoerotic poems present a more positive, unifying and democratic image rather than the negative implication of isolation established in conventional nineteenth-century discourse," since a live oak is "a lonely oak tree," while a calamus plant "often grows in 'clusters' of other calamus plants, making it a more 'brotherly' symbol."]

Clausson, Nils. "'Hours Continuing Long' as Whitman's Rewriting of Shakespeare's Sonnet 29." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 26 (Winter 2009), 131-142. [Analyzes Whitman's 1860 "Calamus" number 9 poem, "Hours continuing long," as an unconventional sonnet that responds thematically and structurally to Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 ("When in disgrace with fortune"), and that echoes Shakespeare's sonnet while simultaneously reshaping his personal poem about same-sex love into a "political protest against having to suffer, like countless others, in silence."]

Champagne, John. "Walt Whitman, Our Great Gay Poet?" *Journal of Homosexuality* 55 (2008), 648-664. [Offers a detailed overview of the critical debates surrounding the "Calamus" poems and argues that "the attempt to reclaim Whitman as gay might sometimes serve very 'unqueer' ends," thus "limit[ing] rather than enhanc[ing] our understanding" of Whitman, so that "a reading of Whitman as homosexual threatens to simplify our understanding of the history of homosexuality and to blunt the power of Whitman's poetry to continue to 'queer' normative understandings of sex and gender identity categories and their relationship to politics"; concludes that "Whitman's startlingly erotic poems keep alive a model of democratic friendship that seeks

to bind people of a variety of 'perverse' sexualities together in arrangements that exceed the state's abilities to comprehend, regulate, and sanctify."]

Athenot, Éric. "'Love, that fuses': 'Calamus' et la communauté des amants chez Walt Whitman." In Yves-Charles Granjeat, ed., *Le Sens de la communauté* (Pessac, France: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 2006), 343-355. [Examines the tension between the singular and the plural as well as the role of the (male) body in the politics of adhesiveness and the prospective formation of a community of "lover-exegetes" in the "Calamus" poems; argues that the poems warn the reader not to read the politics of the poems literally, but to read between the lines and hear the "song of erotic love between men, charged with spiritual values"; further claims, following Maurice Blanchot, that the poems alternate between "a community of absence" and "an absence of community" as they encourage the reader to wander between individual and collective experience and aim to inscribe the singularity of poetic language within the plurality of the commonplace; in French.]

Kajiwara, Teruko. "Is 'Calamus' a Gay Discourse?: Reading 'Calamus' (1860) in the 'Ensemble, Spirit, and Atmosphere' of *Leaves of Grass*." *Studies in English Literature* 47 (2006), 181-201. [Argues against the "the scholarly tendency" to define the "Calamus" poems as "homosexual" and sees Whitman's objective instead "to expand and universalize the nature of love in 'Calamus,'" creating "an undifferentiated erotic tie toward strangers," a tie that is "expanded to the poet-reader relationship."]

Olsen-Smith, Steven. "'Live Oak, with Moss,' 'Calamus,' and 'Children of Adam.'" In Donald D. Kummings, ed., *A Companion to Walt Whitman* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 508-521. [Examines how these three clusters of poems are "textually and conceptually related" and how they "represent the poet in his most intimate, most exposed, and most controversial postures"; offers a detailed reading of the "Live Oak, with Moss" manuscript sequence and compares it to the published 1860 "Calamus" sequence; and examines the implications of "Whitman's near-simultaneous conception of ideas for 'Calamus' and 'Children of Adam.'"]

Carr, Bonnie. "Whitman's Legacy of Love and the Challenge of Public Space." *Mickle Street Review* nos. 17-18 (2005), [www.micklestreet.rutgers.edu/index.html](http://www.micklestreet.rutgers.edu/index.html). [Argues that "Calamus addresses a situation of constant exposure and concealment that both generates and threatens the intimacies that support personal and political union," and that in these poems Whitman "rejects the love of those readers who do not respond appropriately to his work," attempting "to create a model that combines the flaneur's mastery of urban life with his intense need for loving companionship."]

Tayson, Richard. "The Casualties of Walt Whitman." *Virginia Quarterly Review* 81 (Spring 2005), 79-95. [Offers an account of the author's own first encounters with Whitman, when he denied Whitman's homosexuality even while he was admitting his own, then found his way to Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss" manuscript sequence; provides a reading of "Live Oak" as "Whitman's gayest, most forthright poem," which Whitman then scattered and dispersed in

Leaves of Grass, "weaken[ing] its gay narrative"; concludes by asserting that "by not even acknowledging, let alone accepting, the homosexuality in Whitman's work, . . . we have been unable to clearly read" his work, and this "has been particularly damaging to gay writers like myself who have felt as though we were writing in a cultural vacuum when in fact there was a strong history behind us."]

Auclair, Tracy. "The Language of Drug Use in Whitman's 'Calamus' Poems." *Papers on Language and Literature* 40 (Summer 2004), 227-259. [Examines "the ways in which Whitman links the calamus root in his poetry to literary representations of drugged consciousness," arguing that the hallucinogenic qualities of the calamus root were familiar to Whitman and "he chose it to be a major trope in his poetic sequence based on this knowledge"; goes on to "explore how the rhetoric of drugged consciousness, which is typified in Fitz Hugh Ludlow's *The Hasheesh Eater*, informs Whitman's 'Calamus' poems," allowing Whitman to "depict the hashish-like effects of the calamus root as a means of collapsing personal and public space," of dissolving "the classic American tension between the individual and the mass."]

Scholnick, Robert J. "The Texts and Contexts of 'Calamus': Did Whitman Censor Himself in 1860?" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 21 (Winter/Spring 2004), 109-130. [Examines the recent controversy over the relationship of the "Live Oak, with Moss" sequence to the 'Calamus' cluster and argues that, "when paired with contextual evidence, an examination of the manuscripts of the 'Calamus' poems offers no basis for [the] charge of self-censorship and defeat" in this sequence of poems.]

Cocks, Harry G. *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003). [Chapter 5, "'A Strange and Indescribable Feeling': Unspeakable Desires in Late-Victorian England" (157-198), offers an overview of "the Bolton Whitmanites" and examines them in terms of the development of homosexual desire, because this "group of men in Victorian Lancashire give us the distance from London that lends perspective to the view of late nineteenth-century homosexuality" and "show how new theories of homosexuality produced by sexologists and homophile writers like Edward Carpenter were actually taken up and applied by individuals to their own lives and desires," revealing "the way in which even private desires might be simultaneously recognised as homoerotic and yet remain unnameable or ineffable" and showing "that comradeship was a sign under which many different types of masculine intimacy could be articulated"; argues that "an intense love existed between some of [the Bolton Whitman followers] which became a means to experience homosexual desire," requiring "a new vocabulary of evasion to be spoken of, and new understandings of consciousness in order to be acknowledged"; analyzes how the Bolton Whitmanites, through "the triangle of love, death, and immortality," "found personal solutions to their own crises of faith and desire in Whitman's poetry" with its emphasis on "effusive love" and "loving comradeship," a concept that could (and was) read in both spiritual and physical terms, creating complex shifts and changes in how Whitman's Calamus poems were read; also addresses J. W. Wallace's efforts to turn the Bolton College "to a more purposive social role," including combining Whitmanism with "the early labour movement"; examines Richard M. Bucke's associations with the Bolton Whitmanites,



particularly his introduction of the idea of "cosmic consciousness" that "provided professional sanction and scientific theory to justify Wallace's belief in the power of comradeship"; assesses the entry of "synaesthete" Philip Dalmas into the group, which "inspired the College fellows to even greater heights of comrade love" by "articulating for them their muted desires"; and analyzes the impact of Edward Carpenter and his ideas of "homogenic love" on the Bolton College and on the history of homosexual desire more generally.]

Dickey, Frances, and M. Jimmie Killingsworth. "Love of Comrades: The Urbanization of Community in Walt Whitman's Poetry and Pragmatist Philosophy." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 21 (Summer 2003), 1-24. [Argues that "the social crisis produced by urbanization shaped Whitman's poetry and pragmatist thought in similar ways," and examines Whitman's struggles with skepticism and relativism in light of his straddling of rural and urban experience, finding that Whitman's "untamed flow of sympathy" in his urban poems of 1855 and 1856 gives way to an increasing "urbane doubt" and "withdrawal from the city" in his 1860 "Calamus" poems.]

Scholnick, Robert. "'An Unusually Active Market for Calamus': Whitman, *Vanity Fair*, and the Fate of Humor in a Time of War, 1860-1863." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 19 (Winter/Spring 2002), 148-181. [Tracks over twenty references to Whitman, many of them previously unrecorded, appearing in *Vanity Fair* during its three-and-a-half year existence and discusses the cultural significance of the journal in the context of Whitman's life and career.]

Katz, Jonathan Ned. *Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. [Offers a detailed historical and anecdotal examination of "men's lust and love for men in the nineteenth-century United States," and uses Whitman as the major case study; Whitman appears in most chapters and is the focus of Chapter 3, "A Gentle Angel Entered" (33-41), analyzing Whitman's 1841 story "The Child's Champion"; Chapter 7, "Voices of Sexes and Lusts" (95-122), tracking Whitman's efforts to "give words to his ardent intimacies" in the 1855, 1856, and 1860 editions of *Leaves of Grass* (especially *Calamus*), and analyzing critical responses to those editions; Chapter 8, "Sincere Friends" (123-132), summarizing Whitman's relationship with Fred Vaughan; Chapter 10, "I Got the Boys" (147-163), examining Whitman's relationships with Civil War soldiers; Chapter 11, "Yes, I Will Talk of Walt" (164-177), tracing Whitman's relationship with Peter Doyle; Chapter 12, "In the Name of CALAMUS Listen to Me!" (178-187), looking into Whitman's influence on and encouragement of the writer Charles Warren Stoddard; Chapter 15, "I Wish You Would Put the Ring on My Finger Again" (220-231), summarizing Whitman's relationships with Harry Stafford and Edward Cattell; three chapters--Chapter 16, "He Cannot Be Oblivious of Its Plainer Meanings" (235-245), Chapter 18, "I Cannot Get Quite to the Bottom of Calamus" (257-271), and Chapter 19, "Ardent and Physical Intimacies" (272-287)--all tracking John Addington Symonds' life, his correspondence with Whitman, Whitman's tortured responses to him, and Symonds' writings about Whitman; Chapter 24, "A Much More Intimate Communion" (321-329), discussing Edward Carpenter's, Gavin Arthur's, and Allen Ginsberg's attitudes toward Whitman and their sexual interrelationships; and the Conclusion, "Sex and Affection between Men--Then and Now" (331-343), proposing that Edward Cattell's expressed

love for Whitman is one of the most revealing relationships about nineteenth-century male-male affection: "Cattell and Whitman, I believe, consciously used their time's language of spiritual true love to speak safely and freely of a relationship that was actively affectionate and erotic."]

Maar, Michael. "Im Schatten des Calamus: Autobiographisches in Thomas Manns indischer Novelle Die vertauschten Kopfe." *Merkur* 55 (August 2001), 678-685. [Deals with Mann's intense response to the "Calamus" poems; in German.]

Schmidgall, Gary. "Suppressing the Gay Whitman in America: Translating Thomas Mann." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 19 (Summer 2001), 18-39. [Examines Mann's 1922 speech "On the German Republic," in which Mann uses Whitman's Calamus poems to evoke Eros as "the figurehead of his democratic republic"; investigates why the key passage about Whitman's "manly love of comrades" is missing in Helen Tracy Lowe-Porter's English translation of the speech; reprints the missing passage in the original German and an English translation; and gives an overview of "the history of *Leaves of Grass* in German-speaking countries" and "Mann's encounter with Hans Reisiger's Whitman translations."]

Vincent, John. "Rhetorical Suspense, Sexuality, and Death in Whitman's 'Calamus' Poems." *Arizona Quarterly* 56 (Spring 2000), 29-48. [Examines "issues of concealment and revelation of homosexual thematics" in the "Calamus" poems, looking at Whitman's "rhetorical bait-and-switch" tactics, his "thematic oscillation between absolute availability and absolute unavailability, materiality and ghostliness, and between the proffering and withholding of 'the truth' about the poet's sexual identity."]

Miller, Jr., James E. "'Calamus.'" In J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds., *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1998), 95-98. [Encyclopedia entry.]

Helms, Alan, and Hershel Parker. "Commentary." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52 (December 1997), 413-416. [Exchange between Helms and Parker on Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss" sequence of poems.]

Olsen-Smith, Steven, and Hershel Parker. "'Live Oak, with Moss' and 'Calamus': Textual Inhibitions in Whitman Criticism." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 14 (Spring 1997), 153-165. [Examines "inhibiting assumptions--textual and aesthetic, not sexual"--that the authors believe "have persisted, apparently not so much unacknowledged by [...] critics, but unrecognized" in the "Calamus" cluster in *Leaves of Grass*; reviews previous readings of "Calamus" and explores textual issues related to Whitman's editing and rearrangement of the cluster.]

Folsom, Ed. "Whitman's Calamus Photographs." In Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman, eds., *Breaking Bounds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 193-219. [Analyzes the photos of Whitman with other people, particularly the photos of the poet with Peter Doyle, Harry Stafford, Bill Duckett, and Warry Fritzing, all of which illustrate Whitman's Calamus relationships, but none of which were published during his lifetime; suggests these photos existed for Whitman in

a private and intimate space, accessible only to a close circle of friends, not to a wider public; investigates the significance of the publication history of these images, along with a Thomas Eakins sequence of nude photographs of an old man who might be Whitman.]

Parker, Hershel. "The Real 'Live Oak, with Moss': Straight Talk about Whitman's 'Gay Manifesto.'" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 51 (September 1996), 145-160. [Views "Live Oak, with Moss" as "a brave sexual manifesto" and takes issue with Alan Helms's essay, "Whitman's 'Live Oak with Moss'" (in Robert K. Martin, ed., *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman* [1992]), and with Helms's presentation of Whitman's poetic sequence; argues that by misrepresenting the text of Whitman's original sequence, Helms "took a sequence that should have been liberating and explicated it as a sequence about victimization and oppression."]

Martin, Robert K. "Whitman and the Politics of Identity." In Ed Folsom, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 172-181. [Analyzes a "triptych" of "Calamus" poems (#18, #19, #20) that traces out the construction of "a particular gay identity."]

Sherman, Nancy. "'Eligible to Burst Forth': Whitman and the Art of Reticence." *Massachusetts Review* 33 (Spring 1992), 7-15. [Focusing on "Calamus" poems, Sherman argues that Whitman's poetry has "more subtlety, more cadence and variation, more quietly minor notes" than it is given credit for, and "it is in those undercurrents that much of his persistent claim to greatness lies"; also compares Whitman to Emily Dickinson, concluding that "Beneath Dickinson's fine-tuned precision we can hear Whitman's hum."]

Helms, Alan. "Whitman's 'Live Oak with Moss.'" In Robert K. Martin, ed., *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), 185-205. [Reading of "Live Oak" as "a deeply troubled sequence, mostly about the confusion, pain, and fear that surround the fact of men loving men"; with speculation on why, after the 1860 *Leaves*, "Whitman never again wrote frankly about loving men."]

Bergman, David. *Gaity Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. [Chapter 3, "Choosing Our Fathers: Gender and Identity in Whitman, Ashbery, and Richard Howard," 44-63, views gay poets' "attempts to resolve the problem of the social construction of a gay poetic selfhood," beginning with Whitman, whose "genius is not that he was able to establish a gay identity . . . but that he points out the difficulties so clearly"; Bergman reads Calamus as "a moving portrait of psychosexual isolation against which [Whitman's] grandiosity is clearly a strategy to prevent the most profound depression."]

Grossman, Jay. "'The Evangel-Poem of Comrades and of Love': Revising Whitman's Republicanism." *ATQ* 4 (September 1990), 201-218. [Views Calamus as a "political mission" related to antebellum republicanism, including communalism, reform, and the "changing conception of the family" (Whitman contributes the "grandest leveling gesture of them all" by representing "a world without even the implicit generational hierarchy of fathers and sons" and

creating instead "a world of comrades linked each to each"); argues that the "keynote" of Calamus is not marginalization and secrecy, but an insistence on "the public gestures of confession and, significantly, of action."]

Martin, Robert K. "The Disseminal Whitman: A Deconstructive Approach to *Enfans d'Adam* and *Calamus*." In Donald D. Kummings, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Whitman's "Leaves of Grass"* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1990), 74-80. [Teaching Calamus and *Enfans d'Adam* as a "poetics of bliss," as courageous and revolutionary statements of "national and cosmic seminality."]

Scholnick, Robert J. "'This Terrible, Irrepressible Yearning': Whitman's Poetics of Love." In Ann Massa, ed., *American Declarations of Love* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), 46-67. [Tracks the changes in "Whitman's emotional landscape" from his 1855 autoerotic poetry written with "the phallic excitement of his newly awakened sexuality," to his more mature "Calamus" poetry of satisfying yet suffering love, to his later writing where, "subsuming this powerful language of desire under the abstraction of religion, Whitman emasculated it."]

Wheat, Edward M. "Walt Whitman's Political Poetics: The Therapeutic Function of Children of Adam and Calamus." *Midwest Quarterly* 31 (Winter 1990), 236-251. [Reads Children of Adam and Calamus as "public, or political, poetry" and argues that these poems "re-enact the event of the founding of America and give it mythic significance": Children of Adam poems are of the "lower Eros," portraying the country as a new Garden of Eden, while Calamus poems articulate the "higher Eros," espousing "the political ideal of fraternity."]

Pollak, Vivian R. "Death as Repression, Repression as Death: A Reading of Whitman's 'Calamus' Poems." *Mickle Street Review* 11 (1989), 56-70. [On Whitman's anticipation of "a heroic death that will liberate him from the death-in-life which he associates with erotic bereavement and with sexual repression"; and on the ways the "Calamus" poems "negotiate between Whitman's sense of himself as a representative American bard and his sense of himself as a member of a sexual minority."]

Kearney, Martin F. "Whitman's 'Live Oak, with Moss': Stepping Back To See." *Innisfree* 7 (1987), 40-49. [Extended reading of Whitman's "Live Oak, with Moss" series of notebook poems, tracking "four distinct phases of experience, each corresponding with an internal group of three poems," all illustrating the poet's "philosophical development."]

Thomas, M. Wynn. "Whitman's Achievements in the Personal Style in Calamus." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 1 (December 1983), 36-47. [Responds to previous critics who have repeatedly emphasized the "deeply personal" nature of Whitman's Calamus poems by arguing that Whitman achieved this personal quality by working with "a considerable degree of artistic detachment" and that "it is . . . this very same detachment, operating perhaps at a more instinctive level, that enabled Whitman to produce a poetry that is most profoundly and convincingly confessional by

virtue of its implicit admissions and explicit investigations of 'the difficulties of the confessional poet.'"

Martin, Robert K. *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979. [An invaluable text for tracking the shift in attitudes toward homosexuality in the U.S.]

Martin, Robert K. "Conversion and Identity: The 'Calamus' Poems." *Walt Whitman Review* 25 (June 1979), 59-66. [Marks a sea-change in the understanding of Whitman's poetry by demonstrating how the "text" of Whitman's poems reflects "the poet's awareness of himself as a homosexual": "Prior to Whitman there were homosexual acts but no homosexuals," and Whitman thus "defines a radical change in historical consciousness: the self-conscious awareness of homosexuality as an identity"; goes on to examine "Calamus" as "the 'heart' of *Leaves of Grass*, as well as the root, and it is Whitman's book of self-proclamation and self-definition."]

Hunt, Russell A. "Whitman's Poetics and the Unity of 'Calamus.'" *American Literature* 46 (January 1975), 482-494. [The "Calamus" section of *Leaves of Grass* is "not an autobiographical 'confession,' not a celebration of homosexuality..., and not a political program which advocates manly love as the foundation of democracy." Regarded as a whole, the "Calamus" poems form a statement of Whitman's poetic theory: the origin and nature of his poems, the method by which they must be approached, and the results of such an approach for the reader and the society.]

Krauth, Leland. "Whitman and His Readers: The Comradeship Theme." *Walt Whitman Review* 20 (December 1974), 147-151. [In the Calamus cluster Whitman discovered the ultimate meaning of comradeship—a possible "mode of access into the fundamental reality of the universe." Following this realization, he began to regard his readers as potential comrades, offering them through his poetry the kind of union which can lead to spiritual insight.]