"There Was A Child Went Forth"
by Walt Whitman

There was a child went forth every day.
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and
the song of the phoebe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's
foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pondside,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the
beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him.
The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow, and the esculent roots of
the garden,
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and
wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the oldest drunkard staggering home from the out-house of the tavern
whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in
her womb and birth'd him.
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.


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The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor
falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger’d, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning
and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay’d, the sense of what is real, the thought if
after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether
and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, and if they are not flashes and
specks, what are they?
The streets themselves and the facades of houses and goods in the windows
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank’d wharves, the huge crossing at the
ferries,
The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on the roofs and gables of
white or brown two miles off,
The schooner nearby sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-
tow’d astern,
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of color’d clouds, the long bar or maroon-tint away solitary by
itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon’s edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and
shore mud,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now
goes, and will always go forth every day.
Sample Revision Frame Guide

*Note: Prepositions may differ from Whitman’s. This is just a guide.

1. There was a child went forth every day,

2. And the first object s/he look’d upon, that s/he became,

3. And that object became part of him/her for the day or a certain part of the day,

4. Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

5. ___________ became part of this child.

6. And _____________ and _____________ and _____________
   and _____________ and _____________, and ___________
   of the _____________,

7. And the _____________ and the _____________, and the
   _____________ and the _____________

8. And the _____________ of the _____________, and the
   _____________ and the _____________

9. And the _____________ _____________ ing themselves so
   _____________ below there

10. And the _____________ with their _____________, all be-
    come part of him/her.

11. The _____________ of _____________ -month and
    _____________ -month became part of him/her.

12. _____________ and those of the _____________, and the
    _____________ of the _____________,

13. And the _____________ and the _____________ and _____
    and the _____________ by the _____________

And the _____________ ing home from the _____________ of the _____________ when s/he had _____________,

And the _____________ that _____________ ed on his/her to the _____________

And the _____________ that pass’d, and the _____________,

And the _____________ and _____________, and the _____________ and _____________,

And all the changes of _____________ and _____________ wherever s/he went.

His/her own parents, he that had father’d him/her and she that had conceiv’d him/her in her womb and birth’d him/her,

They gave this child more of themselves than that,

They gave him/her afterward every day, they became part of him/her.

The mother at _____________ _____________ ing ______ on the _____________,

The mother with _____________, _____________ her ________ and _____________, a _____________ _____________ ing _____________ her _____________ and _____________ as she _____________,

The father, _____________ _____________ , _____________, _____________, _____________ , _____________ , _____________, ________

The _____________, the _____________, the ______, the _____________,

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26 The family ________________, the ________________, the
________________, the ________________, the ________________
and ________________

27 ________________ that will not be ________________, the sense of
what is ________________, the ________________ if after all
it should ________________ ________________

28 The ________________ of ________________ and the ________
of ________________, the curious ________________ and
______________

29 Whether that which ________________ ________________
______________, or is it all ________________
and ________________?

30 ________________ and ________________ ________________
in the ________________, if they are not ________________
and ________________ what are they?

31 The ________________ themselves and the ________________ of
______________, and ________________ in the
______________

32 ________________, ________________, the ________________, the
______________ at the ________________

33 The ________________ on the ________________ seen from afar at
______________, the ________________ in between,

34 ________________, ________________ and ________________,
the ________________ ________________ ing on the ______
and ________________ of ________________ or ________________ miles off,

35 The ________________ nearby ________________ ________________
down the ________________, the ________________
______________ ________________ ________________,
36  The ____________________________ ing ____________________________ ing ____________,
    ____________________________ ____________________________ ____________________________ ing

37  The ____________________________ of ____________________________ ____________________________,
    the ____________________________ ____________________________ away by ____________________________,
    the ____________________________ of ____________________________
    it ____________________________ in,

38  The ____________________________ ‘s ____________________________ , the ____________________________
    ____________________________ , the ____________________________ of ____________________________
    and ____________________________ ,

39  These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and
    will always go forth every day.
Student Model

“There Was a Child Went Forth”
Eric Klein, Capistrano Valley High School

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look’d upon, that he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
The white snow became part of this child.
And the stockings and the green and silver Christmas tree, and the red and green gifts, and the songs of Christmas,
And the tall dark pews, and the room’s eerie hollow echo, and the air’s smell and the stranger’s voice,
And the cozy warmth of the back seat or under the shelf under the TV,
And the world so beautifully coloring itself out there, and the warm inside,
And the Leggos with their bright varied shapes, all became part of him.
The rain storms of March and April were part of him.
Spring rose buds and those across the cool, dirty street, and the mysterious houses of the neighbors,
And the preschool filled with children and the drive home, and the gum wrappers, and the windshield wipers up and down,
And the cheerful ice cream man driving home past the children on the street where he had just been,
And the lady that’d knock on the door for his mom,
And the friendly neighbors that’d wave, and the mean neighbors,
And the cruel and the big mouthed boys, and the bright colored bigwheels and the bikes,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.
His own parents, he that had father’d him and she that had conceived him in her womb and birth’d him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.
The mother at home busily cleaning the house with her rags,
The mother with dark hair unchanging her mind and complexion, a dull color radiating from herself and her clothes as she moves around.
The father, big all-knowing, understanding, strong, smiling, warm.

The argument, the big mean words, the long night, the hasty apology,
The family house, the yard, the fort, the garage, the blue and sparkling pool,
Property that will not be taken, the knowing of who you are, the idea if after all it should be imaginary,
The questions about the world and the questions about life, the curious animals and how,
Whether those which seem so are real or are they all faces and figures
People and machines working continuously in this world, if they are not faces and figures, what are they?
The houses themselves and the lawns of grass and bushes along the streets,
Cars, parking lots, the smoke-filled waiting rooms, the faceless mannequins at the department store.
The city in the hills seen from the bay at dusk, the boats between,
People, buildings and shops, the mimes performing in the streets and plazas with crowds or alone thirty feet away,
The wilderness nearby peacefully running along the hillside, the little trees’ green-brown dots
The endlessly breaking waves, sandy wooden boardwalk, laughing,
The lines of bright rides, the endless line of horizon and blue and orange water alone shining by themselves, the frame of stillness they gleam silently in,
The world’s edge, the burning redwood, the fragrance of charred marshmallows and tree moss,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will go forth every day.