

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd Quotations

Writer: Walt Whitman | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Quotes

"O powerful western fallen star!" (Apostrophe + Metaphor)

Explanation: The poet calls the star a symbol of Abraham Lincoln. The star falling means the death of a great leader. The poet directly addresses the fallen star (apostrophe), which symbolizes Abraham Lincoln. The "fallen star" is a metaphor for his death.

"Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave, / Night and day journeys a coffin."

(Imagery + Personification)

Explanation: The poet shows the coffin of Lincoln moving across the land. It unites the whole nation in mourning. The coffin is described as if it makes a journey day and night (personification), creating a vivid picture (imagery).

"Here, coffin that slowly passes, I give you my sprig of lilac." (Apostrophe + Symbolism)

Explanation: The poet offers lilac flowers as love and memory for Lincoln. It is a symbol of respect. The coffin is directly addressed (apostrophe). The lilac is a symbol of love, mourning, and tribute.

"Sing on dearest brother... with voice of uttermost woe." (Apostrophe + Alliteration ["with... woe"])

Explanation: The hermit thrush bird sings of death. Its song teaches the poet to accept death with peace. The bird is addressed as "brother" (apostrophe). The phrase "with... woe" shows alliteration.

"Come lovely and soothing death, / Undulate round the world." (Personification + Apostrophe)

Explanation: The poet welcomes death not as pain but as peace. Death becomes soft, calm, and universal. Death is imagined as a gentle and soothing being (personification) and is directly addressed (apostrophe).

"And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death." (Repetition + Personification)

Explanation: The poet realizes that death is not only sorrow. It is a sacred truth that belongs to all life. The word "death" is repeated for emphasis (repetition). Death is given the qualities of thought and knowledge (personification).

"Come lovely and soothing death... In the day, in the night, to all, to each." (Apostrophe + Anaphora [repetition at beginning: "In the... In the..."])

Explanation: The poet welcomes death as gentle and universal. Death comes to everyone, sooner or later. Death is called upon (apostrophe). The repetition of the structure "In the..." is an example of anaphora.

"Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet." (Metaphor + Personification)

Explanation: Death is called a dark mother. She is always near, moving softly and silently. Death is called "dark mother" (metaphor). Death is given the human action of gliding softly (personification).

"Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee, / Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death." (Metaphor + Imagery)

Explanation: Death is seen as a sea of love and bliss. It is not terror, but peace. Death is compared to an ocean and a flood (metaphor), producing a strong image (imagery).

"Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul." (Symbolism + Imagery)

Explanation: The three symbols—lilac, star, and bird—join with the poet's soul. Together, they keep Lincoln's memory alive. Lilac = love, star = death, bird = song of grief (symbolism). All three are intertwined with the poet's soul, creating imagery.

LxNotes