

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poems

Fasces Americae and Walt Whitman's House

by Fred Marchant



FRED MARCHANT, PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

Walt Whitman's House

Camden

His last one, two floors, two granite slabs
for his doorstep, empty lots and snowy vastness
surrounding, rows of row-houses torn down.

Across the street the beige bricks of the jail,
a bus-stop, a few metallic window-slots five
or six floors up. I think mostly of his kind eyes,

how they would have taken in the jail, the jailers,
the inmates, the friends and lovers at the bus-stop
waiting for the bus, the snow falling, going home all.

How in their sleep he might visit, touch their lips
and try to keep them warm with feelings no one,
not even the poets of then or now, know the name of.

Outside his house in the white snow, on the drifts
rising like waves frozen, a vast stone ship of state
is lit up, its hold filled to the limit, and about to sink.



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