Democracy most of all affiliates with the open air, is sunny and hardy and sane only with Nature—just as much as Art is. Something is required to temper both—to check them, restrain them, from excess, morbidity. I have wanted, before departure, to hear special testimony to a very old lesson and requisite. American Democracy, in its myriad personalities, in factories, workshops, stores, offices—through the dense streets and houses of cities, and all the manifold sophisticated life—must either be fibred, vitalized, by regular contact with out-door light and air and growths, farm scenes, animals, fields, trees, birds, sun-warmth, and free skies, or it will morbidly dwindle and pale. We cannot have grand races of mechanics, work people, and commonalty, (the only specific purpose of America) on any less terms. I conceive of no flourishing and heroic elements of Democracy in the United States, or of Democracy maintaining itself at all, without the Nature-element forming a main part—to be its health-element and beauty-element—really to underlie the whole politics, sanity, religion and art of the New World.

Walt Whitman, Autobiographia