Poetry: Comparison & Contrast

Walt Whitman (1819–1892).  Leaves of Grass.  1900.

Cavalry Crossing a Ford

|  |  |
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|  | A line in long array, where they wind betwixt green islands; |
|  | They take a serpentine course—their arms flash in the sun—Hark to the musical clank; |
|  | Behold the silvery river—in it the splashing horses, loitering, stop to drink; |
|  | Behold the brown-faced men—each group, each person, a picture—the negligent rest on the saddles; |
| 5 | Some emerge on the opposite bank—others are just entering the ford—while, |
|  | Scarlet, and blue, and snowy white, |
|  | The guidon flags flutter gaily in the wind. |

Herman Melville (1819-1891)

The Night March

|  |  |
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|  | With banners furled and clarions mute, |
|  | An army passes in the night; |
|  | And beaming spears and helms salute |
|  | The dark with bright. |
|  |  |
| 5 | In silence deep the legions stream, |
|  | With open ranks, in order true; |
|  | Over boundless plains they stream and gleam |
|  | No chief in view! |
|  |  |
|  | Afar, in twinkling distance lost, |
| 10 | (So legends tell) he lonely wends |
|  | And back through all that shining host |
|  | His mandate sends. |