



Lead in Literature: The World Below the Brine

BY WALT WHITMAN

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<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45481/the-world-below-the-brine>]



The world below the brine,

Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,

Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the thick tangle,
openings, and pink turf,

Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white, and gold, the play of light through the
water,

Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten, grass, rushes, and the aliment of the
swimmers,

Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly crawling close to the bottom,

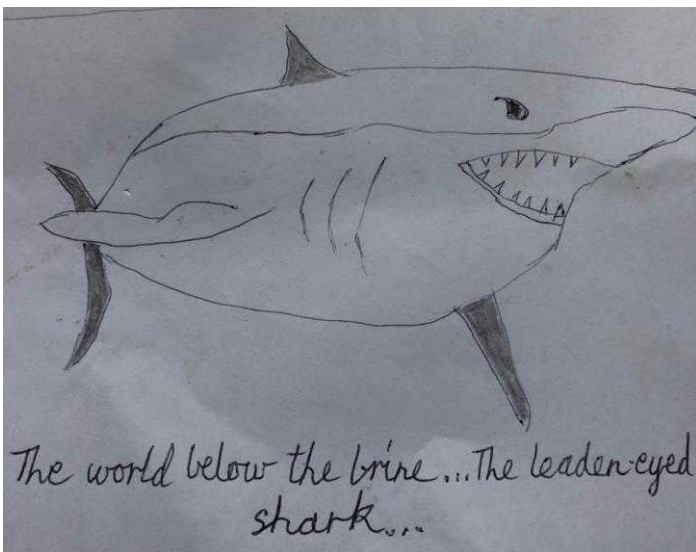
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or disporting with his flukes,

The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,

Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths, breathing that thick-
breathing air, as so many do,

The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air breathed by beings like us who
walk this sphere,

The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other spheres.



2020 Volcano Art Prize (VAP) Entry.

Title: The world below the brine...The leaden-eyed shark....

Lead-Safety Message: Great White Sharks Have Toxic Levels of Mercury, Arsenic and Lead In Their Blood- it's likely if we eat the same fish that sharks eat, we'll be poisoned too!

Artist: Elizabeth O'Brien

Description of Work: Title from a poem in Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" book of poems. Lead pencil and pen drawing.

URL: [https://volcanoartprize.com/portfolio-](https://volcanoartprize.com/portfolio-item/the-world-below-the-brine-the-leaden-eyed-shark/)

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