**Nineteenth Century American Poets – Whitman, Dickinson, Poe**

Using textbooks, anthologies or online resources, find and choose one poem by each of our three poets.

For each of the three poems you choose you will write a “Poetry Lab Report” including the following:

1. An initial understanding of the poem will be explained (what were your first thoughts? Why did you choose this poem?)
2. A deeper understanding of the poem will be explained, including:
   1. biographical context of the poem (look it up!) How does the poet’s life inform your reading of the poem?
   2. historical context of the poem (look it up!) How does the history of the time period inform your reading of the poem?
   3. a connotative exploration of word choice and how meaning is constructed
   4. an examination of word order and grammar and how they influence meaning
   5. a judgment – Good poem? Bad poem? Doggerel? Philosophical? Memorable? Valuable? Instructive?

Your write-up on each poem should be about 1 page in length (per poem – that means three pages or so total).

First drafts of your paper will be due on\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We will spend time in class on this – don’t worry.