

## 7.2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Understanding Metaphor**

Up to now, the poems in this unit have used figurative language in clear ways. For example, Sherman Alexie's poem compares basketball to war by saying directly: "for us, it is war."

However, poets do not always make their comparisons so directly. As readers, one of the things we must figure out is whether or not Whitman is referring to literal songs that people would sing out loud, if he is using the idea of singing as a metaphor, or if he is doing both.

Consult the poem as needed to answer the following questions about how Whitman uses metaphor.

1. At the end of the poem, Whitman writes, "Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else." Using your own words, explain what Whitman means here.

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2. Whitman makes sure to explain that the singers are all doing some kind of work. Here, he is probably not saying that everyone is singing at their jobs! Instead, he seems to compare work to singing. Type ways that each of the following kinds of work might be like singing.

A. Shoemaking: \_\_\_\_\_

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B. Plowing a field: \_\_\_\_\_

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