



Nature Essays: Essays: Introduction First Series **Second Series** Nature History The Poet Commodity Self-Reliance Experience Compensation Character Beauty Spiritual Laws Manners Language Discipline Gifts Love Idealism Friendship Nature Politics Spirit Prudence Nominalist and Realist Prospects Heroism The Over-Soul New England Reformers Circles

Essays: The First Series, The Second Series, Nature

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

Read by: Bob Neufeld Format: MP3 CD in DVD case

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Nature (1837), Essays: The First Series (1841) and Essays: The Second Series (1844) by Ralph Waldo Emerson were derived from his many lectures on the subject topics and articulated the ideas and values that came to be known at the time as the Transcendentalist movement and have since become woven into the fabric of the American temperament.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 – April 27, 1883) was an American essayist, lecturer and poet best known for his essays and for leading the Transcendentalist movement. He was a champion of the emerging idea of individualism and a critic of the constraints imposed by conformity to prevailing social and religious beliefs. His essays and lectures set the course of much of the intellectual life of the country.

Waldo, as he liked to be called, was born in Boston the son of a Unitarian minister who died when he was eight years old. He attended Boston Latin School, Harvard College and subsequently Harvard Divinity School, which exposed him to new translations of Hindu and Buddhist poetry. He was ordained as minister of the Second Church in Boston in 1829 and married Ellen Louisa Tucker that same year, who died of tuberculosis within a few years and left him with a small inheritance. He married Lydia Jackson in 1835 and settled in Concord, Massachusetts, where they raised four children and entertained many noted artists and intellectuals, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson and Louis May Alcott, and Henry David Thoreau, whose cabin on Walden Pond stood on Emerson property.

In the 1830's Emerson gradually parted company with conventional beliefs and began to articulate a pantheistic sensibility in which God and the world were indivisible. The first and formative expression of the Transcendentalist philosophy appeared in 1836 in his essay "Nature"; his ground-breaking speech, "The American Scholar", in 1837, was called America's "Intellectual Declaration of Independence" by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.; his controversial address at the Harvard Divinity School in 1838 caused him to be labeled an atheist. With Margaret Fuller, he founded the Transcendentalist journal *The Dial* in 1840 and published his seminal *Essays: First Series* in 1841 and *Essays: Second Series* in 1844. His work brought him worldwide recognition and enabled him to travel and lecture widely and publish continuously until his death from pneumonia in 1882.