



Henry David Thoreau Journal Entries on or around January 7th

"What are you doing now?" he asked. "Do you keep a journal?" So I make my first entry to-day.

SOLITUDE

To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present,--I avoid myself.

--1837, October 22 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p.3)

As a child looks forward to the coming of the summer, so could we contemplate with quiet joy the circle of the seasons returning without fail eternally. As the spring came round during so many years of the gods, we could go out to admire and adorn anew our Eden, and yet never tire.

--1838, January 6 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 25)

I am singularly refreshed in winter when I hear tell of service-berries, pokeweed, juniper. Is not heaven made up of these cheap summer glories?

--1842, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 315)

When, as now, in January a south wind melts the snow, and the bare ground appears, covered with sere grass and occasionally wilted green leaves which seem in doubt whether to let go their greenness quite or absorb new juices against the coming year,--in such a season a perfume seems to exhale from the earth itself and the south wind melts my integuments also. Then is she my mother earth. I derive a real vigor from the scent of the gale wafted over the naked ground, as from strong meats, and realize again how man is the pensioner of Nature. We are always conciliated and cheered when we are fed by [such] an influence, and our needs are felt to be part of the domestic economy of Nature.

--1842, January 8 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 315)

The knowledge of an unlearned man is living and luxuriant like a forest, but covered with mosses and lichens and for the most part inaccessible and going to waste; the knowledge of the man of science is like timber collected in yards for public works, which still supports a green sprout here and there, but even this is liable to dry rot.

--1851, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. II, p. 138)

And then the sun goes down, and long the afterglow gives light. And then the damask curtains glow along the western window. And now the first star is lit, and I go home.

--1852, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. III, p. 179)

This promises a perfect winter day...Perfect serenity and clarity and sonorousness in the earth. All nature is but braced by the cold. It gives tension to both body and mind...

About ten minutes before 10 A.M., I heard a very loud sound, and felt a violent jar, which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle, which I knew must be either a powder-mill blown up or an earthquake...

I perceive (?) the increased length of the day on returning from my afternoon walk. Can it be? The sun sets only about five minutes later, and the day is about ten minutes longer.

--1853, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. IV, pp. 453-455)

Day before yesterday I looked at the mangled and blackened bodies of men which had been blown up by powder, and felt that the lives of men were not innocent, and that there was an avenging power in nature. Today I hear this immortal melody, while the west wind is blowing balmily on my cheek, and methinks a roseate sunset is preparing. Are there not two powers?

--1853, January 9 (*Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 459)

"Why!" said I, speaking to his condition, "the stones are happy, Concord River is happy, and I am happy too. When I took up a fragment of a walnut-shell this morning, I saw by its very grain and composition, its form and color, etc., that it was made for happiness. The most brutish and inanimate objects that are made suggest an everlasting and thorough satisfaction; they are the homes of content. Wood, earth, mould, etc., exist for joy. Do you think that Concord River would have continued to flow these millions of years by Clamshell Hill and round Hunt's Island, if it had not been happy, - if it had been miserable in its channel, tired of existence, and cursing its maker and the hour that it sprang?"
--1857, January 6 (*Journal*, Vol. IX, pp. 206 - 207)

There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me and excites such serene and profitable thought. The objects are elevating. In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the least redeem it, -- dining with the Governor or a member of Congress! ! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sprout-lands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day, like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine.
--1857, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. IX, p. 208)

But away out of the town, on Brown's scrub oak lot, which was sold the other day for six dollars an acre, I have company such as England cannot buy, nor afford. This society is what I live, what I survey, for. I subscribe generously to *this* - all that I have and am.
--1857, January 7 (*Journal*, Vol. IX, p. 210)