



Henry David Thoreau Journal Entries on or around May 6th

"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)

The poet speaks only those thoughts that come unbidden, like the wind that stirs the trees, and men cannot help but listen. He is not listened to, but heard. The weathercock might as well dally with the wind as a man pretend to resist eloquence. The breath that inspires the poet has traversed a whole Campagna, and this new climate here indicates that other latitudes are chilled or heated.

--1841, May 9 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 258)

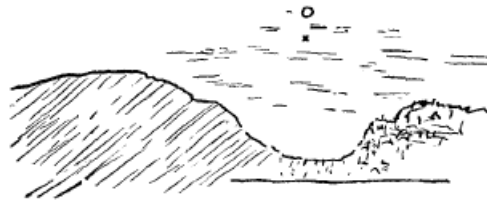
Speak to men as to gods and you will not be insincere.

--1841, May 9 (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 258)

Evening. --The moon is full. The air is filled with a certain luminous, liquid, white light. You can see the moonlight, as it were reflected from the atmosphere, which some might mistake for a haze,-- a glow of mellow light, somewhat like the light I saw in the afternoon sky some weeks ago; as if the air were a very thin but transparent liquid, not dry, as in winter, nor gross, as in summer. It has depth, and not merely distance (the sky).

--1852, May 3 (*Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 12)

At Hubbard's Bridge. The river still quite high. The water is calm. I hear a stertorous sound from some frog. This makes three frogs' notes that I hear. There is the moon in the south, with one bright star just beneath it, which, when the moon is in clouds, is its representative. Looking from bridge to hill, above is the moon, separated from attendant star by a bar of white clouds, below which the star shines brightly in a clearing; beneath this, bars of white clouds to the horizon. The hill and opposite woods are



dark with fine effect. The little peepers have much the greatest apparatus for peeping of any frogs that I know.

Frogs are the birds of the night.

--1852, May 3 (*Journal*, Vol. IV, pp. 13-14)

It is stated in the Life of Humboldt that he proved "that the expression, 'the ocean reflects the sky,' was a purely poetical, but not a scientifically correct one, as the sea is often blue when the sky is almost totally covered with light white clouds." He used Saussure's cyanometer even to measure the color of the sea.

--1853, May 4 (*Journal*, Vol. V, pp. 120-121)

If you are really a sick man, it is indeed to be regretted, for you cannot accomplish so much as if you were well. All that a man has to say or do that can possibly concern mankind, is in some shape or other to tell the story of his love,--to sing; and, if he is fortunate and keeps alive, he will be forever in love. This alone is to be alive to the extremities.

-- 1854, May 6 (*Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 237)

It is a pity that this divine creature should ever suffer from cold feet; a still greater pity that the coldness so often reaches to his heart.

-- 1854, May 6 (*Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 237)

At sunset across the flooded meadow to Nawshawtuct. The water becoming calm. The sun is just disappearing as I reach the hilltop, and horizon's edge appears with beautiful distinctness. As the twilight approaches or deepens, the mountains, those pillars which point the way to heaven, assume a deeper blue. As yet the aspect of the forest at a distance is not changed from its winter appearance, except where the maple-tops in blossom in low lands tinge it red. And the elm-tops are in fruit in the streets; and is there not [a] general but slight reddish tinge from expanding buds? Scared up ducks of some kind.

-- 1854, May 6 (*Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 245)

What fair isles, what remote coast shall we explore? What San Salvador or Bay of All Saints arrive at? All are tempted forth, like flies, into the sun. All isles seem fortunate and blessed to-day; all capes are of Good Hope. The same sun and calm that tempts the turtles out tempts the voyagers. It is an opportunity to explore their own natures, to float along their own shores.

-- 1857, May 3 (*Journal*, Vol. X, pp. 351-352)

I sympathize not to-day with those who go to church in newest clothes and sit quietly in straight-backed pews. I sympathize rather with the boy who has none to look after him, who borrows a boat and paddle and in common clothes sets out to explore these temporary vernal lakes. I meet such a boy paddling along under a sunny bank, with bare feet and his pants rolled up above his knees, ready to leap into the water at a moment's warning. Better for him to read "Robinson Crusoe" than Baxter's "Saints' Rest."

-- 1857, May 3 (*Journal*, Vol. X, p. 352)