

Laura McLean
To Walden and Back: What is Your Place in the World?
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical H.S.
1121 Ashley Blvd.
New Bedford, MA 02745
Grade 12 AP Literature & Composition
August 2022

Unit Overview:

This unit will tap into the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau as a launching pad for exploring the relationship between nature and the self. Students will also read present day regional writers whose focus is the ordinary discoveries of daily life. Concurrent with the readings & analysis, students will keep daily journals, leading them on to write their own personal narrative, using the concept of place as a springboard for their thoughts. The basis for the activities (reading and interpreting Thoreau and others) is meant to give students a true sense of approaching Walden and making a connecting experience.

This unit will coincide with trimester 3, and will cover a full 6-day academic cycle of 45-minute classes. It will be preceded by 2 trimesters of skill building in literary analysis and culminate in personal reflections a la Thoreau, allowing them to stand back and see their relationship with where they are in the world at this pivotal juncture before graduating and entering the wider world.

As goes with an AP level course, it is a rigorous, college-level class in which great literature will be read, interpreted and analyzed through writing and discussion. The inclusion of Thoreau & followers offers a unique brand of narrative that will further insight and self awareness.

Objectives:

- To analyze the significance of essays/poems within the context of Transcendentalism
- To trace themes including: the role of nature; independence and individuality; and conscience
- To broaden awareness of the natural world understanding the story it has to impart
- To develop a personal connection to the various texts
- To practice quick explicating techniques in analysis of poetry and prose
- To generate thoughtful, analytical discourse during class discussions
- To make thematic connections between Emerson/Thoreau's essays & other works

Outline:

- Introduce Emerson & Thoreau

- Brief bio and timeline & definition of transcendentalism
- Excerpts from “A Native Hill” and “The Work of Local Culture” by Wendell Berry from *The World-Ending Fire, The Essential Wendell Berry*; Additional Readings: [Wendell Berry](#)
- Readings: from memoir *Swimming at Supper* by Carol Wasserman, (“Side Chairs,” “Burning Brush,” “Scavengers” “The ATM.”)
- Selected poems: “The Peace of Wild Things” by Wendell Berry; “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” by W.B. Yeats; “A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal” by William Wordsworth; “Wild Geese” by Mary Oliver; “[Sic Vita](#)” by Henry David Thoreau; and “On the Grasshopper and Cricket” by John Keats.
- Audio -Excerpts from Ben Shattuck’s “Six Walks: In the Footsteps of Henry David Thoreau.
- Classwork each day will revolve around readings (of essays and poems) with individual annotations arousing group discussions.
- Homework will center on journal writing, allowing students to set down their thoughts in solitude, since the questions raised require some introspection. They will be encouraged to use longhand and digress as they see fit. See instructions under “Keeping a Journal”
- Proverb Charades - Other group activities will be introduced when time allows such as a “Proverb Charades “ where team members pantomime quotes by Emerson and Thoreau, thus familiarizing themselves with the aphorisms.
- [Quotations by Emerson](#)
- [Quotations by Thoreau](#)
- Photography Exercise: Putting Yourself in Nature: Students will meet Everglades activist & photographer Clyde Butcher, a modern-day Ansel Adams watching a [brief interview](#) of him. Try to capture a photo (even a selfie) that shows you in nature. Explain in a paragraph where your journey has taken you and places on your “wish list” (Appalachian Trail? National Parks? Acadia? Walden?)
- Journaling Guidelines: Glance at [notes](#) from Robert D. Richardson’s “First We Read Then We Write Emerson on the Creative Process” students will pen their thoughts that spring from readings as well as a particular prompt posed. This is a highly personal endeavor, a departure from the typical AP assignments aimed at grooming students for the AP exam. It may prove beneficial to them as they manage their lives beyond high school.
- Post Unit work - As a follow-up - after returning from shop cycle students will be given two timed AP Test prep exercises based on Thoreau and Emerson scripts. One essay and one multiple choice. These are from the Prestwick House resources for Advanced Placement Literature titled “Transcendentalism: Essays of Emerson and Thoreau.

Lesson Details

Lesson 1: *Voices of the Counter Culture*: Introduction to Transcendentalism, Emerson & Thoreau. Introduced by instructor.

Pre Reading Materials:

[Introduction to Transcendentalism](#)

[Profiles of Emerson and Thoreau](#)

[Watch bio clip](#)

Working independently: Readings (as marked) from *Nature* and from *Self-Reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson. **Objectives:** Note the main topic; annotate rich passages; make connections to yourself. What is the essence of the piece? What are some of the key details of the text? Write a synopsis that confirms your understanding of the two passages. Be ready to share your findings.

Homework - Journal Entry 1: What values are formed through a relationship with nature? Do you have a particular kinship with the natural world? Explain how it happened. How might you be improved by nature?

Lesson 2: *Walden Opening & Closing*. To be done individually. Annotate as you read, asking questions and taking time to look up unknown vocabulary. As you read the excerpts from [Walden](#), think of how Thoreau blends natural observation, social criticism, and philosophical insight. Read the first 12 paragraphs of: “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” and “The Conclusion”: from “I left the woods...to “The sun is but a morning star.”

Annotate: Mark details in the paragraphs that address Thoreau’s belief in less ownership in favor of a higher nonmaterial value. What does Thoreau mean when he says “It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.” What details does he use to forward the main ideas? What effect does Thoreau create with the use of figurative language to describe life and time (Paragraph 12)?

Homework - Journal Entry 2: Imagine going off to be alone in a cabin in the woods...Could you personally accept giving up “things?” How might you benefit? How would you fill the days? What would be your essentials? What would you miss most about civilization? How can you live more deliberately?

Lesson 3: *More Walden Wisdom*. With a partner, read sections from *Walden: Solitude and The Village*. Sift through the passages for things that amuse or surprise you. Look up allusions to grasp the full effect of Thoreau’s writing. Find a few “golden” sentences. Specify what is

relatable or remote to your life in his discussion. Do you agree that solitude has merit? What if anything do you disagree with here? What are your personal preferences - country or village life? Explain.

Proverb Charades - Write proverbs (using quotes from Emerson and Thoreau [Quotations by Emerson](#), [Quotations by Thoreau](#)) on slips of paper. Class will be divided into two teams with members taking turns selecting and pantomiming them for the rest of the team.

Homework - Journal Entry 3: To paraphrase Emerson: “Know thyself, study nature.” Take time out of the hectic world and observe nature up close. You will go outdoors and simply observe, using all of your senses. Devote 20 minutes to this solitary activity and see where it takes you. Reflect on this experience in today’s journal. You may get as creative as you like with this. You may discover something within and without.

Lesson 4: *Continuing the legacy.* We will move on to writers who continue to invoke Thoreau, beginning with [Wendell Berry](#). Consider this quote: “For humans to have a responsible relationship to the world, they must imagine their place in it. To have a place, to live and belong in a place, to live from a place without destroying it, we must imagine it.”—Wendell Berry, “It All Turns on Affection,” [The 2012 Jefferson Lecture](#). We will read together excerpts from Wendell Berry’s “The Work of Local Culture” & “A Native Hill.” Hone in on patterns that emerge from the essays that reflect the quotation. What is your impression of Berry? How is he similar to Thoreau? Is he someone you would read more of?

Homework - Journal Entry 4: Reflecting on Berry’s essays, talk about a place that you hold special and explain its significance. The setting should be a place that has meaning and has shaped your development. It can be a public or private place but it must speak to you. Using descriptive details, share why you find it inspiring, comforting, or captivating.

Lesson 5: *How does nature stimulate the creative process?* Selections offer students a variety of voices that beckon the reader to turn their heads to nature. Using [TPCASTT](#) as a method of analysis, students will work in partners (or independently) on a poem and then share their findings in class in mini-presentations where the poem will first be recited and then discussed. Poetry is an important component in the AP Lit curriculum and students will already be practiced in analysis. This will serve as an interactive way to apply their skills while continuing the theme of nature.

- Selected poems: “[The Peace of Wild Things](#)” by Wendell Berry; “[The Lake Isle of Innisfree](#)” by W.B. Yeats; “[The World is Too Much With Us](#)” by William Wordsworth; “[Wild Geese](#)” by Mary Oliver; “[Sic Vita](#)” by Henry David Thoreau; “[On the Grasshopper and Cricket](#)” by John Keats; “[Birches](#)” by Robert Frost.

- Students share ideas on their poem - meanings & themes within as well as the artful components used (diction, imagery, tone, syntax and detail). This activity will build confidence in understanding poetry and hopefully students will enjoy the process. They can use TPCASTT as a reference.

Homework - Journal Entry 5: Breaking routine. Recalling why Thoreau ended his experiment of living in the woods (due to it becoming routine), choose a pattern that is a regular part of your life and do it differently. It could be something as simple as the course you take driving or running. See what this small alteration does. Then describe the changes you made, and the effect it had on you. What did you learn? Did you find it empowering?

Lesson 6: *Beyond Walden.* To finish this cycle we will read 2-3 chapters from Carol Wasserman's memoir *Swimming at Suppertime* ("Side Chairs," "Burning Brush," "Scavengers"). by and listen to excerpts on audio from Ben Shattuck's new book: *Six Walks: In the Footsteps of Henry David Thoreau*. Students will annotate as we go and then pool thoughts at the conclusion. Think about how these distinct visions of individuality continue to speak to us today. What did you like or dislike about each reading? What kind of rituals do you have in your daily life?

Homework - Personal Narrative: In this final entry you will seek to channel Thoreau and others in writing about an experience that formed or influenced you, including as much detail of the natural surroundings as you can recall. Free write for 15 minutes a snapshot from your life - no editing - no crossing out. The topic is open - think of a memory worthy of preserving. It might be a moment at school or work or home. Read over your writing and select the sentence that "pops out" the most to you - maybe the verb vibrates, evokes an emotion, or an image. Put that sentence at the top of the page and free write for another 15 minutes from that starting point.

Homework addendum: Photography Exercise: Putting Yourself in Nature: In conjunction with your Personal Narrative you will complete the following exercise: Watch an [interview](#) with Everglades activist & photographer Clyde Butcher, a modern-day Ansel Adams. Then take a photo (a selfie showing you in your chosen setting or a shot of the place.) Include a caption that says where your journey has taken you and where you would like to continue your journey in the natural world. (Appalachian Trail? National Parks? Walden?)

Standards:

SLCA.1 Speaking and Listening Standards for Literacy in the Content Area. Participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

SLCA.4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning...

WCA.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

WCA.10 Writing routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences

Grading:

Annotations count as Classwork = 10 percent of their grade

Discussions are weighed at 20 percent

Journals and Personal Narrative count as Informal Writing = 30 percent

Practice drills are weighed as Formal Writing = 40 percent

AP Essay Rubric

Category

Thesis Statement - sums up your entire point 0-1

Evidence & Commentary - text references relevant 0-4
To thesis & commentary proves connection between
Idea and evidence

Sophistication - Depth, Analogy/Your prose style... 0-1

Works Cited/Works Consulted

Berry, Wendell, and Paul Kingsnorth. "A Native Hill and The Work of Local Culture." *The World-Ending Fire: The Essential Wendell Berry*, Counterpoint, Berkeley, CA, 2018.

Richardson, Robert D. *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process*. University of Iowa Press, 2015.

Shattuck, Ben. *Six Walks: In the Footsteps of Henry David Thoreau*. Tin House, 2022.

Thoreau, Henry David, and Jeffrey S. Cramer. *The Portable Thoreau*. Penguin Books, 2012.

Wasserman, Carol. *Swimming at Suppertime: Seasons of Delight on the Wrong Side of Buzzards Bay*, Crown Publishers, New York, 2002.

Links:

[Wendell Berry](#)

Selected poems: "[The Peace of Wild Things](#)" by Wendell Berry; "[The Lake Isle of Innisfree](#)" by W.B. Yeats; "[The World is Too Much With Us](#)" by William Wordsworth; "[Wild Geese](#)" by Mary Oliver; "[Sic Vita](#)" by Henry David Thoreau; "[On the Grasshopper and Cricket](#)" by John Keats; "[Birches](#)" by Robert Frost.

TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

TITLE: Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

PARAPHRASE: Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be inverted) and look up unfamiliar words.

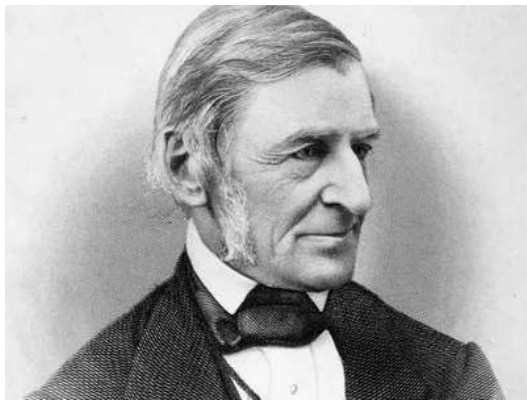
CONNOTATION: Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

ATTITUDE/TONE: Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

SHIFTS: Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

TITLE: Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

THEME: Briefly state in your own words what the poem is about (subject), then what the poet is saying about the subject (theme).



RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Waldo Emerson—he stopped using “Ralph” while he was in college—is, if not the best-known Transcendentalist, certainly among the most influential. He was born in 1803, the middle son of a conservative Unitarian minister, who himself had come from a long line of ministers. The elder Emerson died when Waldo was eight, and this would prove to be the first of many losses Emerson would suffer in his life, including all three of his brothers, his first wife, and his oldest son.

Emerson was an indifferent student at Harvard University and Harvard Divinity School. He was, however, ordained a minister in the Unitarian Church—as had generations of Emersons before him—and assigned to the pulpit of the Second Church in Boston in 1829. He married his first wife, Ellen Tucker that same year. Less than three years later, Ellen died of tuberculosis, and Emerson resigned his pulpit.

After traveling extensively in Europe, he returned to the United States to begin a career as an essayist, poet, and lecturer. He married Lydia Jackson in 1835, and together, they had four children. Their oldest son, Waldo, died at the age of five in 1842.

Emerson continued his writing and lecturing, studying philosophy, and sharing his ideas with a growing circle of friends that included Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Bronson Alcott (father of Louisa May Alcott, the famous author of *Little Women*).

In 1847, Emerson returned to England and witnessed firsthand the effects of the Industrial Revolution, especially the widening chasm between the upper and lower classes and the plight of the new urban poor championed in the novels of Charles Dickens.

A lifelong abolitionist, Emerson was disappointed in President Abraham Lincoln's hesitance to end slavery at the risk of destroying the Union. While experiencing the turmoil of the Civil War, Emerson also suffered the deaths of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Thoreau, to whom he would always refer as his best friend.

In 1871 or 1872, Emerson began to lose his memory and experience episodes of aphasia, the loss of the ability to produce or understand language. By the end of the decade, he forgot his own name at times and, when anyone asked how he felt, he responded, "Quite well; I have lost my mental faculties, but am perfectly well."

On July 24, 1872, Emerson's home in Concord caught fire. Friends and neighbors collected over \$15,000 for Emerson and his wife to rebuild. From then onward, Emerson essentially retired from public lecturing. While the house was being rebuilt, Emerson took a trip to England, Europe, and Egypt with his daughter.

Eventually, the problems with his memory and his aphasia embarrassed Emerson to the point that he ceased all public appearances. Friend and colleague Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "It is painful to witness his embarrassment at times."

On April 19, 1882, despite having a cold, Emerson went walking and was caught in a sudden rain shower. Two days later, he was diagnosed with pneumonia, and he died on April 27, 1882.

As a writer and lecturer, Emerson had become the leading voice of American intellectualism. While generally hailed as a genius, Emerson's critics found him cold and unemotional. Herman Melville thought him conceited. Still, everyone who knew him recognized his greatness and his ability to inspire others—like Thoreau—so that his literary and intellectual accomplishments resonate as a part of the very fabric of American culture.



HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Henry David Thoreau considered his life to be a work of craftsmanship, like his writing. He was born in 1817 in Concord, Massachusetts. His father, John Thoreau, was a pencil maker. His maternal grandfather, Asa Dunbar, had led the first recorded student protest in the United States: Harvard University's 1766 student "Butter Rebellion."

Thoreau wrote that his earliest memory was sneaking out of bed in the middle of the night and "looking through the stars to see if I could see God behind them."

Thoreau and his brother, John, were close, and John taught school to earn the money to pay for Thoreau's tuition at Harvard. There is a popular legend that claims that Thoreau never officially graduated from Harvard because he refused to pay the five-dollar fee required for a diploma. He allegedly said, "Let every sheep keep its own skin," a probable reference to the fact that diplomas are traditionally printed on vellum, a paper made from sheepskin. It is more likely that Thoreau declined a master's degree that had no academic value. Thoreau claimed that Harvard College offered it to graduates "who proved their physical worth by being alive three years after graduating, and their saving, earning, or inheriting quality or condition by having Five Dollars to give the college."

It was while studying at Harvard that Thoreau first read Emerson's "Nature," and began the friendship that would last for the rest of his life.

Thoreau and his brother attempted to open a school together, but John cut himself while shaving and died of tetanus in 1842. Thoreau worked for several years as a surveyor and making pencils with his father, but at the age of 28 in 1845, wanting to write his first book, he went to Walden Pond and built his cabin on land owned by Emerson. During his twenty-five months on Walden Pond, Thoreau was arrested and spent a single night jail for failure to pay poll taxes as a protest against the Mexican-American War. Against his protests, Thoreau's aunt paid the delinquent taxes, and Thoreau was released from jail after his single infamous night.

At the completion of his Walden experience, during which his stated goal was to live life “simply and deliberately,” Thoreau continued to write and lecture. He was an avid proponent of recreational canoeing and hiking. In 1859, he fell ill with bronchitis, which complicated the tuberculosis he’d contracted more than twenty years earlier. As he grew sicker, and it became apparent that he was dying, his aunt Louisa asked him if he had made his peace with God. Thoreau responded, “I did not know we had ever quarreled.” He died on May 6, 1862 at the age of forty-four.

His writing on self-governance and the primacy of the individual conscience inspired political leaders around the world and engendered revolutions that toppled empires and secured basic rights for hundreds of thousands of human souls. His writings, for example, informed both the passive resistance methods of the civil rights movement and the underlying vision of the ecology movement.

WHAT IS TRANSCENDENTALISM?

In the 150+ years since Waldo Emerson (as he preferred to be called) published his essay, “The Transcendentalist,” there have been almost as many definitions and explanations of Transcendentalism as there have been people offering those definitions and explanations. Indeed, part of the strength and weakness of the Transcendental Movement and the system of thought it engendered is that there is no one “creed,” no one set of beliefs—philosophical, spiritual, or ethical—that all Transcendentalists embraced.

Part of the goal of the Transcendentalists was to rethink theories of how the mind perceived and understood the world, the Divine, and itself. The prevailing thought of the day taught that such Truth existed outside of the mind and could be learned only through experience and reason. The Transcendentalists—like their European literary counterparts, the Romantics—believed that Truth lay within each individual and could be known intuitively.

Indeed, the very emphasis of Transcendentalism on the Individual and the Individual’s ability to discern Truth would make any attempt to codify it into a simple nutshell statement an oxymoron. In “The Transcendentalist,” Emerson defined Transcendentalism as “Idealism as it appears in 1842.” This “idealism” was a call to individuals to turn their backs on the materialistic, industrial, and corporate aspects of the world and to explore the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. In exploring these aspects, however, the individual was further called upon to reject the ideas of the past: old doctrines and dogmas that had, in the opinion of the Transcendentalists, been the cause of war and oppression. Rather, the individual was to examine his or her own innermost being and arrive at his or her own intuitive knowledge of truth. So adamant were Emerson and Thoreau that each individual must intuit his or her own truth, that neither desired

“followers” or “disciples.” Both admonished their would-be disciples to find their own way rather than imitate the beliefs and lives of the authors. Each must follow his or her own instincts and not conform to the dictates of society. Although society would always attempt to influence the individual toward conformity, the individual must always struggle to remain true to his or her self and to his or her identity.

Ironically, however, it was Transcendentalism’s emphasis on individual thought and effort that doomed it as a fleeting movement never to be institutionalized. Still, it was enormously influential in defining what it would mean to be an intellectual in America in the following centuries.

The principles of transcendentalism were, in fact, so individual—and its sources so varied—the philosophies of Plato, Emanuel Swedenborg, and the German Romantics—that the philosophy was condemned by critics as ill-defined and unknowable.

This is not to say, however, that there weren’t a few principles on which the early Transcendentalists essentially agreed. Many of Emerson’s and Thoreau’s ideas about individual reason, the rule of conscience, and self-governance were more similar than different and rooted in a preference for nature over the human realm and intuition over reason and experience. These ideals were largely a reaction to the eighteenth-century empiricism (the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment) that gave rise to the Industrial Revolution, and the resultant despoilation and pollution of the countryside, and the creation of a new form of urban poverty, all in the name of “progress.”

There are strong hints of vitalism and pantheism in Transcendentalism. Emerson believed in what he called the Oversoul, and taught that all life contained an inner spark that partook of the Divine and connected all facets of nature, including humankind. Transcendentalists eschewed organized religion, believing that humans, because they partook of Divine nature, did not need the intercession of an institution or its agents (priests and ministers) in order to approach God. The Transcendentalists were, therefore, idealistic and optimistic, believing they actually could find answers to whatever they were seeking—that all things were ultimately knowable. The key to gaining this knowledge was simply to learn how to decipher—through intuition—the symbols of nature. Intuition, the individual’s “inner voices,” allowed the Transcendentalists to turn their backs on external authority and to rely, instead, solely on their own direct experience. While Transcendentalists focused on the Divine in each individual, they emphasized that individuals could discover their own divinity only if they had freed themselves from dependence on encouragement and positive feedback from others.

A part of the Transcendentalist’s idealism and optimism was the belief that there was meaning in everything and that meaning was good; everything was connected and part of a Divine plan.

Emerson himself denied the existence of evil by insisting that Evil was not an entity in and of itself but simply the absence of Good. Just as a single spark of light was sufficient to penetrate the darkness, so too could a single act of goodness shatter the facade of evil. Transcendentalism, therefore, pointed to the essential goodness of humanity and humanity's unlimited potential to connect with both the natural and spiritual worlds, to become fully aware of what the senses perceived, and to interpret that sensory input. At the core of his essay, "Self-Reliance," Emerson admonishes his reader to "trust thyself."

With its focus on the individual and its rejection of former and foreign philosophies, Transcendentalism seemed tailor-made for the new American spirit, and it was quickly—if only briefly—embraced as almost a national philosophy.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF TRANSCENDENTALISM

John Locke—Considered the first of the British empiricists, John Locke taught that understanding was attainable only through sensory experience. He was among the first philosophers to theorize about the self as a conscious being, and, contrary to the common theories of his day, taught that the newborn mind was a tabula rasa that held no innate ideas.

Immanuel Kant—Beginning to break away from the absolute rationalism of the Enlightenment, the German philosopher espoused the "intuition of the mind" as the primary means for knowing. The Transcendentalists, however, did not think Kant took his ideas far enough. Kant believed that, ultimately, the mind could never grasp whether or not there was a God. The Transcendentalists countered that the mind that relied on external authority and input could never know the existence of God, but the independent mind, unfettered by any reliance on external authority, could certainly come to such knowledge intuitively.

Emanuel Swedenborg—A Christian philosopher and mystic, the Swedish-born theologian challenged traditional doctrines of the Christian Trinity and salvation by faith alone.

(Prestwick House AP Lit: The Essays of Emerson and Thoreau)

Emerson on Journaling: Notes from *First We Read Then We Write Emerson on the Creative Process* by Robert D. Richardson

"Keep a journal...for the habit of rendering an account to yourself of yourself in some rigorous manner and at more certain intervals than mere conversation." (Richardson 19)

What is a journal? It isn't a diary, nor is it an appointment calendar or a record of one's feelings. (Richardson 19) Emerson told his friend Thomas Carlyle, "**My journals, which I dot at here at**

home day by day, are full of disjointed dreams, audacities, unsystematic irresponsible lampoons of systems and all manner of rambling reveries, the poor drupes and berries I find in my basket after aimless rambles in woods and pastures.” (21)

The aimlessness and lack of system were part of the point, which was to preserve things just as they came to him, without second thoughts, without fitting them into predetermined niches. This fidelity to the first blush of an idea or a perception makes Emerson’s journals true records of his actual days.-- (21)

The best single bit of practical advice about writing Emerson ever gave - best because it is a cry from the heart, because it focuses on attitude not aptitude, and because it is as stirring as a rebel yell – is this: “The way to write is to throw your body at the mark when your arrows are spent.” (24)

Keeping that in mind, it is your raw thoughts, straight from your mind onto the page.