



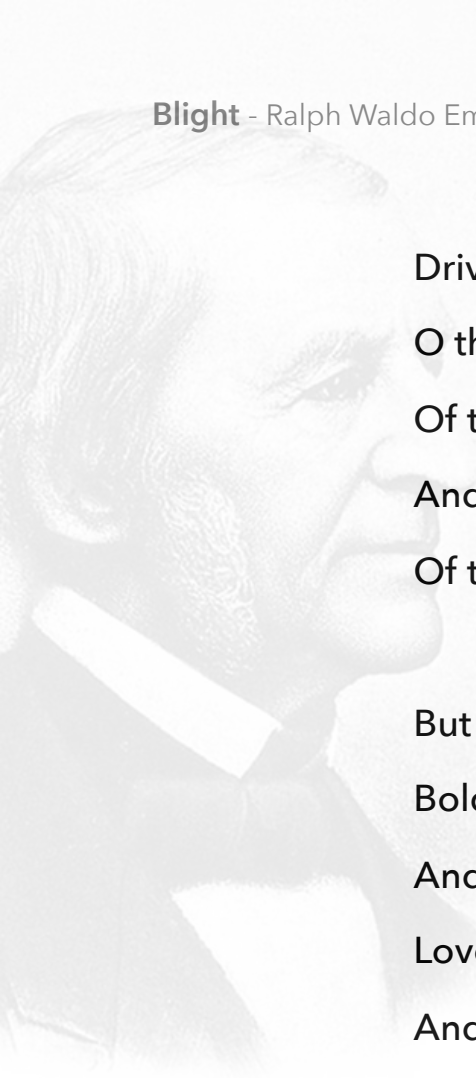
Ralph Waldo Emerson  
(1803-1882)

# Blight

from: Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Early Poems of Ralph Waldo Emerson. New York, Boston, Thomas Y. Crowell & Company: 1899. Introduction by Nathan Haskell Dole.

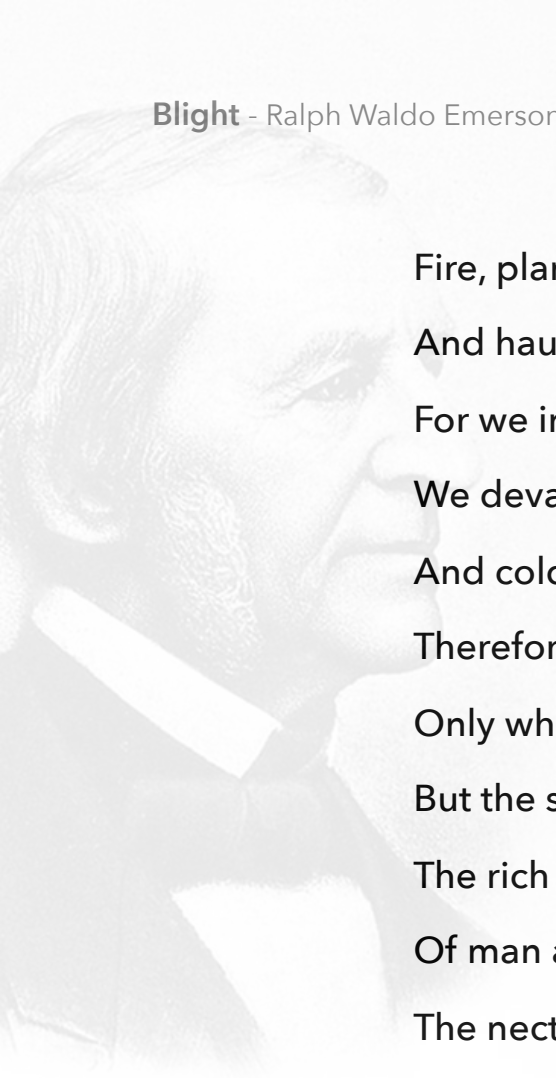
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Give me truths,  
For I am weary of the surfaces,  
And die of inanition. If I knew  
Only the herbs and simples of the wood,  
Rue, cinquefoil, gill, vervain, and pimpernel,  
Blue-vetch, and trillium, hawkweed, sassafras,  
Milkweeds, and murky brakes, quaint pipes and sundew,  
And rare and virtuous roots, which in these woods  
Draw untold juices from the common earth,  
Untold, unknown, and I could surely spell  
Their fragrance, and their chemistry apply  
By sweet affinities to human flesh,



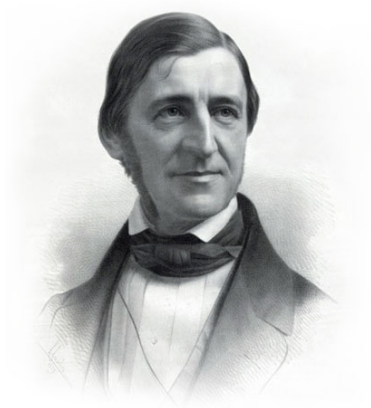
Driving the foe and stablishing the friend,—  
O that were much, and I could be a part  
Of the round day, related to the sun,  
And planted world, and full executor  
Of their imperfect functions.

But these young scholars who invade our hills,  
Bold as the engineer who fells the wood,  
And travelling often in the cut he makes,  
Love not the flower they pluck, and know it not,  
And all their botany is Latin names.  
The old men studied magic in the flower,  
And human fortunes in astronomy,  
And an omnipotence in chemistry,  
Preferring things to names, for these were men,  
Were unitarians of the united world,  
And wheresoever their clear eyebeams fell,  
They caught the footsteps of the SAME. Our eyes  
Are armed, but we are strangers to the stars,  
And strangers to the mystic beast and bird,  
And strangers to the plant and to the mine;  
The injured elements say, Not in us;  
And night and day, ocean and continent,



Fire, plant, and mineral say, Not in us,  
And haughtily return us stare for stare.  
For we invade them impiously for gain,  
We devastate them unreligiously,  
And coldly ask their pottage, not their love,  
Therefore they shove us from them, yield to us  
Only what to our griping toil is due;  
But the sweet affluence of love and song,  
The rich results of the divine consents  
Of man and earth, of world beloved and lover,  
The nectar and ambrosia are withheld;  
And in the midst of spoils and slaves, we thieves  
And pirates of the universe, shut out  
Daily to a more thin and outward rind,  
Turn pale and starve. Therefore to our sick eyes,  
The stunted trees look sick, the summer short,  
Clouds shade the sun, which will not tan our hay.  
And nothing thrives to reach its natural term,  
And life, shorn of its venerable length,  
Even at its greatest space, is a defeat,  
And dies in anger that it was a dupe,  
And, in its highest noon and wantonness,  
Is early frugal like a beggar's child:

With most unhandsome calculation taught,  
Even in the hot pursuit of the best aims  
And prizes of ambition, checks its hand,  
Like Alpine cataracts, frozen as they leaped,  
Chilled with a miserly comparison  
Of the toy's purchase with the length of life.



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