

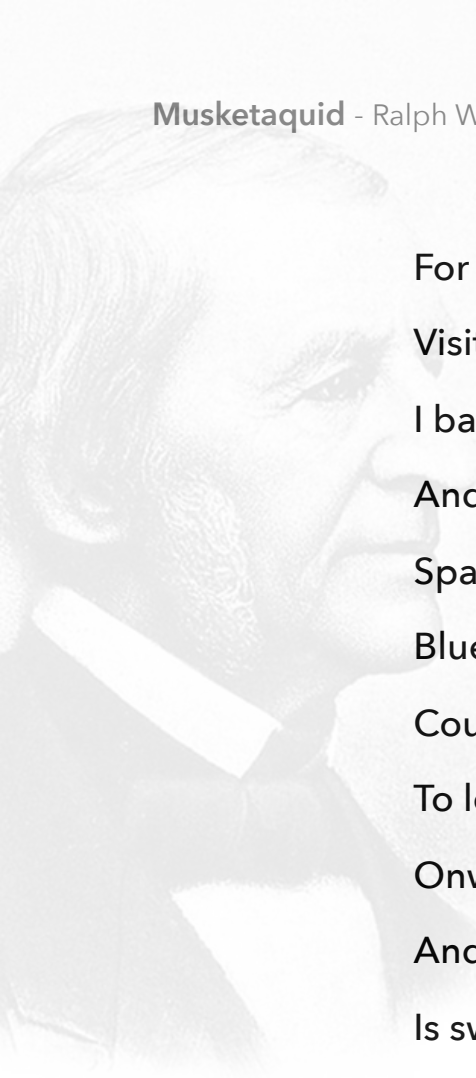


Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

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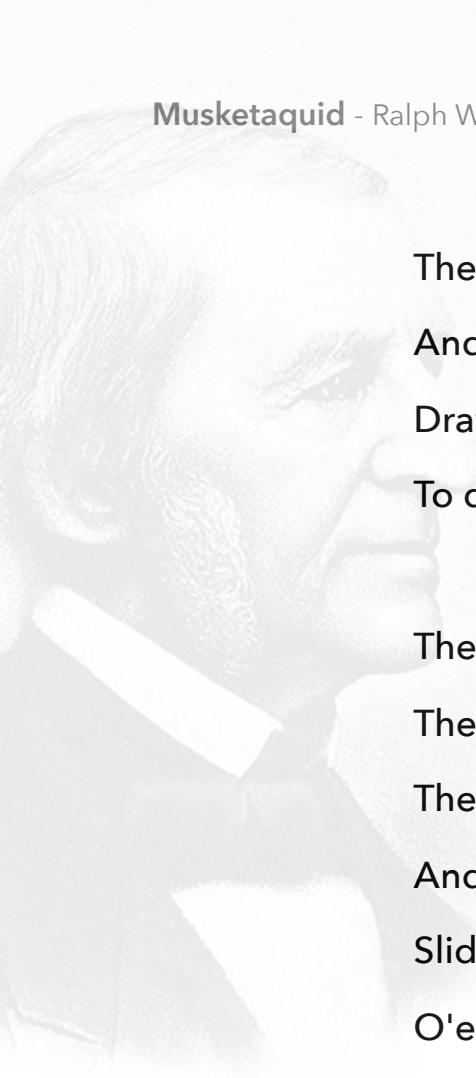
from: Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Early Poems of Ralph Waldo Emerson. New York, Boston, Thomas Y. Crowell & Company: 1899. Introduction by Nathan Haskell Dole.

Because I was content with these poor fields,
Low open meads, slender and sluggish streams,
And found a home in haunts which others scorned,
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,
And granted me the freedom of their state,
And in their secret senate have prevailed
With the dear dangerous lords that rule our life,
Made moon and planets parties to their bond,
And pitying through my solitary wont
Shot million rays of thought and tenderness.



For me in showers, in sweeping showers, the spring
Visits the valley:—break away the clouds,
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.
Sparrows far off, and, nearer, yonder bird
Blue-coated, flying before, from tree to tree,
Courageous sing a delicate overture,
To lead the tardy concert of the year.
Onward, and nearer draws the sun of May,
And wide around the marriage of the plants
Is sweetly solemnized; then flows amain
The surge of summer's beauty; dell and crag,
Hollow and lake, hill-side, and pine arcade,
Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged cliff
Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.

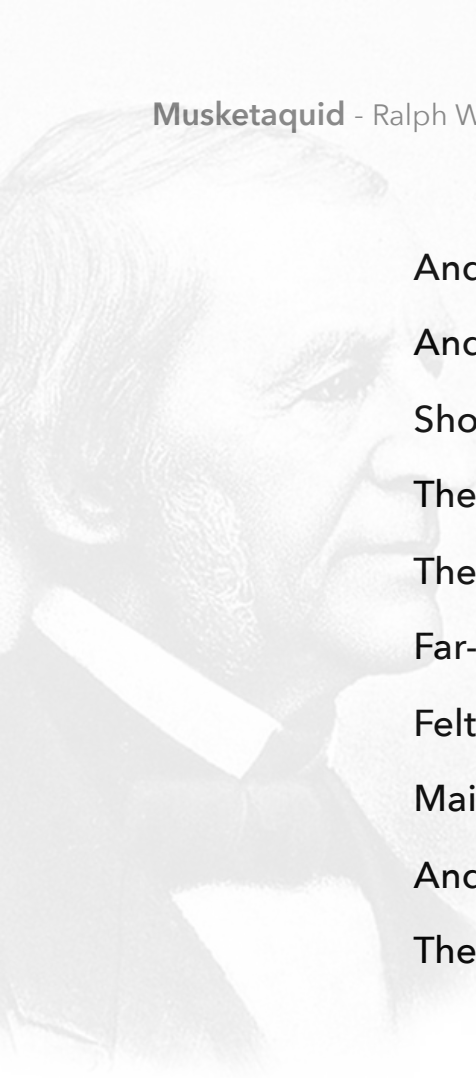
Here friendly landlords, men ineloquent,
Inhabit, and subdue the spacious farms.
Traveller! to thee, perchance, a tedious road,
Or soon forgotten picture,— to these men
The landscape is an armory of powers,
Which, one by one, they know to draw and use.
They harness, beast, bird, insect, to their work;



They prove the virtues of each bed of rock,
And, like a chemist 'mid his loaded jars,
Draw from each stratum its adapted use,
To drug their crops, or weapon their arts withal.

They turn the frost upon their chemic heap;
They set the wind to winnow vetch and grain;
They thank the spring-flood for its fertile slime;
And, on cheap summit-levels of the snow,
Slide with the sledge to inaccessible woods,
O'er meadows bottomless. So, year by year,
They fight the elements with elements,
(That one would say, meadow and forest walked
Upright in human shape to rule their like.)
And by the order in the field disclose,
The order regnant in the yeoman's brain.

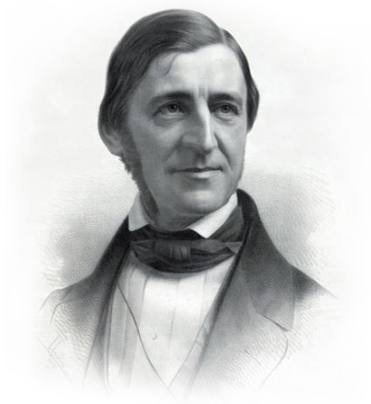
What these strong masters wrote at large in miles,
I followed in small copy in my acre:
For there's no rood has not a star above it;
The cordial quality of pear or plum
Ascends as gladly in a single tree,
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;



And every atom poises for itself,
And for the whole. The gentle Mother of all
Showed me the lore of colors and of sounds;
The innumerable tenements of beauty;
The miracle of generative force;
Far-reaching concords of astronomy
Felt in the plants and in the punctual birds;
Mainly, the linked purpose of the whole;
And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty,
The home of homes plain-dealing Nature gave.

The polite found me impolite; the great
Would mortify me, but in vain:
I am a willow of the wilderness,
Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts
My garden-spade can heal. A woodland walk,
A wild rose, or rock-loving columbine,
Salve my worst wounds, and leave no cicatrice.
For thus the wood-gods murmured in my ear,
Dost love our manners? Canst thou silent lie?
Canst thou, thy pride forgot, like nature pass
Into the winter night's extinguished mood?
Canst thou shine now, then darkle,

And being latent, feel thyself no less?
As when the all-worshipped moon attracts the eye,
The river, hill, stems, foliage, are obscure,
Yet envies none, none are unenviable.



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