



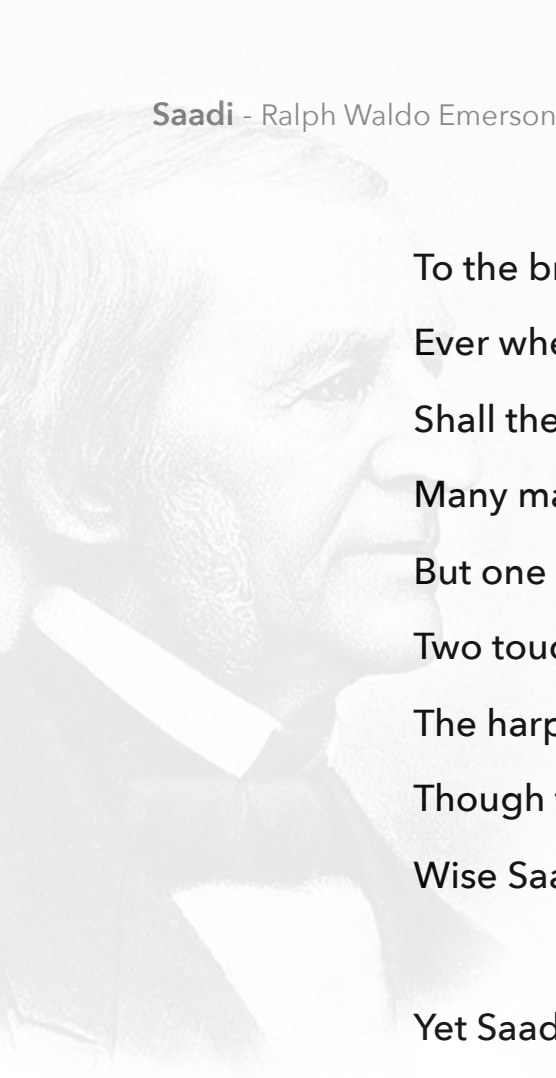
Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

Saadi

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

Trees in groves,
Kine in droves,
In ocean sport the scaly herds,
Wedge-like cleave the air the birds,
To northern lakes fly wind-borne ducks,
Browse the mountain sheep in flocks,
Men consort in camp and town,
But the poet dwells alone.

God who gave to him the lyre,
Of all mortals the desire,
For all breathing men's behoof,
Straitly charged him, "Sit aloof;"
Annexed a warning, poets say,

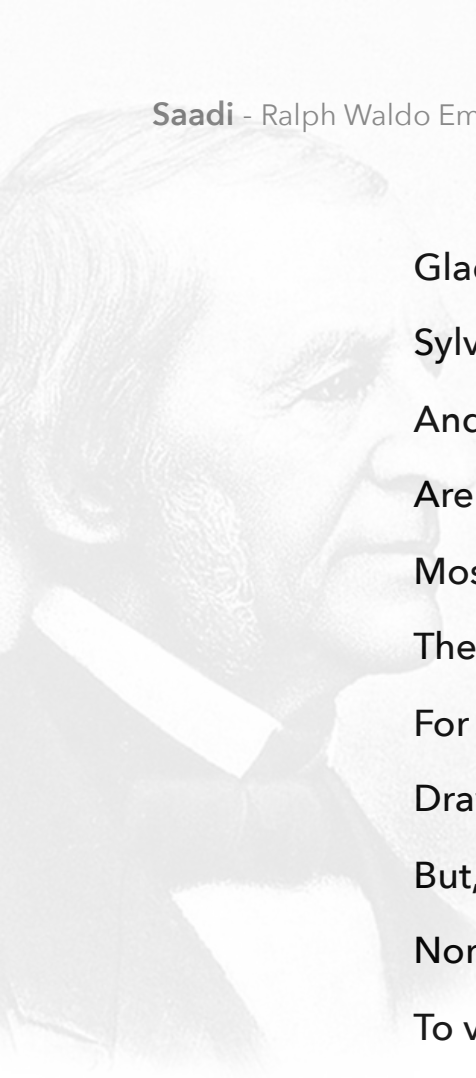


To the bright premium,—
Ever when twain together play,
Shall the harp be dumb.

Many may come,
But one shall sing;
Two touch the string,
The harp is dumb.
Though there come a million
Wise Saadi dwells alone.

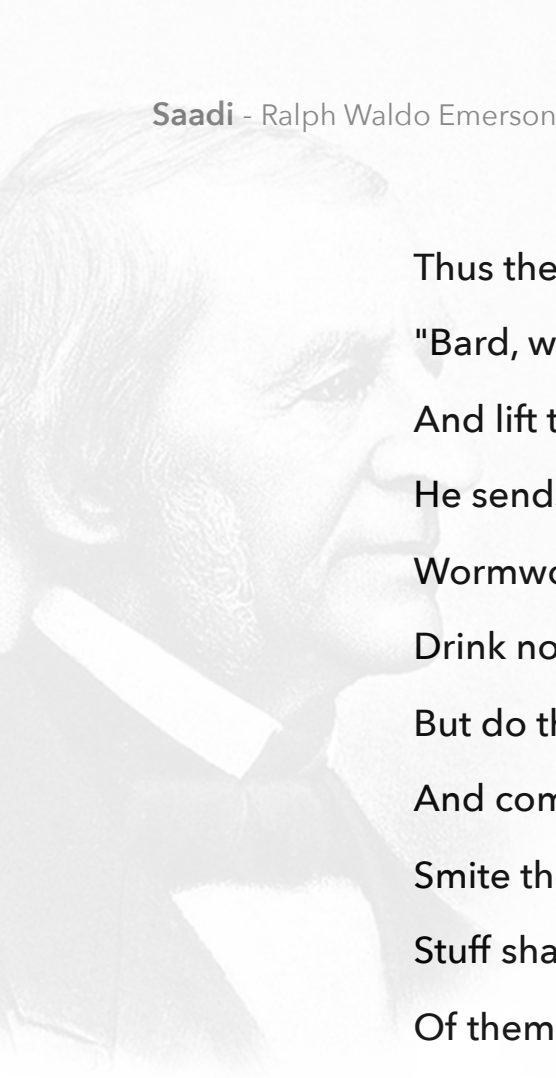
Yet Saadi loved the race of men,—
No churl immured in cave or den,—
In bower and hall
He wants them all,
Nor can dispense
With Persia for his audience;
They must give ear,
Grow red with joy, and white with fear,
Yet he has no companion,
Come ten, or come a million,
Good Saadi dwells alone.

Be thou ware where Saadi dwells.

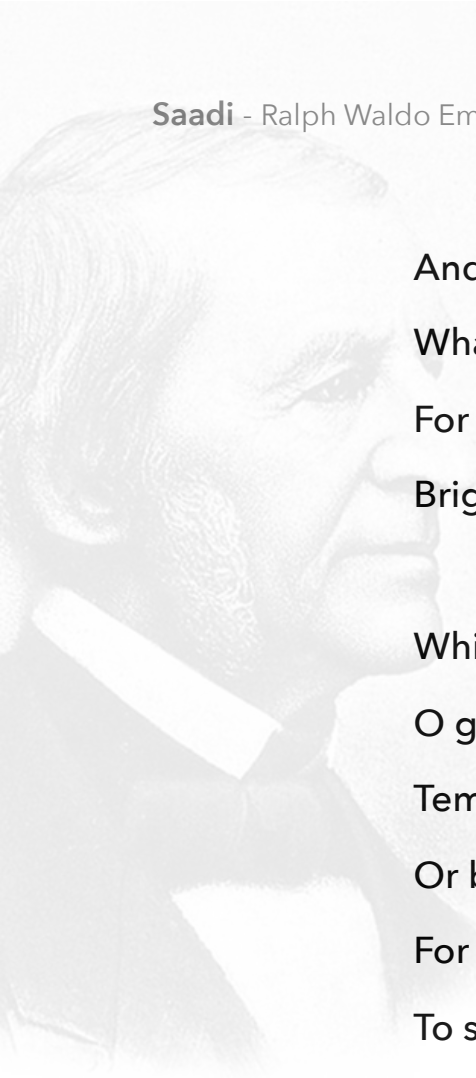


Gladly round that golden lamp
Sylvan deities encamp,
And simple maids and noble youth
Are welcome to the man of truth.
Most welcome they who need him most,
They feed the spring which they exhaust:
For greater need
Draws better deed:
But, critic, spare thy vanity,
Nor show thy pompous parts,
To vex with odious subtlety
The cheerer of men's hearts.

Sad-eyed Fakirs swiftly say
Endless dirges to decay;
Never in the blaze of light
Lose the shudder of midnight;
And at overflowing noon,
Hear wolves barking at the moon;
In the bower of dalliance sweet
Hear the far Avenger's feet;
And shake before those awful Powers
Who in their pride forgive not ours.



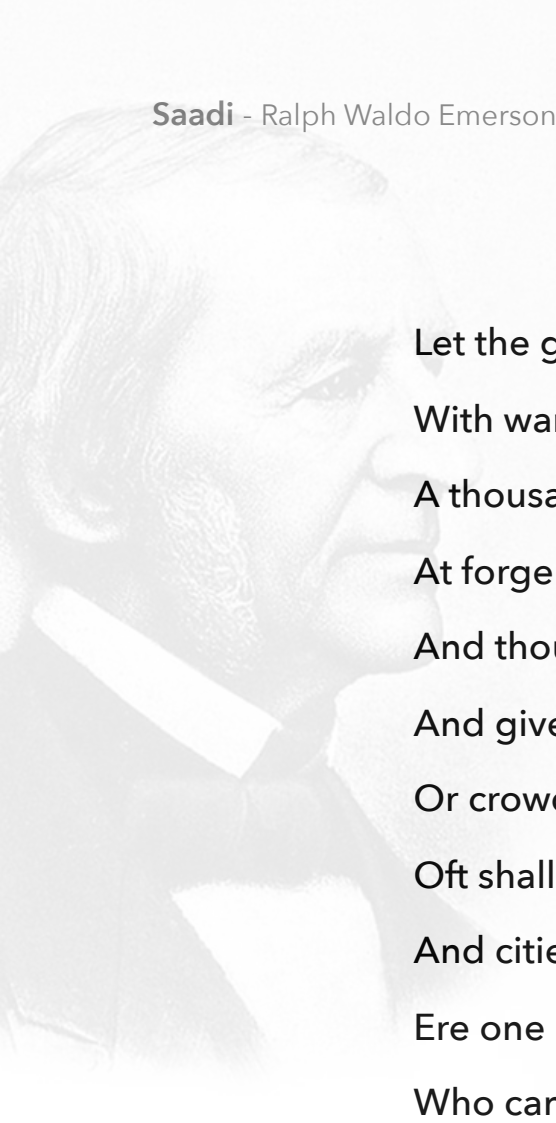
Thus the sad-eyed Fakirs preach;
"Bard, when thee would Allah teach,
And lift thee to his holy mount,
He sends thee from his bitter fount,
Wormwood; saying, Go thy ways,
Drink not the Malaga of praise,
But do the deed thy fellows hate,
And compromise thy peaceful state.
Smite the white breasts which thee fed,
Stuff sharp thorns beneath the head
Of them thou shouldst have comforted.
For out of woe and out of crime
Draws the heart a lore sublime."
And yet it seemeth not to me
That the high gods love tragedy;
For Saadi sat in the sun,
And thanks was his contrition;
For haircloth and for bloody whips,
Had active hands and smiling lips;
And yet his runes he rightly read,
And to his folk his message sped.
Sunshine in his heart transferred
Lighted each transparent word;



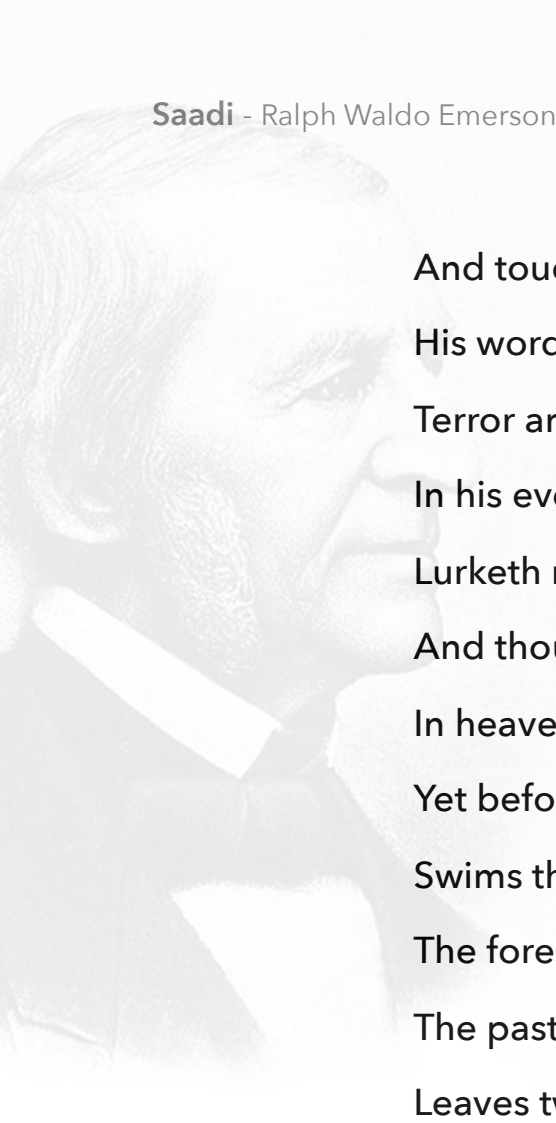
And well could honoring Persia learn
What Saadi wished to say;
For Saadi's nightly stars did burn
Brighter than Dschami's day.

Whispered the muse in Saadi's cot;
O gentle Saadi, listen not,
Tempted by thy praise of wit,
Or by thirst and appetite
For the talents not thine own,
To sons of contradiction.

Never, sun of eastern morning,
Follow falsehood, follow scorning,
Denounce who will, who will, deny,
And pile the hills to scale the sky;
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,
Define and wrangle how they list,—
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer,
But thou joy-giver and enjoyer,
Unknowing war, unknowing crime,
Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme.
Heed not what the brawlers say,
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.

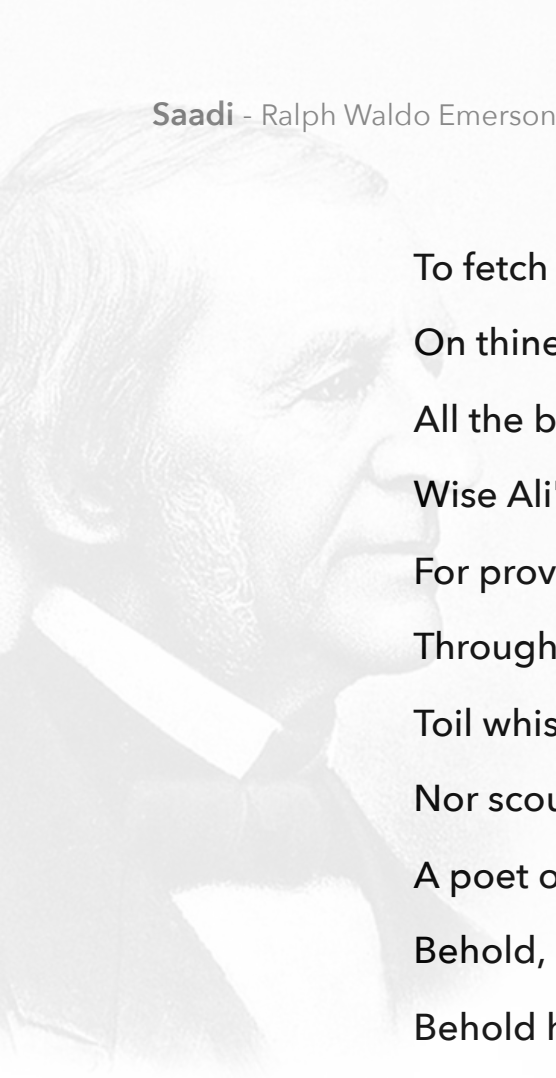


Let the great world bustle on
With war and trade, with camp and town.
A thousand men shall dig and eat,
At forge and furnace thousands sweat,
And thousands sail the purple sea,
And give or take the stroke of war,
Or crowd the market and bazaar.
Oft shall war end, and peace return,
And cities rise where cities burn,
Ere one man my hill shall climb,
Who can turn the golden rhyme;
Let them manage how they may,
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.
Seek the living among the dead:
Man in man is imprisoned.
Barefooted Dervish is not poor,
If fate unlock his bosom's door.
So that what his eye hath seen
His tongue can paint, as bright, as keen,
And what his tender heart hath felt,
With equal fire thy heart shall melt.
For, whom the muses shine upon,



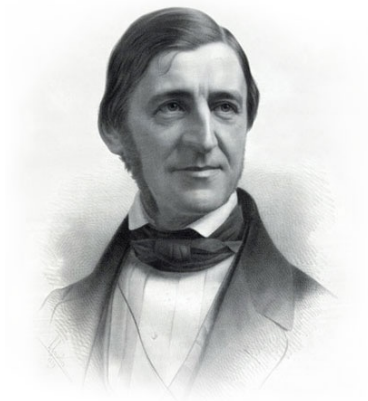
And touch with soft persuasion,
His words like a storm-wind can bring
Terror and beauty on their wing;
In his every syllable
Lurketh nature veritable;
And though he speak in midnight dark,
In heaven, no star; on earth, no spark;
Yet before the listener's eye
Swims the world in ecstasy,
The forest waves, the morning breaks,
The pastures sleep, ripple the lakes,
Leaves twinkle, flowers like persons be,
And life pulsates in rock or tree.
Saadi! so far thy words shall reach;
Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech.

And thus to Saadi said the muse;
Eat thou the bread which men refuse;
Flee from the goods which from thee flee;
Seek nothing; Fortune seeketh thee.
Nor mount, nor dive; all good things keep
The midway of the eternal deep;
Wish not to fill the isles with eyes



To fetch thee birds of paradise;
On thine orchard's edge belong
All the brass of plume and song;
Wise Ali's sunbright sayings pass
For proverbs in the market-place;
Through mountains bored by regal art
Toil whistles as he drives his cart.
Nor scour the seas, nor sift mankind,
A poet or a friend to find;
Behold, he watches at the door,
Behold his shadow on the floor.
Open innumerable doors,
The heaven where unveiled Allah pours
The flood of truth, the flood of good,
The seraph's and the cherub's food;
Those doors are men; the pariah kind
Admits thee to the perfect Mind.
Seek not beyond thy cottage wall
Redeemer that can yield thee all.
While thou sittest at thy door,
On the desert's yellow floor,
Listening to the gray-haired crones,
Foolish gossips, ancient drones,—

Saadi, see, they rise in stature
To the height of mighty nature,
And the secret stands revealed
Fraudulent Time in vain concealed,
That blessed gods in servile masks
Plied for thee thy household tasks.



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