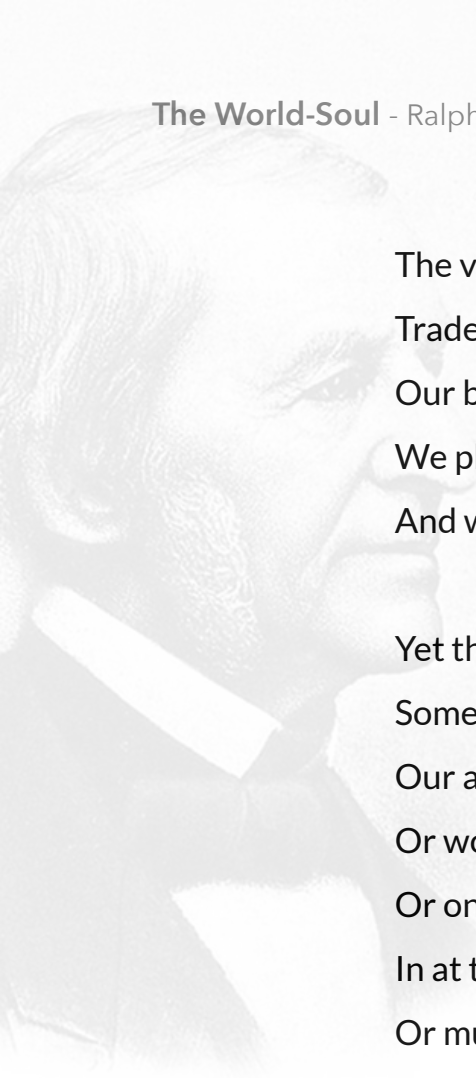


Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

The World-Soul

Thanks to the morning light,
Thanks to the seething sea,
To the uplands of New Hampshire,
To the green-haired forest free;
Thanks to each man of courage,
To the maids of holy mind,
To the boy with his games undaunted,
Who never looks behind.
Cities of proud hotels,
Houses of rich and great,
Vice nestles in your chambers,
Beneath your roofs of slate.
It cannot conquer folly,
Time-and-space-conquering steam,—
And the light-outspeeding telegraph
Bears nothing on its beam.

The politics are base,
The letters do not cheer,
And 'tis far in the deeps of history—

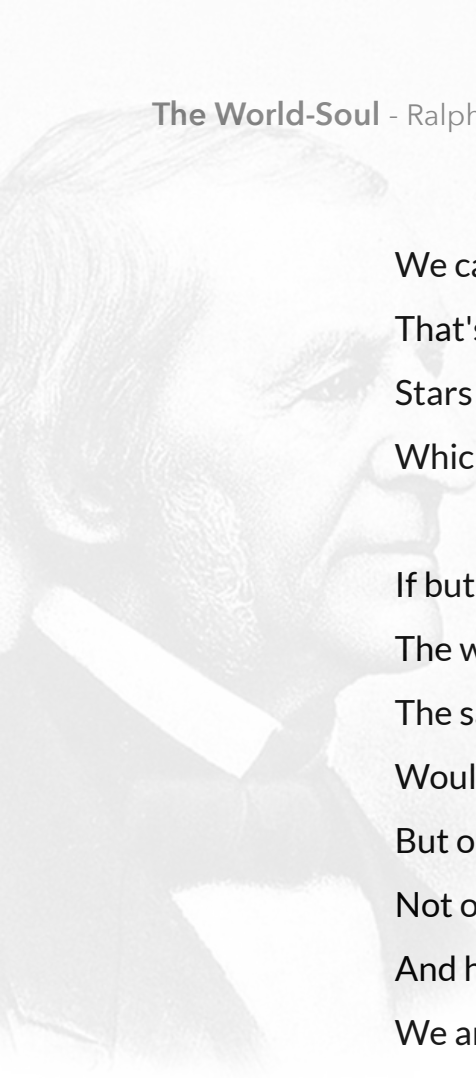


The voice that speaketh clear.
Trade and the streets ensnare us,
Our bodies are weak and worn,
We plot and corrupt each other,
And we despoil the unborn.

Yet there in the parlor sits
Some figure of noble guise,
Our angel in a stranger's form,
Or woman's pleading eyes;
Or only a flashing sunbeam
In at the window pane;
Or music pours on mortals
Its beautiful disdain.

The inevitable morning
Finds them who in cellars be,
And be sure the all-loving Nature
Will smile in a factory.
Yon ridge of purple landscape,
Yon sky between the walls,
Hold all the hidden wonders
In scanty intervals.

Alas, the sprite that haunts us
Deceives our rash desire,
It whispers of the glorious gods,
And leaves us in the mire:

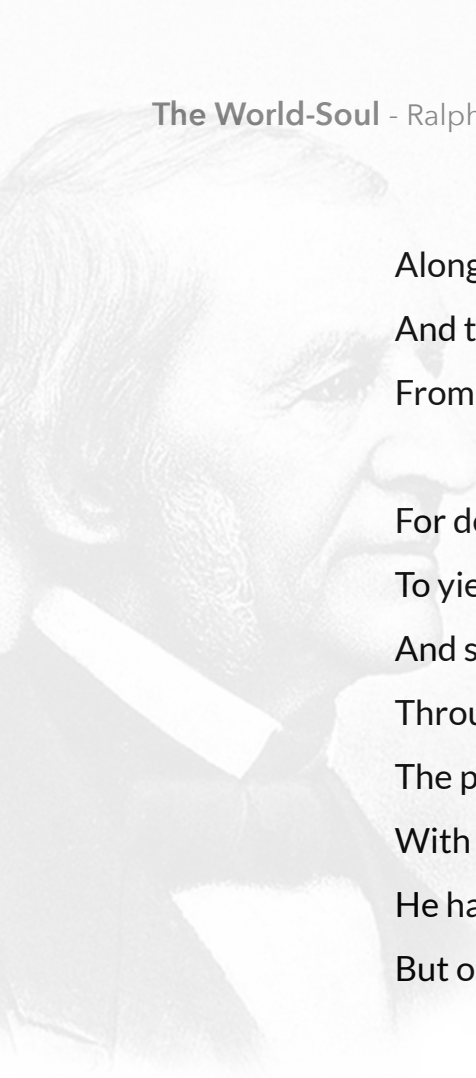


We cannot learn the cipher
That's writ upon our cell,
Stars help us by a mystery
Which we could never spell.

If but one hero knew it,
The world would blush in flame,
The sage, till he hit the secret,
Would hang his head for shame.
But our brothers have not read it,
Not one has found the key,
And henceforth we are comforted,
We are but such as they.

Still, still the secret presses,
The nearing clouds draw down,
The crimson morning flames into
The fopperies of the town.
Within, without, the idle earth
Stars weave eternal rings,
The sun himself shines heartily,
And shares the joy he brings.

And what if trade sow cities
Like shells along the shore,
And thatch with towns the prairie broad
With railways ironed o'er;—
They are but sailing foambells



Along Thought's causing stream,
And take their shape and Sun-color
From him that sends the dream.

For destiny does not like
To yield to men the helm,
And shoots his thought by hidden nerves
Throughout the solid realm.
The patient Dæmon sits
With roses and a shroud,
He has his way, and deals his gifts—
But ours is not allowed.

He is no churl or trifler,
And his viceroy is none,
Love-without-weakness,
Of genius sire and son;
And his will is not thwarted,—
The seeds of land and sea
Are the atoms of his body bright,
And his behest obey.

He serveth the servant,
The brave he loves amain,
He kills the cripple and the sick,
And straight begins again;
For gods delight in gods,
And thrust the weak aside;

To him who scorns their charities,
Their arms fly open wide.

When the old world is sterile,
And the ages are effete,
He will from wrecks and sediment
The fairer world complete.
He forbids to despair,
His cheeks mantle with mirth,
And the unimagined good of men
Is yearning at the birth.

Spring still makes spring in the mind,
When sixty years are told;
Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,
And we are never old.
Over the winter glaciers,
I see the summer glow,
And through the wild-piled snowdrift
The warm rose buds below.



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