



The Laws of Nature: Excerpts from the Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Though written in the mid-nineteenth century, Ralph Waldo Emerson's work, particularly his nature writing, speaks to contemporary sensibilities. The uniquely American, nature-based philosophy commonly attributed to Thoreau was first presented to the world by Emerson in his slender volume *Nature* and later developed by both men, each with his own distinct voice. Emerson's take on wild nature was richer and more complex than Thoreau's, largely due to the influence of Darwinism and Emerson's propensity for delving deeply into the most difficult philosophical matters.

Featuring nearly 100 luminous watercolor illustrations, *The Laws of Nature* collects Emerson's most evocative thoughts on nature, taken from his journals and his books. His famously aphoristic style—"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered"—is showcased throughout. Editor Walt McLaughlin provides background information on Emerson and explores the writer's relationship with Thoreau as well as the powerful influence they exerted on one another. McLaughlin describes Emerson's transformation from minister to passionate nature writer and includes a thoughtful introduction to each section of the book.

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