Each and All
By Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown,
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor’s creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow’s note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty’s best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, “I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood’s cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth:”—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet’s breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;—
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.
Matter
By Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888)

OUT of the chaos dawns in sight
The globe’s full form in orbèd light;
Beam kindles beam, kind mirrors kind,
Nature ’s the eyeball of the Mind;
The fleeting pageant tells for nought
Till shaped in Mind’s creative thought.

The Seer’s Rations
By Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888)

TAKES sunbeams, spring waters,
Earth’s juices, meads’ creams,
Bathes in floods of sweet ethers,
Comes baptized from the streams;
Guest of Him, the sweet-lipp’d,
The Dreamer’s quaint dreams.

Mingles morals idyllic
With Samian fable,
Sage seasoned from cruets,
Of Plutarch’s chaste table.
Pledges Zeus, Zoroaster,
Tastes Cana’s glad cheer,
Sun’s, globes, on his trencher,
The elements there.

Bowls of sunrise for breakfast
Brimful of the East,
Foaming flagons of frolic
His evening’s gay feast.

Sov’reign solids of nature,
Solar seeds of the sphere,
Olympian viand
Surprising as rare.

Thus baiting his genius,
His wonderful word
Brings poets and sibyls
To sup at his board.

Feeds thus and thus fares he,
Speeds thus and thus cares he,
Thus faces and graces
Life’s long euthanasies,
His gifts unabated,
Transfigured, translated—
The idealist prudent,
Saint, poet, priest, student,
Philosopher, he.
Rumors from an Æolian Harp
By Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)

THERE is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth,
Ere it descends upon the earth,
And thither every deed returns,
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung,
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

Stanzas, 'Nature doth have her dawn each day'
By Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)

NATURE doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between;
Content, I cry, for, sooth to say,
Mine brightest are, I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,
Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate,
But if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As 't were two summer days in one,
Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one sun,
With fairest summer weather.
Dryad Song
By Margaret Fuller (1810–1850)

I AM immortal! I know it! I feel it!
Hope floods my heart with delight!
Running on air, mad with life, dizzy, reeling,
Upward I mount,—faith is sight, life is feeling,
Hope is the day-star of might!  

It was thy kiss, Love, that made me immortal,—
"'Kiss,' Love? Our lips have not met!"
Ah, but I felt thy soul through night’s portal
Swoon on my lips at night’s sweet, silent portal,
Wild and as sweet as regret.

Come, let us mount on the wings of the morning,
Flying for joy of the flight,
Wild with all longing, now soaring, now staying,
Mingling like day and dawn, swinging and swaying,
Hung like a cloud in the light:
I am immortal! I feel it! I feel it!
Love bears me up, love is might!

Chance cannot touch me! Time cannot hush me!
Fear, Hope, and Longing, at strife,
Sink as I rise, on, on, upward forever,
Gathering strength, gaining breath,—naught can sever
Me from the Spirit of Life!

Nature
By William Ellery Channing (1818–1901)

I LOVE the universe,—I love the joy
Of every living thing. Be mine the sure
Felicity, which ever shall endure;
While passion whirs the madmen, as they toy,
To hate, I would my simple being warm
In the calm pouring sun; and in that pure
And motionless silence, ever would employ
My best true powers, without a thought’s annoy.
See and be glad! O high imperial race,
Dwarfing the common attitude of strength,
Learn that ye stand on an unshaken base;
Your powers will carry you to any length.
Up! earnestly feel the gentle sunset beams;
Be glad in woods, o’er sands; by marsh, or streams.