



The Portable Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson , Carl Bode , Malcolm Cowley

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This volume, edited by Carl Bode in collaboration with Malcolm Cowley, presents the essential Emerson, selected from works that eloquently express the philosophy of a worldly idealist. **The Portable Emerson** comprises essays, including “History,” “Self-Reliance,” “The Over-Soul,” “Circles,” and “The Poet”; Emerson’s first book, **Nature**, in its entirety; twenty-two poems, including “Uriel,” “The Humble-Bee,” and “Give All to Love”; orations, including “The American Scholar,” “The Fugitive Slave Law,” and “John Brown”; **English Traits**, complete; and biographical essays on Plato, Napoleon, Henry David Thoreau, Thomas Carlyle, and others.

The Portable Emerson Details

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From Reader Review The Portable Emerson for online ebook

H.g. Callaway says

This book is a collection of Emerson's essays and poems--perhaps the standard collection for the general reader. For the scholar, it is often useful to quote this edition, since it is so widely available. Sound scholarship--though now a little older than the recent work in the current Emerson revival. The book has been frequently reprinted.

Kate says

I could - and maybe should - read "Self-Reliance" at least once every month. For me it's one of those texts that gives you a good slap on the face and forces you to really scrutinize your priorities. There are things I still have questions about (namely, his attitude towards charity) but that only adds to the richness of the text. Quite non-dual, too.

Michael says

Perhaps one of the most quintessential American reads. I don't believe I will ever stop reading this book.

James says

Amongst all his poetry the following is one of my favorites.

The Snow-Storm

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he

For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

Wayne says

Living in New York, you can lose touch with nature. Reading this on the subway in the mornings instead of AM new york or Metro, really helps one connect with something bigger than themselves even in a crowded, materialistic, adrenaliine driven city.

Sara says

Love this book, I always turn to the essay "self reliance" when I feel down.

James Violand says

A brilliant man, famous during his time, but today he would be criticized for inconsistency, hypocrisy and egoism. He does not stand the test of time well.

Theresa says

How can a man who said and wrote so many lovely things also, somehow, be sooooo egregiously boring?

Seeing as how I am most certainly NOT a philosophy scholar, I think it would have been better for me to have half-assed it and read something closer to "Emerson's Greatest Hits." ...although I thought that's kind of what this was meant to be. Eh.

Gervaze says

Well, this is the great Ralph Waldo Emerson. When one speaks of Emerson as regards words and thought, there comes the muse that herein lies the 'sentence.' Few if any realize that Emerson had attained what in some circles is coined "Cosmic Consciousness." His writings were among the most principled, spanning the

periods of the 18th and 19th Centuries among the men and women of Letters of America and Britain -- and simply literary concerns generally, regardless of origin. One today relies so heavily upon colloquialism and slang but should one get-on to the like of an Emerson, one finds that eloquence of word and thought far exceeds anything that can be got-up by popular thought and speech. Emerson's was classic.

Dan Kelly says

Self-reliance is one of a handful of essays and books I dig out and reread every couple of months, or whenever I'm feeling a bit adrift. It's about as close as I get to inspirational, but this has an edge to it.

Alex Gregory says

Solid primer on one of America's master writers. I profess that the subject matter was very difficult to follow at times, as I'm not that big on poetry or long-form essays with more classical language. Nonetheless, this is an excellent book for anyone just getting into the man's works, and there are some short stories and speeches that stay with you after you've read them.

Recommended.

David A. Beardsley says

Despite efforts to reduce Emerson to an avuncular source of pithy quotes, his essays, when read in their fullness, still contain the power to move and inspire people today. He was deeply American, yet also aware of the tradition of Idealism, dating back to Plato and beyond, which shaped much of his thinking. His use of language takes some getting used to, since he was often writing at the edge of what is expressible in words, but when you have acquired a taste for him it's difficult to go back to the pabulum that characterizes much of today's "spiritual" writing. This book offers a good cross-section of his essays, lectures, and poems.

Phil Greaney says

The stridency, ambition and intensity of Emerson's greatest work - Nature, Self-Reliance, American Scholar - is its strength and also its undoing. At best, there is an accumulation of pithy, wise and insightful observations; at worst, he reads in a hectoring tone, full of wild and willful explorations, which are unprovable, fantastical and unsustainable.

If you've read contemporary philosophy, say, you'll be shocked by how is able to define art, language, morality and of course nature without pause. Shocked because he offers little restraint when taking in, say, the genius of Shakespeare, where others may fear to tread. He is bold and sometimes reckless. It is refreshing too, if you like the German idealists and the way they thought they might assemble a universal and timeless framework. Emerson is a high point of this kind of idealism.

The 'portable' edition book contains all you need to get started. His poetry is terrible, but useful for biographical purposes.

Lori says

obviously a reread, but really liking this penguin collected edition

Samuel says

When one reads Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings they should keep in mind of three things: nature, God, and New England. All three of these things listed are shown in numerous essays, letters, poems, etc. Another thing that comes to mind is Emerson's politics, he basically was one of several American philosophers who was nether a liberal or conservative but more likely a libertarian. Founder of the transcendentalism movement the core ideas seemed to be finding nature in God and the importance of individualism.
