



# Emerson in His Journals

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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## **Emerson in His Journals** Ralph Waldo Emerson

This long-awaited volume offers the general reader the heart of Emerson's journals, that extraordinary series of diaries and notebooks in which he poured out his thoughts for more than fifty years, beginning with the "luckless ragamuffin ideas" of his college days.

Emerson as revealed in his journals is more spontaneous, more complex, more human and appealing than he appears in the published works. This man is the seeker rather than the sage; he records the turmoil, struggle, and questioning that preceded the serene and confident affirmations of the essays. He is honest, earthy, tough-minded, self-critical ("I am a lover of indolence, & of the belly"), warm in his enthusiasms, a witty and sharp observer of people and events. Everything is grist for his mill: personal experiences, his omnivorous reading, ruminations on matters large and small, his doubts and perplexities, public issues and local gossip. There are abrupt shifts in subject and tone, reflecting the variousness of his moods and the restless energy of his mind.

Drawing from Harvard's sixteen-volume scholarly edition of the journals--but omitting the textual apparatus that makes it hard to read--Joel Porte presents a sympathetic selection that brings us close to Emerson the man.

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