LO SGUARDO POETICO AMERICANO

POETI E COMPOSITORI DAGLI STATI UNITI

E LA PRODUZIONE AMERICANA DI "ART SONGS"

LYCEUM CLUB
INTERNAZIONALE DI FIRENZE

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR AMERICAN MUSIC
info@icamus.org
www.icamus.org

Un programma ICAMus

The International Center for American Music

Il progetto è diretto da Aloma Bardi e Nicole Panizza

Una creazione per il Lyceum Club Internazionale di Firenze

Presidente Donatella Lippi

Sez. Musica, Pres. Eleonora Negri, VicePres. Irene Weber-Froboese

e Sez. Letteratura, Pres. Annalisa Adami, VicePres. Franca Fazzini

LYCEUM CLUB
INTERNAZIONALE DI FIRENZE

ICA Mus

SUONI INTERIORI

I TEMI DELLA NATURA E DELL'IDENTITÀ

Firenze, 16 maggio 2022

LYCEUM CLUB
INTERNAZIONALE DI FIRENZE

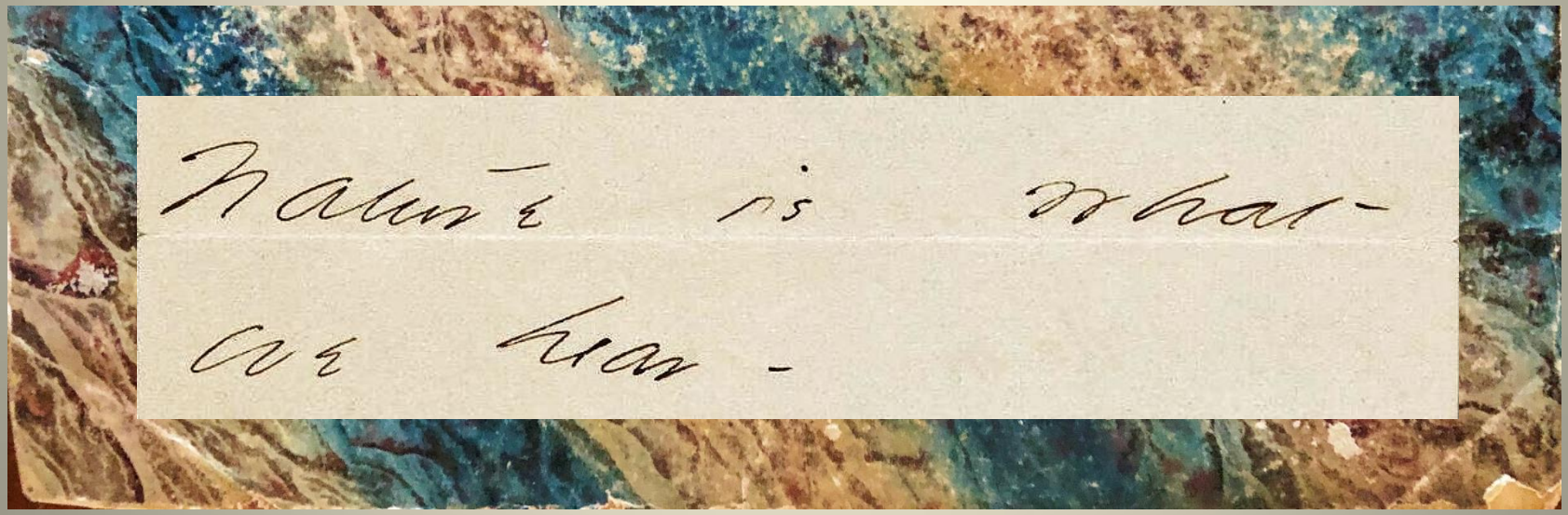
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR AMERICAN MUSIC

Il verso di poeti e poetesse statunitensi ispiratore di musica

"Nature is what we hear"

Aloma Bardi

ICAMus-The International Center for american Music - www.icamus.org



Lyceum Club
Internazionale di Firenze

ICAMus

Amherst, Mass., città natale di Emily Dickinson.

Mappa del 1886, anno della morte della poetessa. L. R. Burleigh.

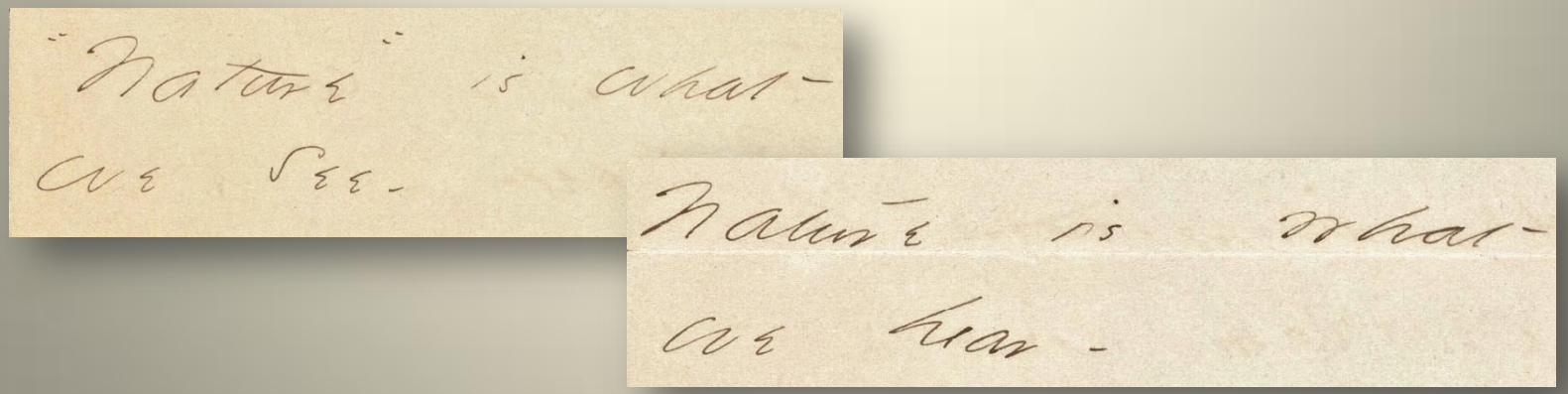
Library of Congress Geography & Map Division, Washington, D.C., G3764.A49A3 1886.B8.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). *"Nature" is what we see*, 1863

Trascrizione dal ms. - Versione it. di Aloma Bardi

"Nature" is what we see –
The Hill – the Afternoon –
Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –
Nay – Nature is Heaven –
"Nature" is what we hear –
The Bobolink – the Sea –
Thunder – the Cricket –
Nay – "Nature" is Harmony –
"Nature" is what we know –
Yet have no art to say –
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

Chiamiamo "Natura" quello che vediamo:
il colle, il meriggio
lo scoiattolo, l'eclissi, il calabrone.
No: la Natura è il paradiso.
Natura è ciò che emette un suono:
l'uccello canterino, il mare
il tuono, il grillo.
Neppure: la Natura è armonia.
Natura è ciò che sappiamo
pur senza la maestria di esprimerlo
tanto impotente è la nostra sapienza
dinanzi alla semplicità di lei.



EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886). DAGHERROTIPO, ca. 1847

nel suo astuccio originale.

Amherst College, dono di Millicent Todd Bingham, 1956.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). *"Nature" is what we see*, 1863

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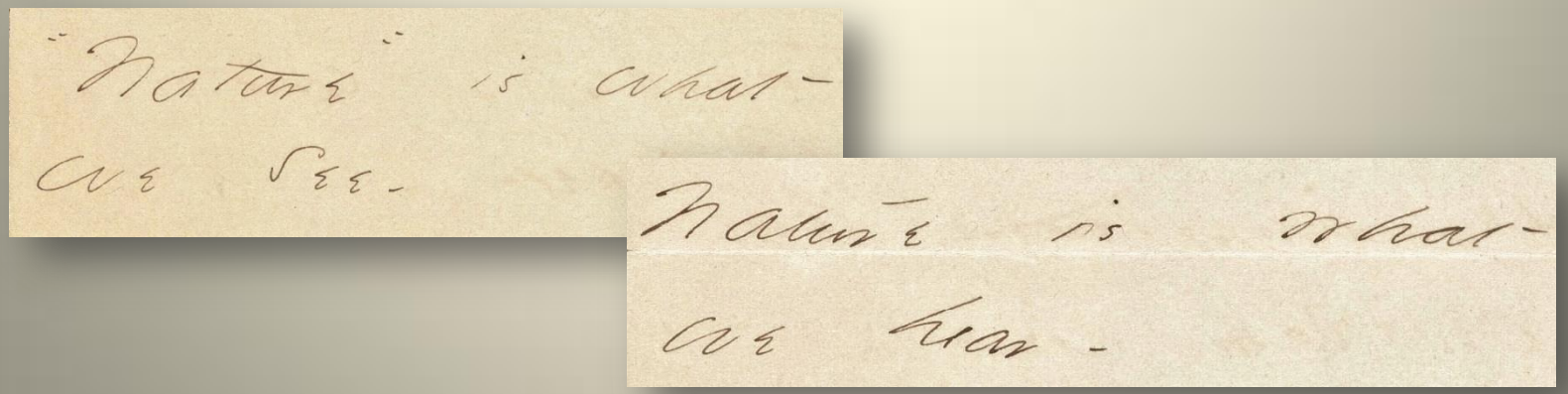
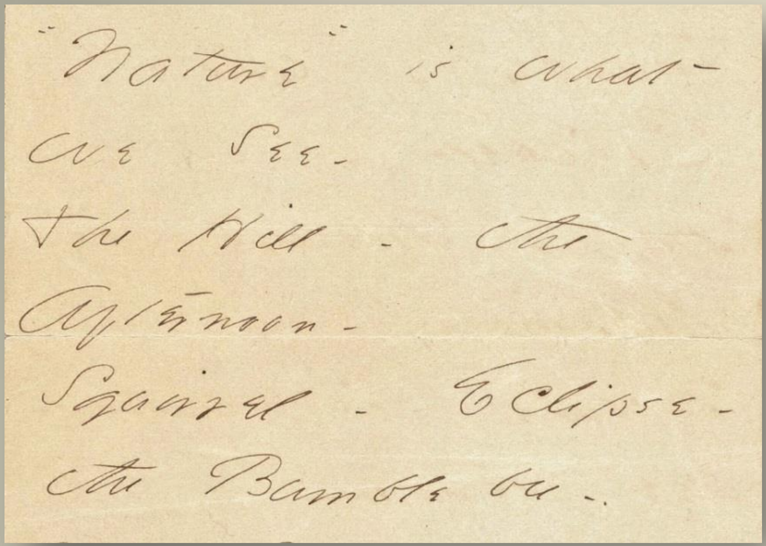
dinanzi alla semplicità di lei.



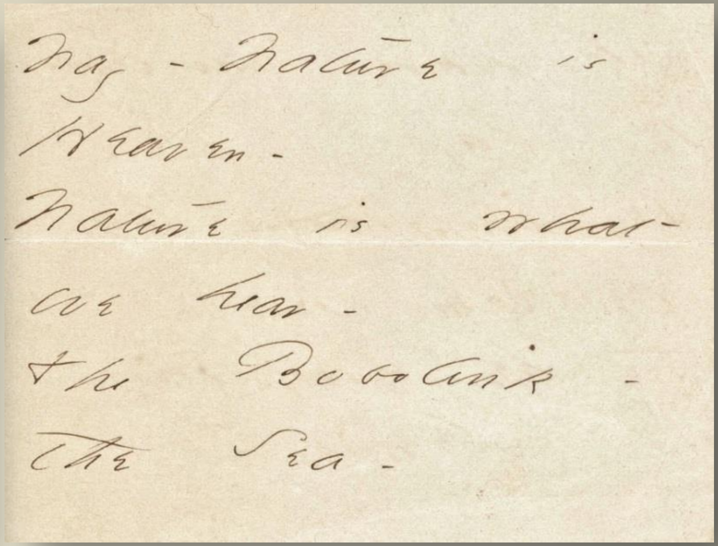
EMILY DICKINSON, "NATURE" IS WHAT WE SEE -, J668, Fr721, Ms.

Houghton Library, Harvard University. Emily Dickinson Poems: Packet XXII, Fascicle 35, ink. Digitized; Emily Dickinson Archive, http://www.edickinson.org.



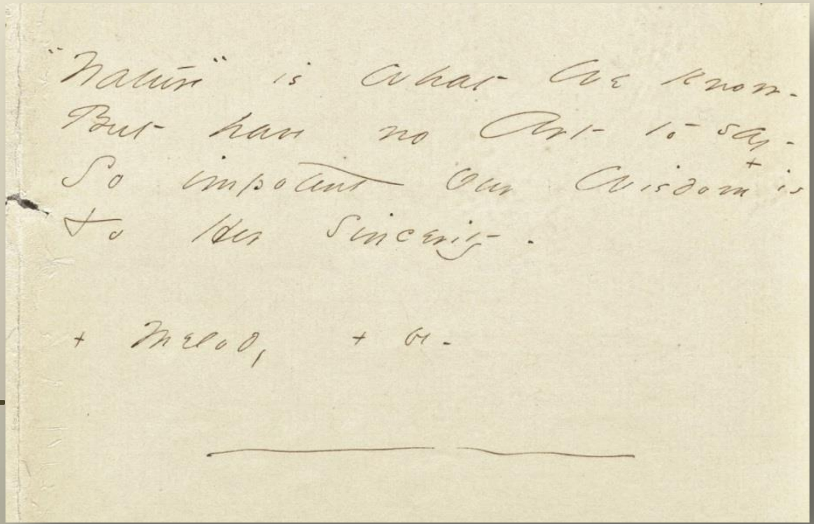
"Nature" is what
We see -
The Hill - the
Afternoon -
Squirrel - Eclipse -
the Bumble bee -

"Nature" is what we see -



Nay - Nature is
Heaven -
Nature is what
We hear -
The Bobolink -
the Sea -

"Nature" is what we hear -



"Nature" is what We know -
But have no Art to say -
So impotent Our Wisdom + is
To Her Sincerity -

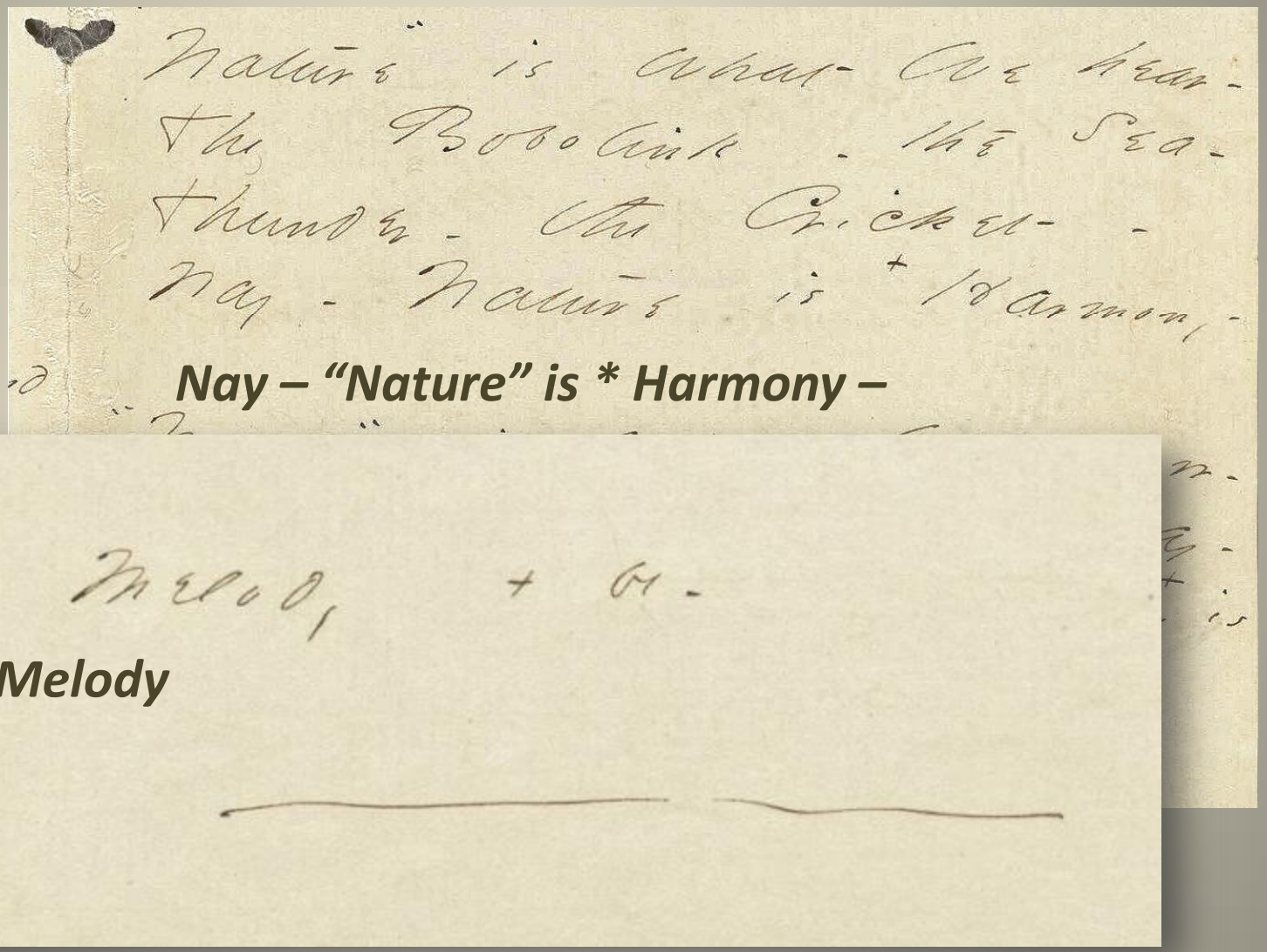
+ Melody, + be -

"Nature" is what we know -

Emily Dickinson, *"Nature" is what we see*, J668, Fr 721

Ms., ca. 1863. Varianti testuali.

Houghton Library, Harvard University. Digitized; Emily Dickinson Archive, http://www.edickinson.org.

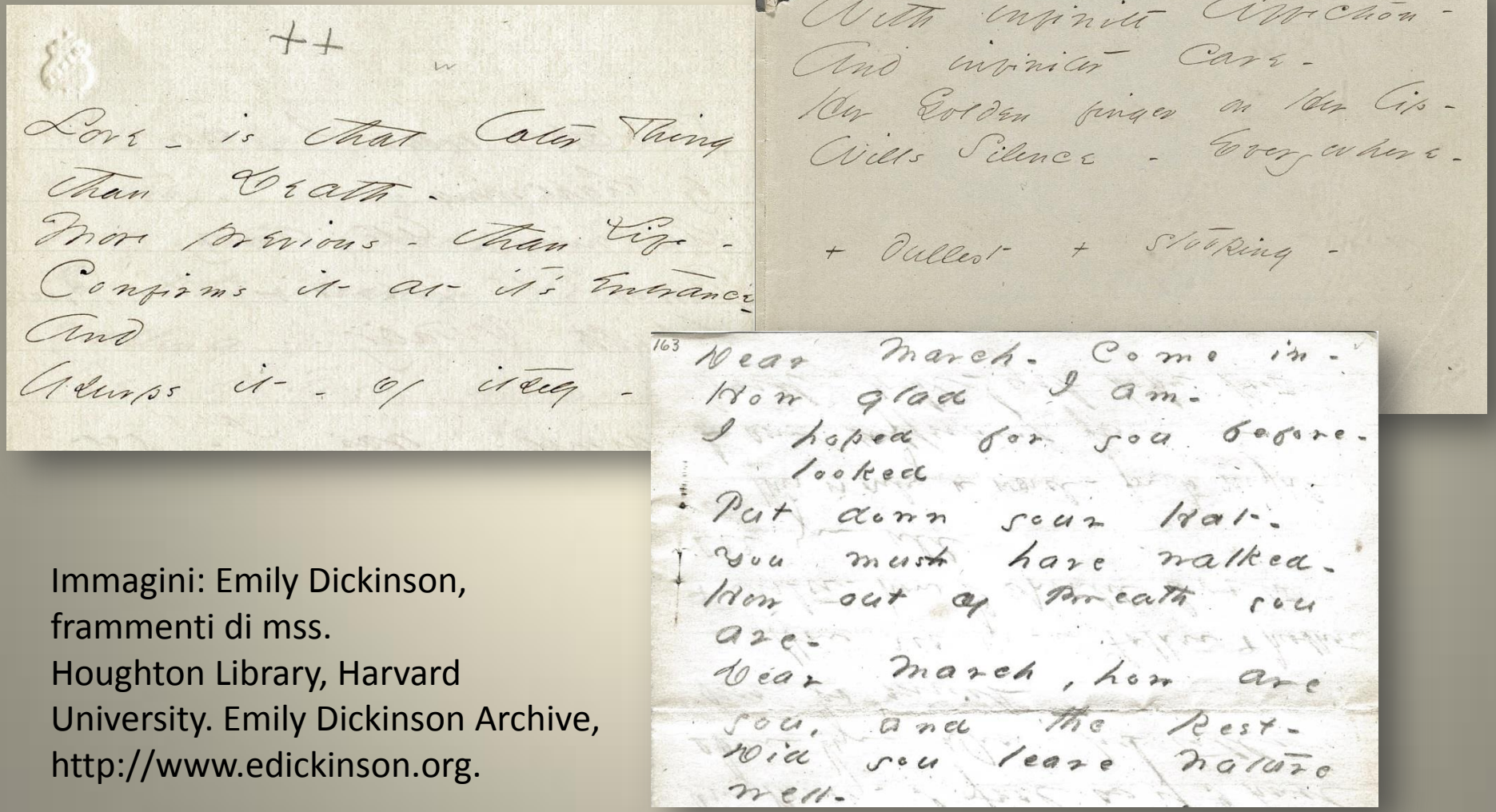


Nay – "Nature" is * Harmony –

**** Melody***

CARATTERISTICHE DELLA SCRITTURA DI EMILY DICKINSON:
USO COSTANTE DEL *DASH* (TRATTINO) - ESEMPI

Love – is that later Thing than Death – • Nature – the Gentlest Mother is, • Dear March – Come in –

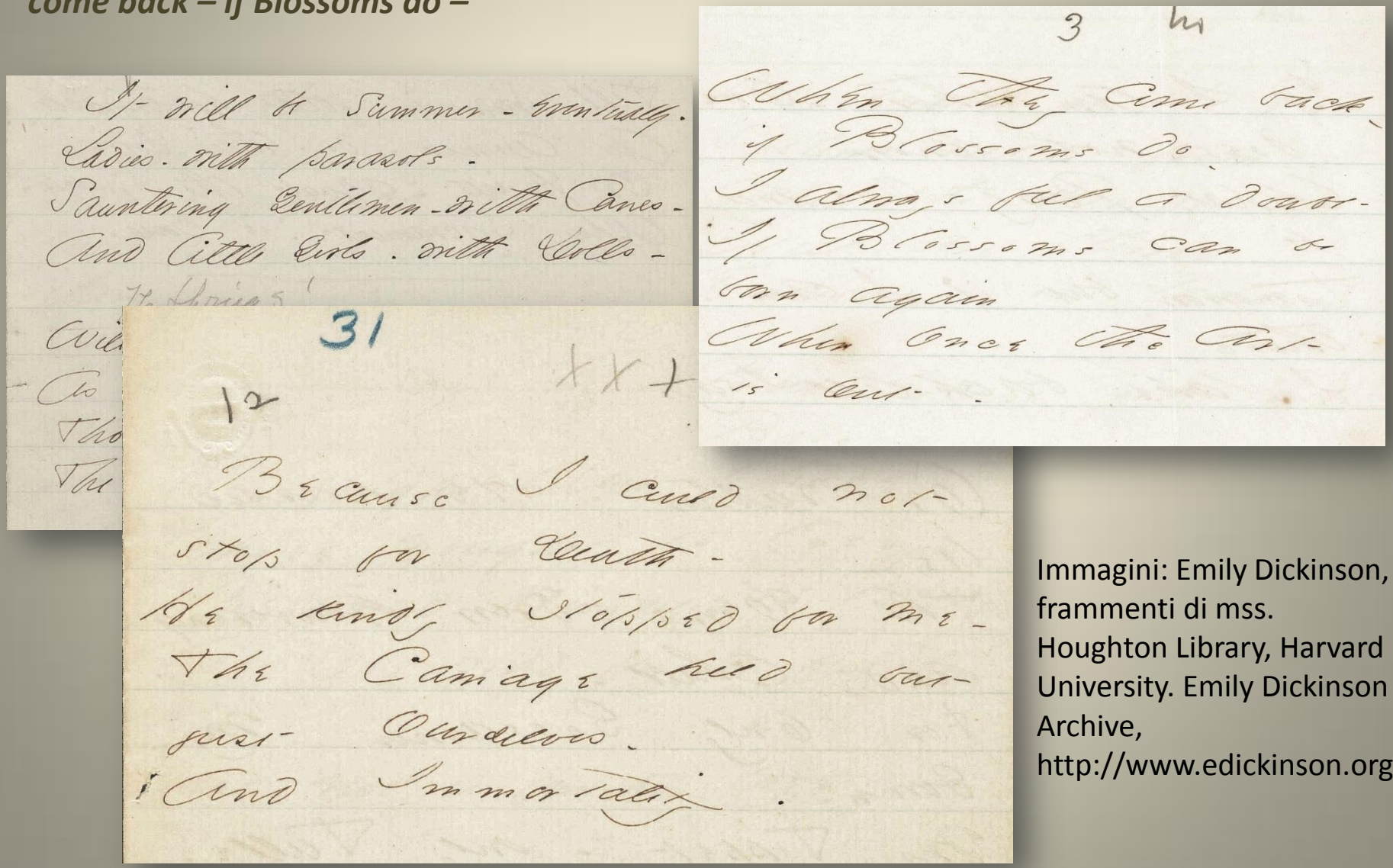


Immagini: Emily Dickinson, frammenti di mss. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Emily Dickinson Archive, http://www.edickinson.org.

Caratteristiche della scrittura di Emily Dickinson:

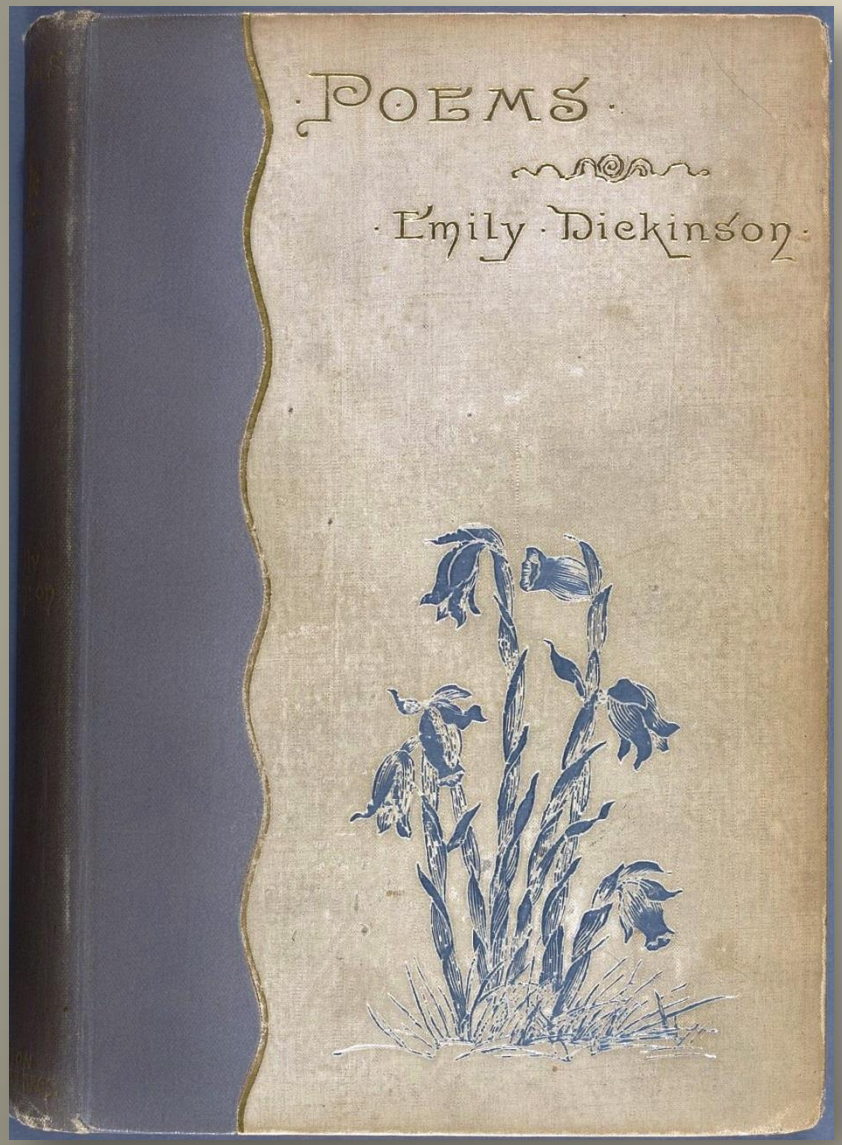
uso insolito delle maiuscole - Esempi

It will be Summer – eventually, • Because I could not stop for Death – • When they come back – if Blossoms do –



Immagini: Emily Dickinson, frammenti di mss. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Emily Dickinson Archive, http://www.edickinson.org

IL PRIMO ARRANGIAMENTO MUSICALE DI VERSI DI EMILY DICKINSON RISALE A SOLI 8 ANNI DOPO LA MORTE DELLA POETESSA.

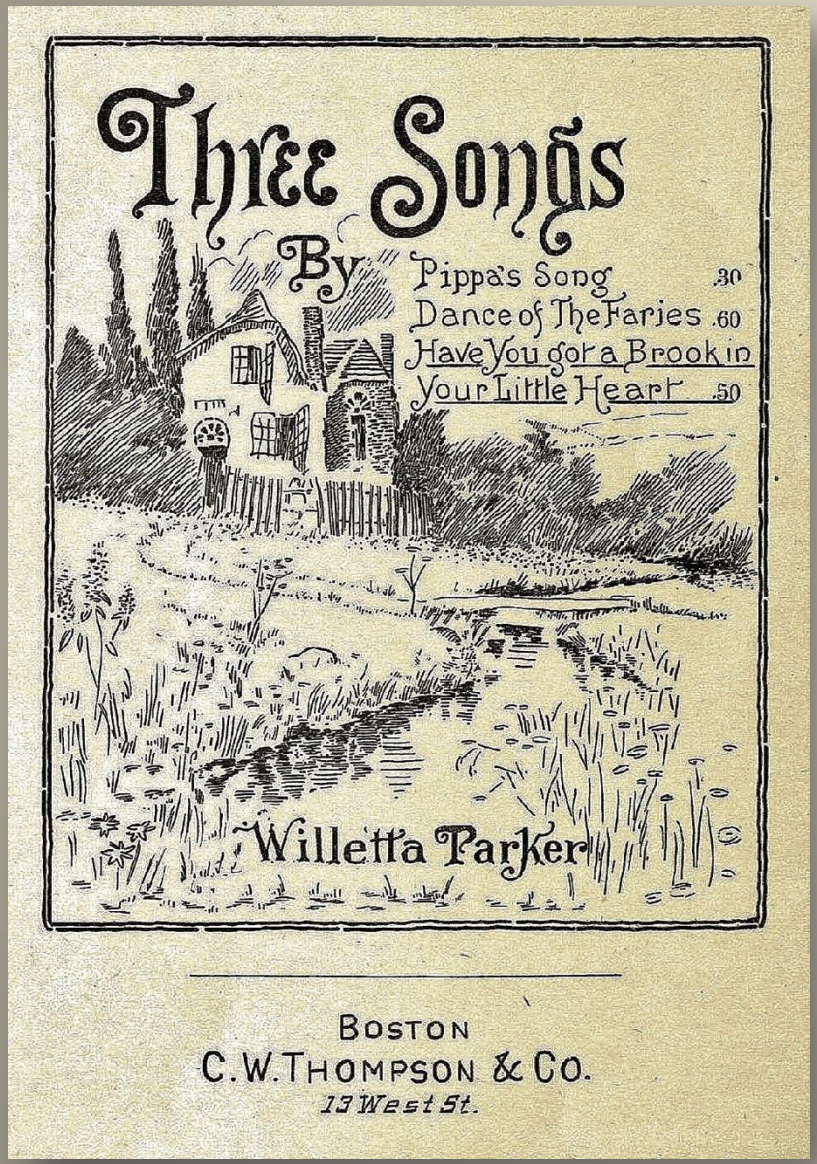


1886 - Morte di Emily Dickinson.

1890 - Prima raccolta di poesie di Emily Dickinson: *Poems: Edited by two of her Friends, Mabel Loomis Todd and T.W. [Thomas Wentworth] Higginson*, Roberts Brothers, Boston; 152 pagg.

Immagine: Emily Dickinson, *Poems: Edited by two of her Friends, Mabel Loomis Todd and T.W. [Thomas Wentworth] Higginson*, Roberts Brothers, Boston 1890; Copertina. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

PRIMO ARRANGIAMENTO MUSICALE DI VERSI DI EMILY DICKINSON: *HAVE YOU GOT A BROOK IN YOUR LITTLE HEART?* DI WILLETTA PARKER.

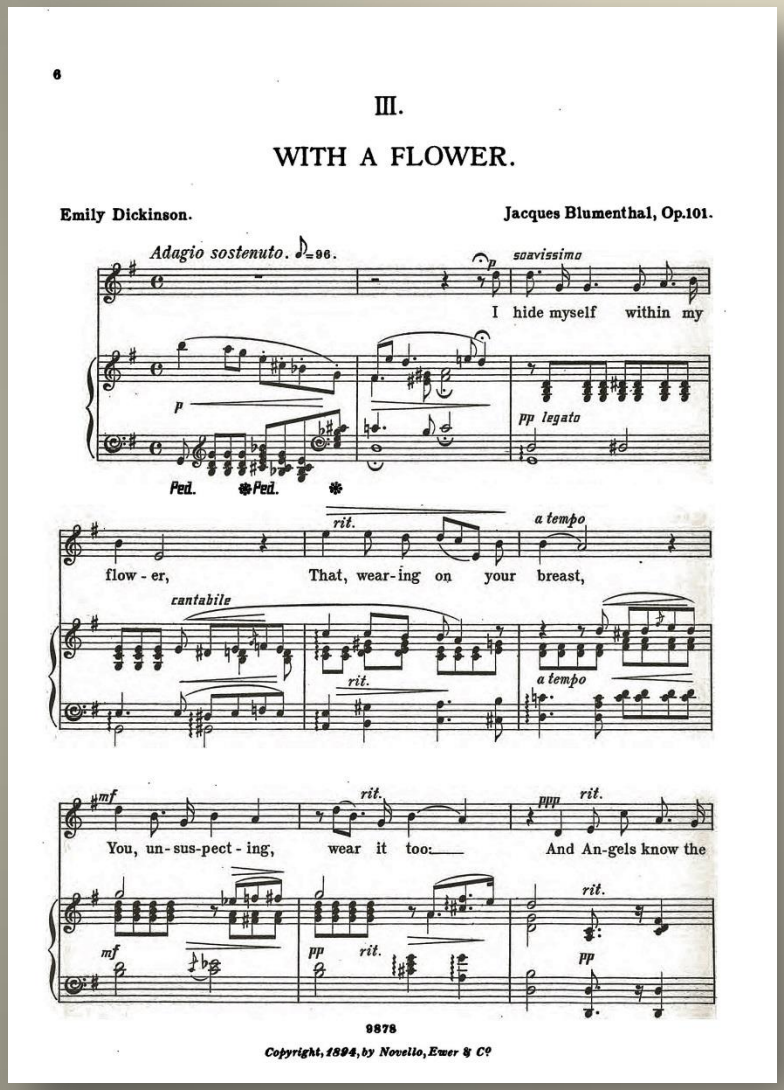


1894 – L'11 dicembre la compositrice Willetta "Etta" Parker esegue in concerto a Boston, Chickering Hall, il proprio song *Have You Got a Brook in Your Little Heart?* sui versi di Emily Dickinson.

1896 - Pubblicazione del song di Willetta Parker in *Three Songs*, C.W. Thompson & Co. (Miles & Thompson), Boston 1896.

Immagine: Willetta Parker, *Three Songs*, C.W. Thompson & Co. (Miles & Thompson), Boston 1896; Copertina. Brown University Library.

JACQUES (JAKOB) BLUMENTHAL (1829-1908)
DUE SONGS SU TESTO POETICO DI EMILY DICKINSON, 1894



6

III.

WITH A FLOWER.

Emily Dickinson. Jacques Blumenthal, Op.101.

Adagio sostenuto. ♪=96. soavissimo

I hide myself within my

Ped. Ped.

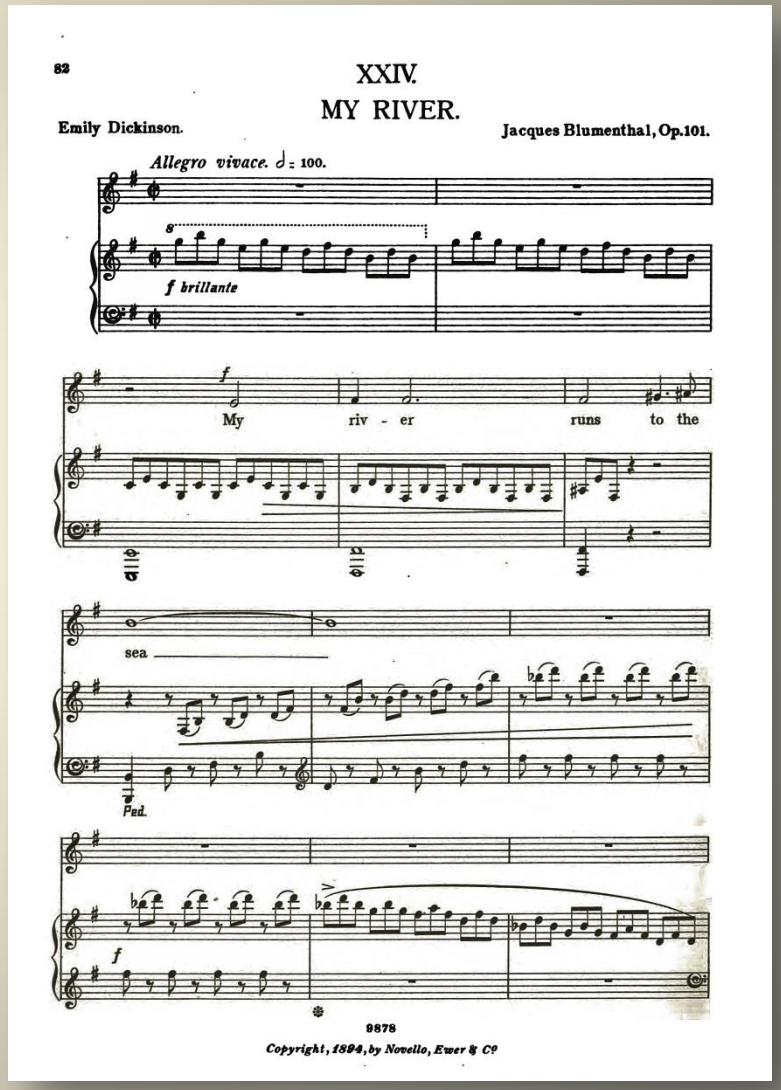
flow - er, That, wear-ing on your breast,

cantabile

You, un-sus-pect-ing, wear it too: And An-gels know the

9878

Copyright, 1894, by Novello, Ewer & Co



82

XXIV.

MY RIVER.

Emily Dickinson. Jacques Blumenthal, Op.101.

Allegro vivace. ♩= 100.

f brillante

My riv - er runs to the

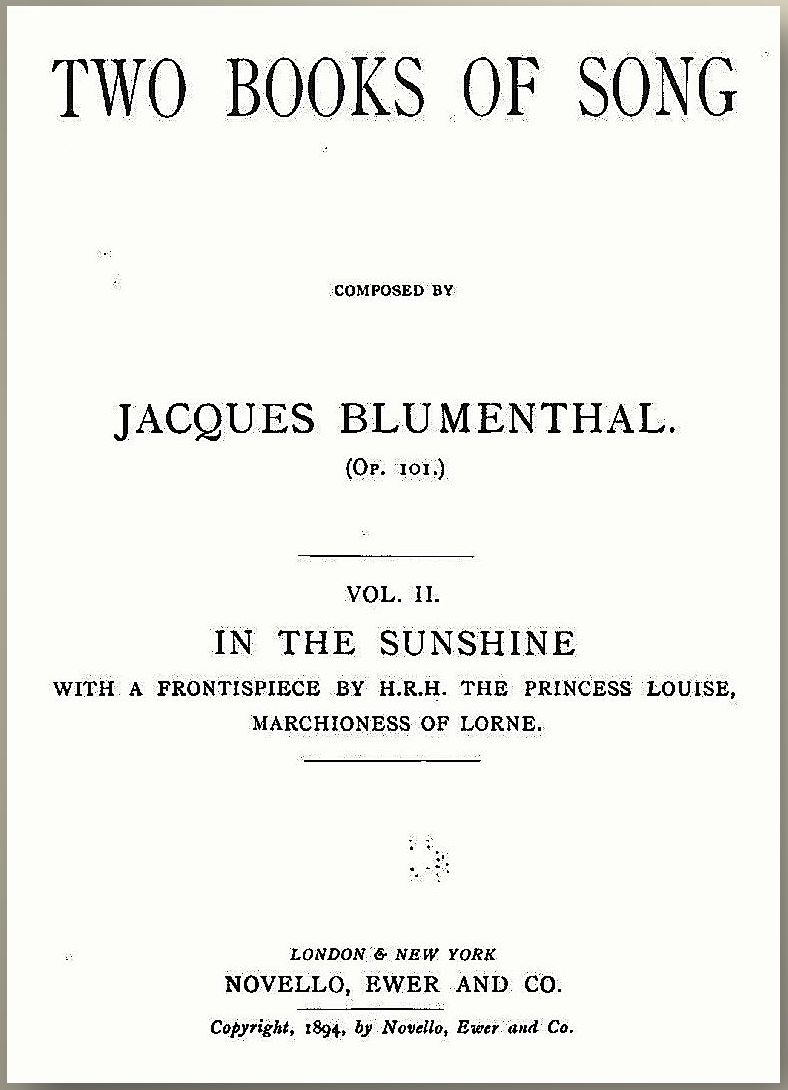
sea

Ped.

9878

Copyright, 1894, by Novello, Ewer & Co

JACQUES (JAKOB) BLUMENTHAL
COMPOSITORE E PIANISTA TEDESCO-INGLESE (1829-1908)



TWO BOOKS OF SONG

COMPOSED BY

JACQUES BLUMENTHAL.

(Op. 101.)

VOL. II.

IN THE SUNSHINE

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY H.R.H. THE PRINCESS LOUISE, MARCHIONESS OF LORNE.

LONDON & NEW YORK
NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Copyright, 1894, by Novello, Ewer and Co.

1894 - Jacques Blumenthal, due liriche su versi dickinsoniani

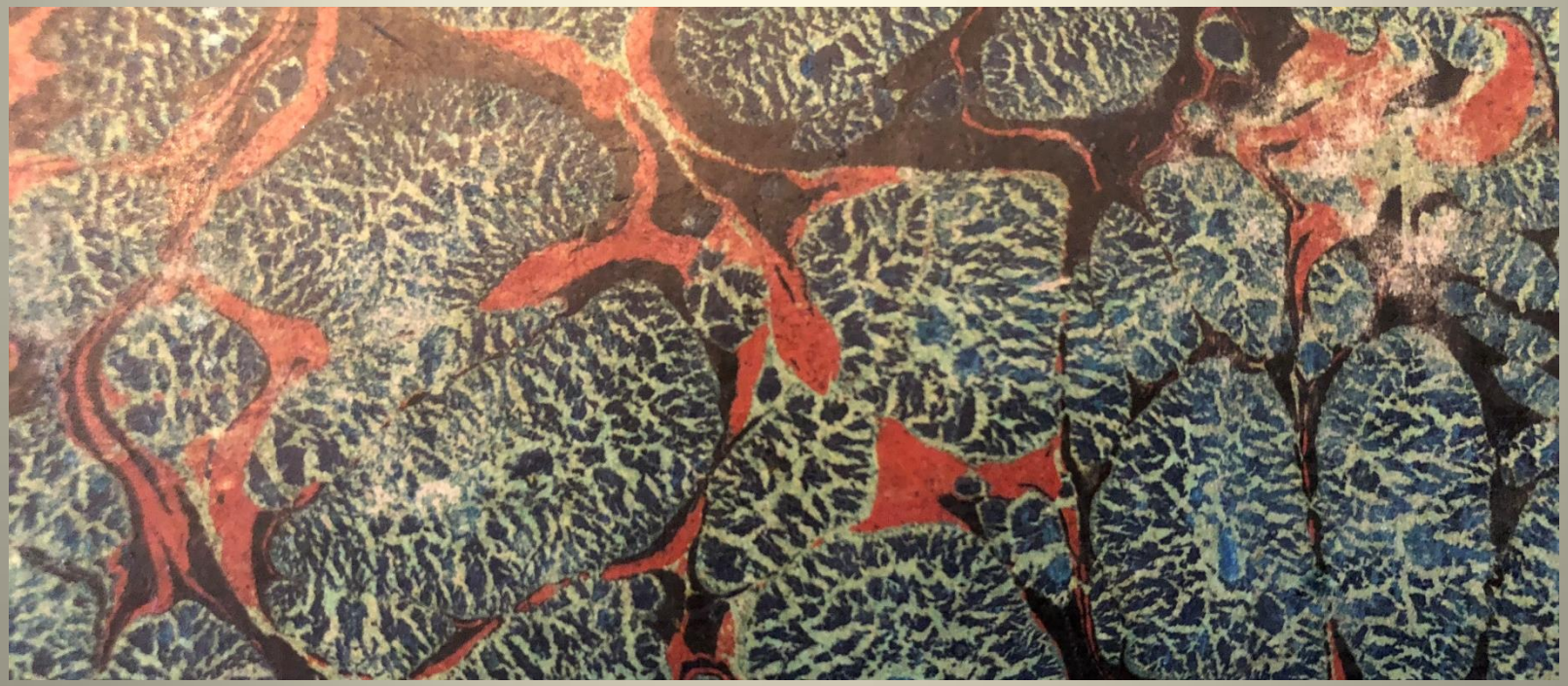
- ***With a flower***
- ***My river***

pubblicate nella raccolta *Two Books of Song*.

Immagine: Jacques Blumenthal, *Two Books of Song*, Op. 101; Vol. II, *In the Sunshine*, Novello, Ewer and Co., London & New York 1894; Frontespizio.

Migliaia di adattamenti musicali di testi poetici di Emily Dickinson sino ai giorni nostri, in ogni stile e livello artistico, sino all'artigianato domestico.

Il nostro programma di songs include adattamenti musicali di testi poetici statunitensi di epoche diverse e ruota attorno alla presenza centrale di Emily Dickinson, anche talora allusiva e di riferimento nel verso di altri autori.

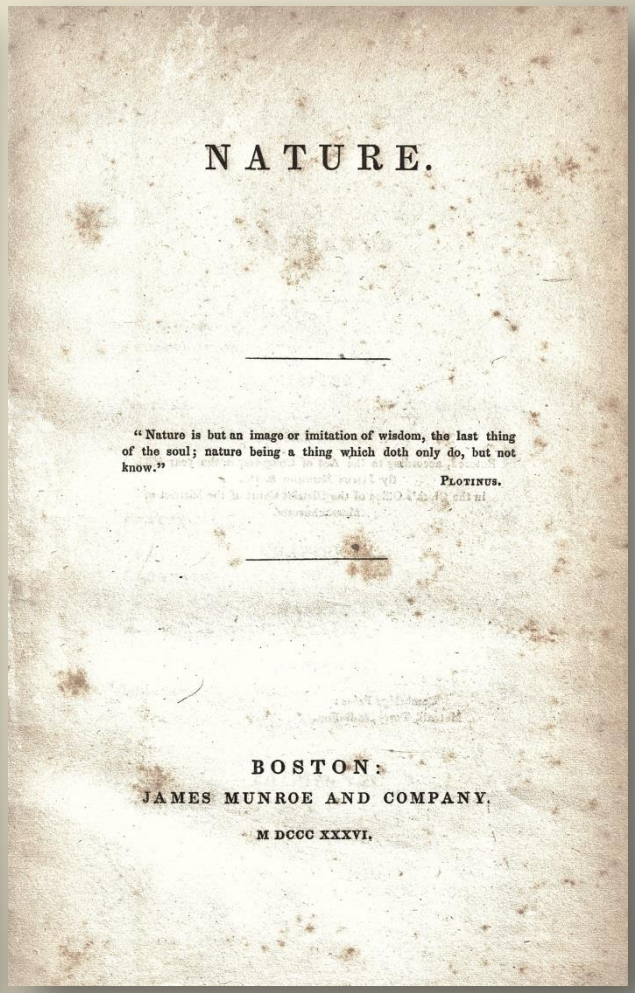


Riflessione sull'isolamento di Emily Dickinson nel contesto della sua epoca.

Immagini: Emily Dickinson, Dagherrotipo, ca. 1847. Amherst College, dono di Millicent Todd Bingham, 1956; particolari.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston 1803-Concord, Mass. 1882)

Filosofo, predicatore, saggista, poeta, conferenziere, abolizionista; figura centrale del Trascendentalismo americano, lo scrittore più influente del movimento di Concord. *NATURE* (1836).



NATURE.

"Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul; nature being a thing which doth only do, but not know."

PLOTINUS.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
M DCCC XXXVI.

Immagini:

- R.W. Emerson, *Nature*, James Munroe and Company, Boston 1836. Frontespizio. Digitized; original from University of California Libraries.

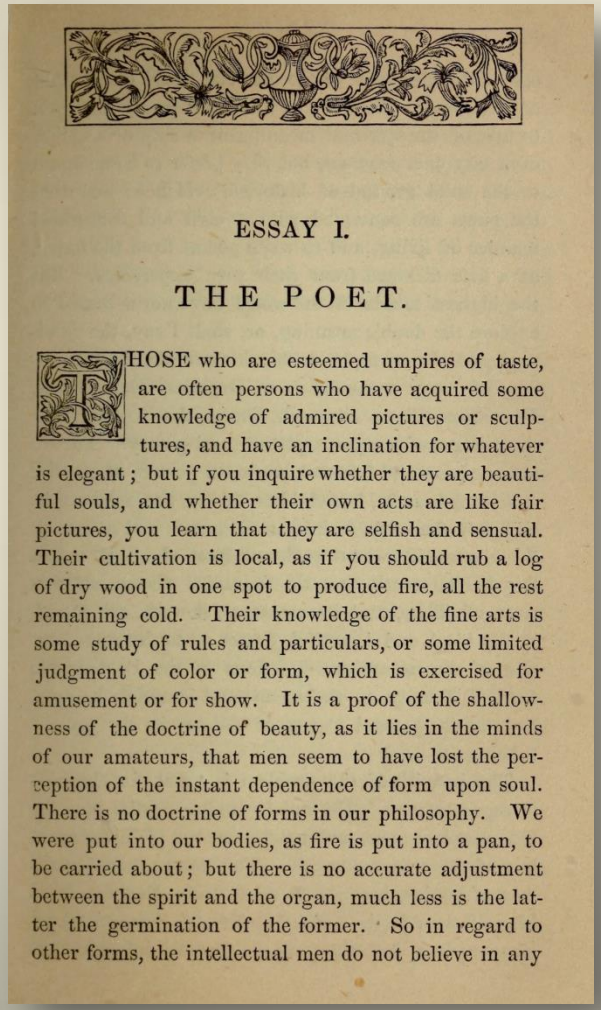
- Ritratto di Emerson: incisione di contro-frontespizio in R.W. Emerson, *Essays, First and Second Series*, Ticknor and Fields, Boston 1866. Digitized; original from Library of Congress.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Poet*

1841-43; pubbl. in *Essays: Second Series*, 1844.

Il poeta come ***seer***.

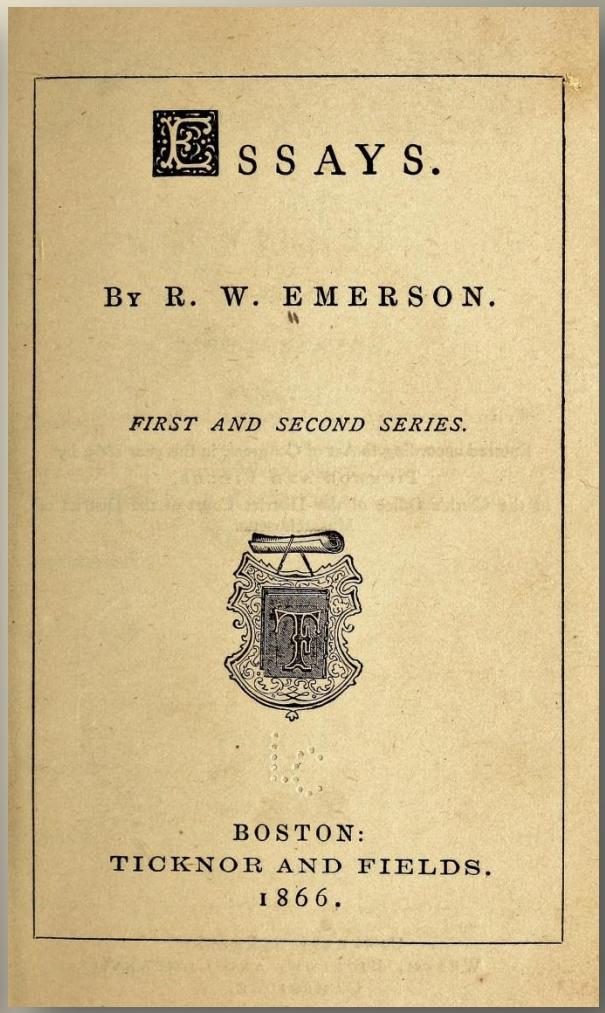
Immagini:
Emerson, *The Poet*, 1841-43; *Essays, First and Second Series*, Ticknor and Fields, Boston 1866, pp. 291-323. Digitized; original from Library of Congress.



ESSAY I.

THE POET.

THOSE who are esteemed umpires of taste, are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures or sculptures, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual. Their cultivation is local, as if you should rub a log of dry wood in one spot to produce fire, all the rest remaining cold. Their knowledge of the fine arts is some study of rules and particulars, or some limited judgment of color or form, which is exercised for amusement or for show. It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty, as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant dependence of form upon soul. There is no doctrine of forms in our philosophy. We were put into our bodies, as fire is put into a pan, to be carried about; but there is no accurate adjustment between the spirit and the organ, much less is the latter the germination of the former. So in regard to other forms, the intellectual men do not believe in any



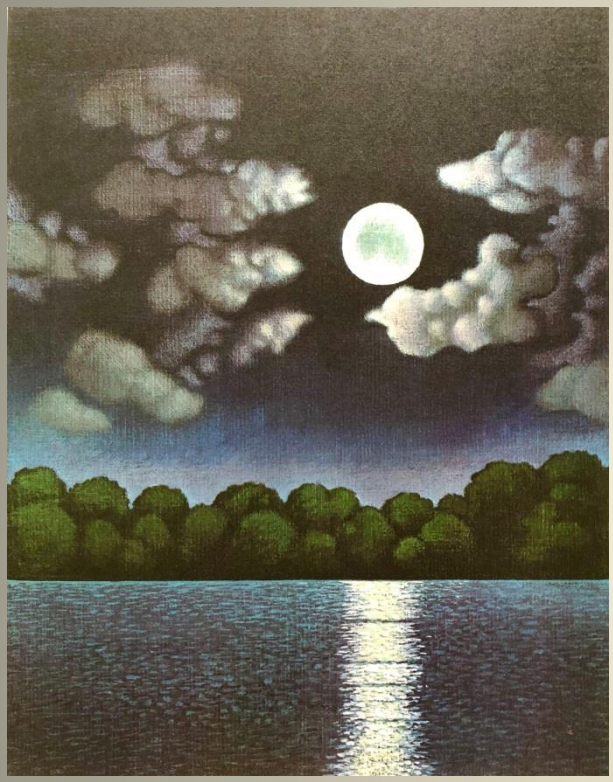
ESSAYS.

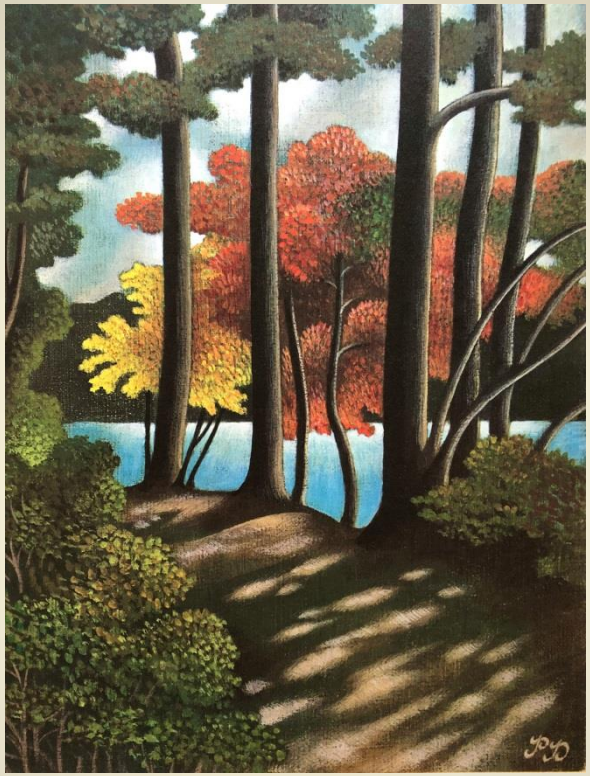
BY R. W. EMERSON.

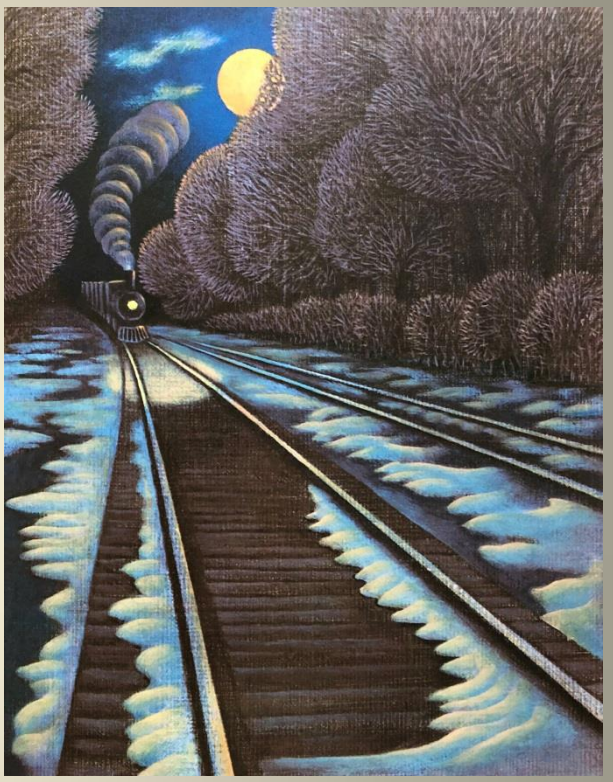
FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1866.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (Concord, Mass. 1817-1862)
A Walden, 1845-47 - Esperienza di vita alternativa.







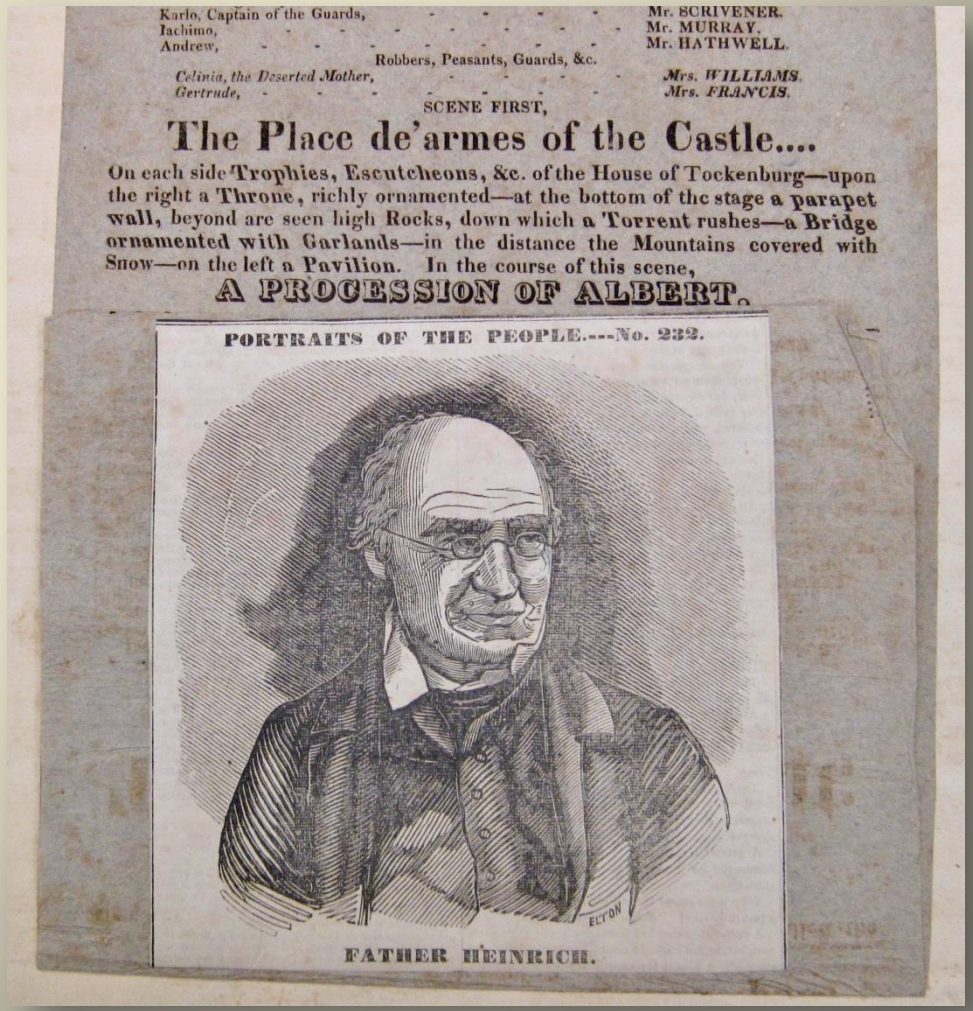
Immagini: Paul Davis, Illustrazioni per *Walden*: Cap. IV, *Sounds*; Cap. IX, *The Ponds*; Cap. XIV, *Former Inhabitants; And Winter Visitors*.

H.D. Thoreau, *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*. Illustrated with original paintings by Paul Davis. Ed. speciale fuori commercio, Olivetti, [s.l.] 1976. ICAMus Special Collections.

Anthony Philip Heinrich

1781-1861

Compositore di lavori orchestrali per grandioso organico strumentale


Karlo, Captain of the Guards, - - - - - Mr. SCRIVENER.
Iachimo, - - - - - - - - - Mr. MURRAY.
Andrew, - - - - - - - - - Mr. HATHWELL.
Robbers, Peasants, Guards, &c.
Celinia, the Deserted Mother, - - - - - *Mrs. WILLIAMS.*
Gertrude, - - - - - - - - *Mrs. FRANCIS.*

SCENE FIRST,

The Place de'armes of the Castle....

On each side Trophies, Escutcheons, &c. of the House of Tockenburg—upon the right a Throne, richly ornamented—at the bottom of the stage a parapet wall, beyond are seen high Rocks, down which a Torrent rushes—a Bridge ornamented with Garlands—in the distance the Mountains covered with Snow—on the left a Pavilion. In the course of this scene,

A PROCESSION OF ALBERT.

PORTRAITS OF THE PEOPLE.---No. 232.

ELTON

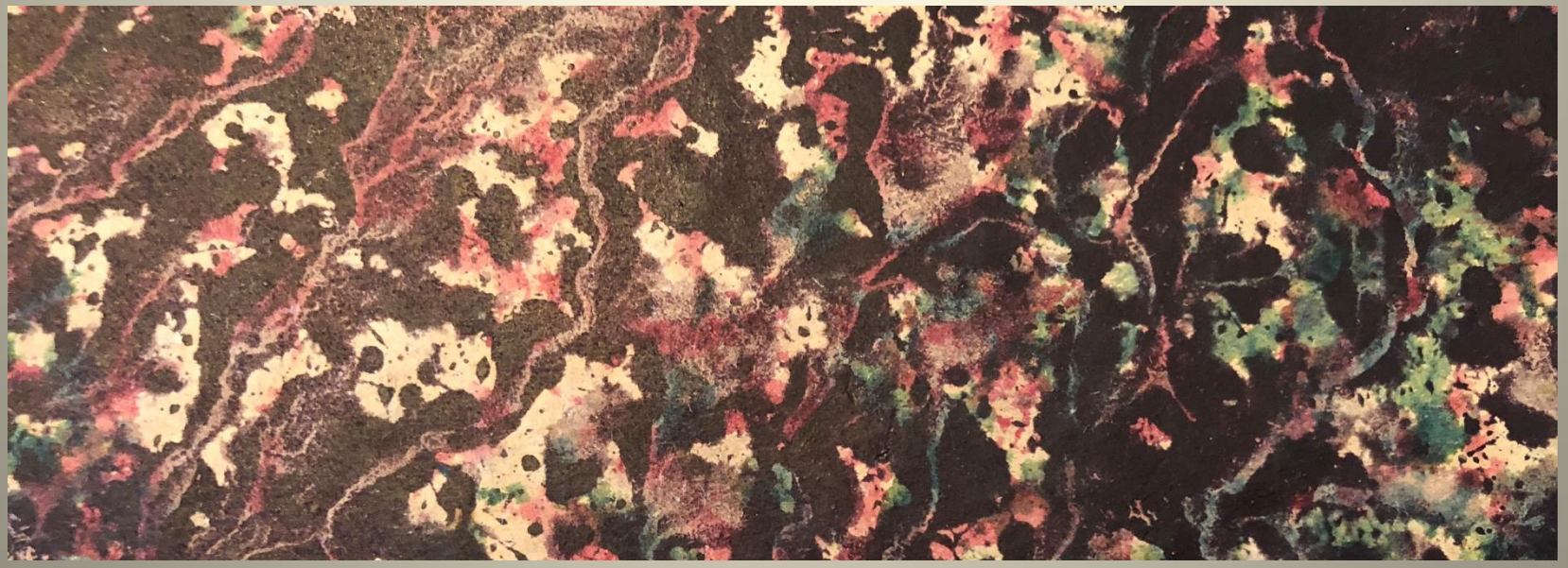
FATHER HEINRICH.

Immagine:
Ritratto di Anthony Philip Heinrich (ca. 1850); incisione di Robert H. Elton, ritagliata e incollata dal compositore nel suo monumentale *Scrap Book* (p. 1196; The Library of Congress Music Division).
Foto: Aloma Bardi.

Composizioni orchestrali di A.Ph. Heinrich ca. 1831-1855

Alcuni titoli:

- ***The Wild Woods Spirits' Chant: Fantasia*, ca. 1842;**
- ***The War of the Elements and the Thundering of Niagara: Capriccio Grande*, ca. inizio anni '40?;**
- ***The Ornithological Combat of Kings*, 1847; rev. 1856.**



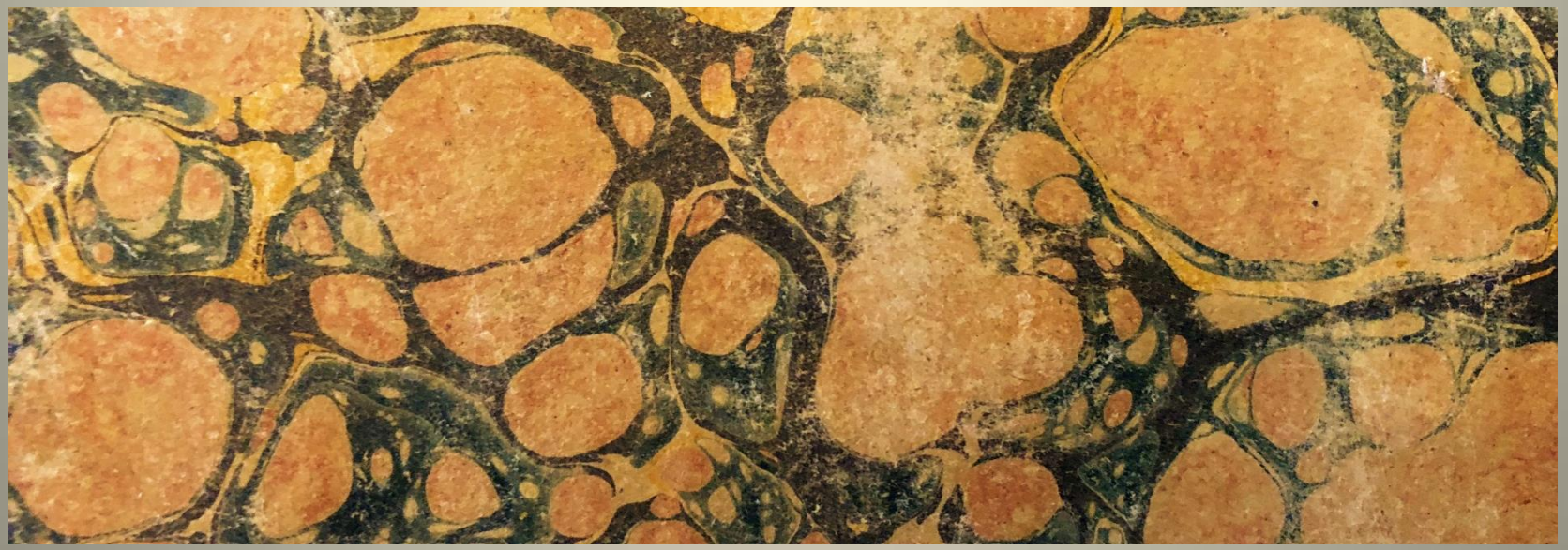
Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), *Niagara* (1857);
Corcoran Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK (1829-1869)

Compositore pan-americano, viaggiatore influenzato da ritmi e colori caraibici nel descrivere il suono della natura.

Alcuni titoli:

- ***La savane, ballade créole*, op. 3, 1847-49;**
- **Symphony No. 1: *A Night in the Tropics / La nuit des tropiques / Noche de los tropicos*, 1858-59;**
- **Symphony No. 2: *A Montevideo*, 1865-68.**



Pittori romantici della Hudson River School

Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900). *Cotopaxi*

1862; Detroit Institute of Arts.

Pittori romantici della Hudson River School

Thomas Cole (1801-1848). *The Voyage of Life: Childhood*

1842; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Pittori romantici della Hudson River School

Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900).

The River of Light* / *El río de luz* / *Morning in the Tropics

1877; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (Concord, Mass. 1817-1862)
1854 - Pubblicazione di *Walden*.
Sounds, IV cap. del volume, che indaga il tema della Natura come suono.

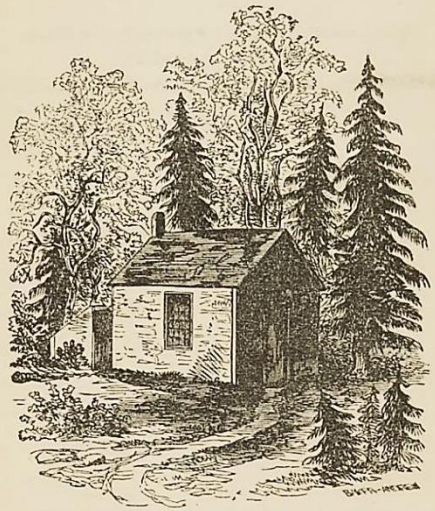
WALDEN;

OR,

LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,

AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 92.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LIV.

IV.

SOUNDS.

BUT while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard. Much is published, but little printed. The rays which stream through the shutter will be no longer remembered when the shutter is wholly removed. No method nor discipline can supersede the necessity of being forever on the alert. What is a course of history or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen? Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity.

Immagini:

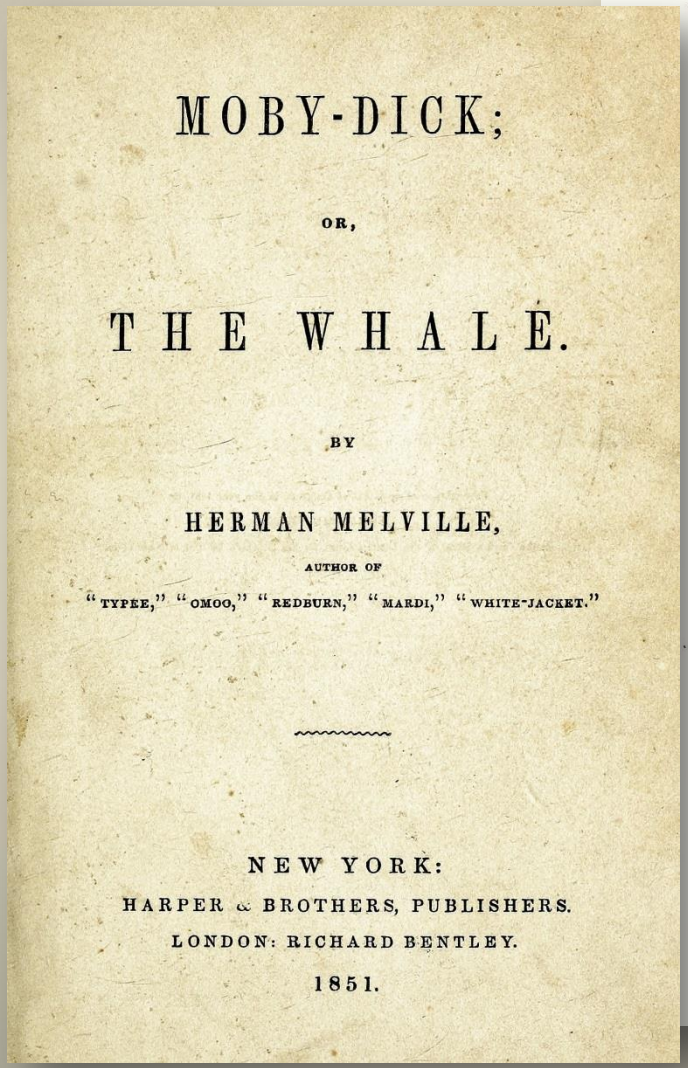
- ***Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*, I ed., Ticknor and Fields, Boston 1854; Frontespizio.**
- ***Walden, in Two Volumes*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston and New York 1892, Vol. 1, p. 174: inizio di *Sounds* (IV cap.). Digitized; original from University of Michigan.**

1851 - Prima edizione di *Moby-Dick* di Herman Melville.

Immagini:

- I edizione: Harper, New York, 1851; Frontespizio. Digitized; original from Duke University.

- Edizione di fine ‘800: Page, Boston 1892; Frontespizio. Digitized; original from New York Public Library.



MOBY-DICK;

OR,

THE WHALE.

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE,

AUTHOR OF

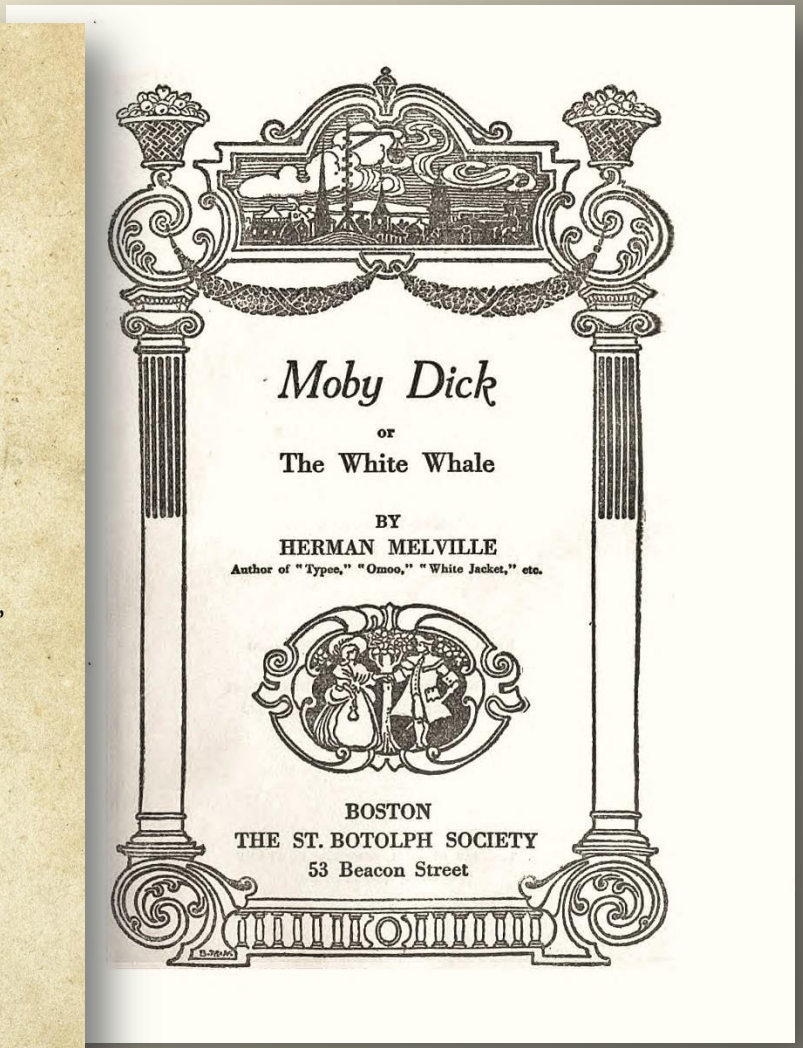
"TYPEE," "OMOO," "REDBURN," "MARDI," "WHITE-JACKET."

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY.

1851.



Moby Dick

or

The White Whale

BY

HERMAN MELVILLE

Author of "Typee," "Omoo," "White Jacket," etc.

BOSTON

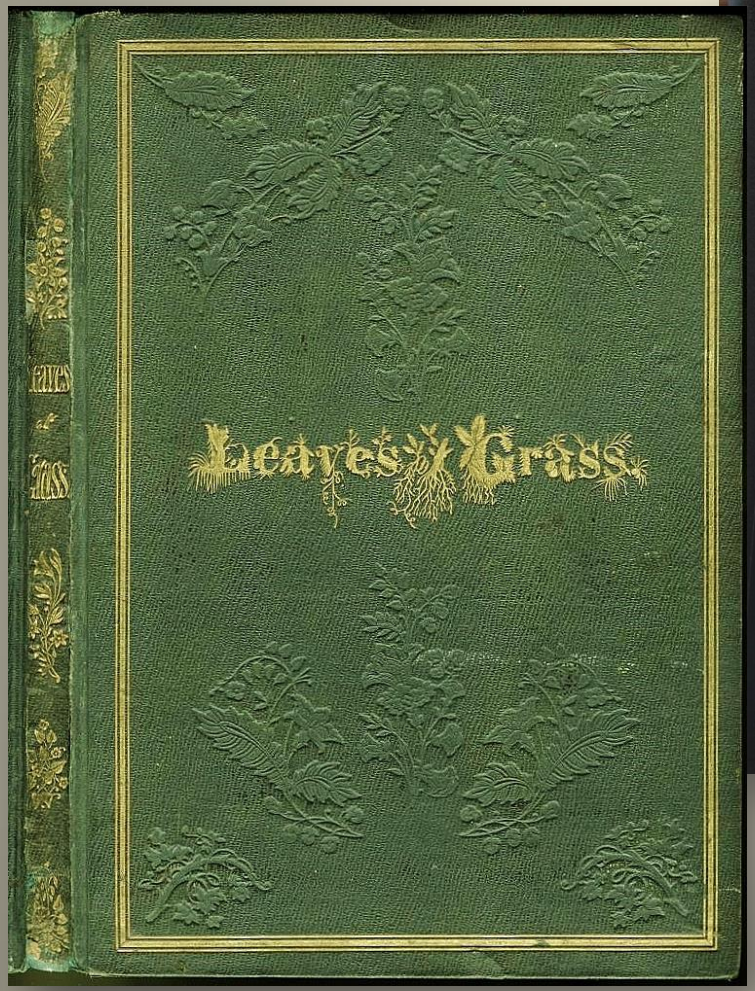
THE ST. BOTOLPH SOCIETY

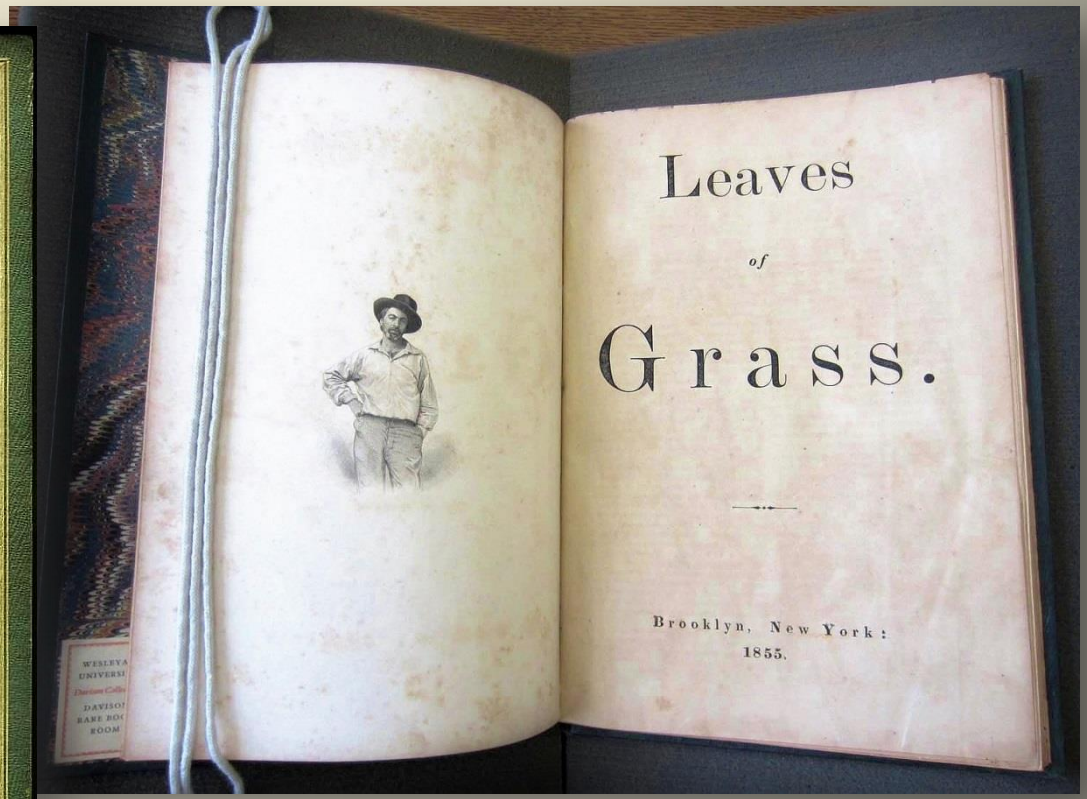
53 Beacon Street

Walt Whitman 1819-1892 - *Leaves of Grass*

I edizione, Brooklyn 1855

12 componimenti poetici, tra i quali *Song of Myself*; 9 successive edizioni ed espansioni della raccolta, sino al 1892; l'edizione finale consiste di 389 poesie.





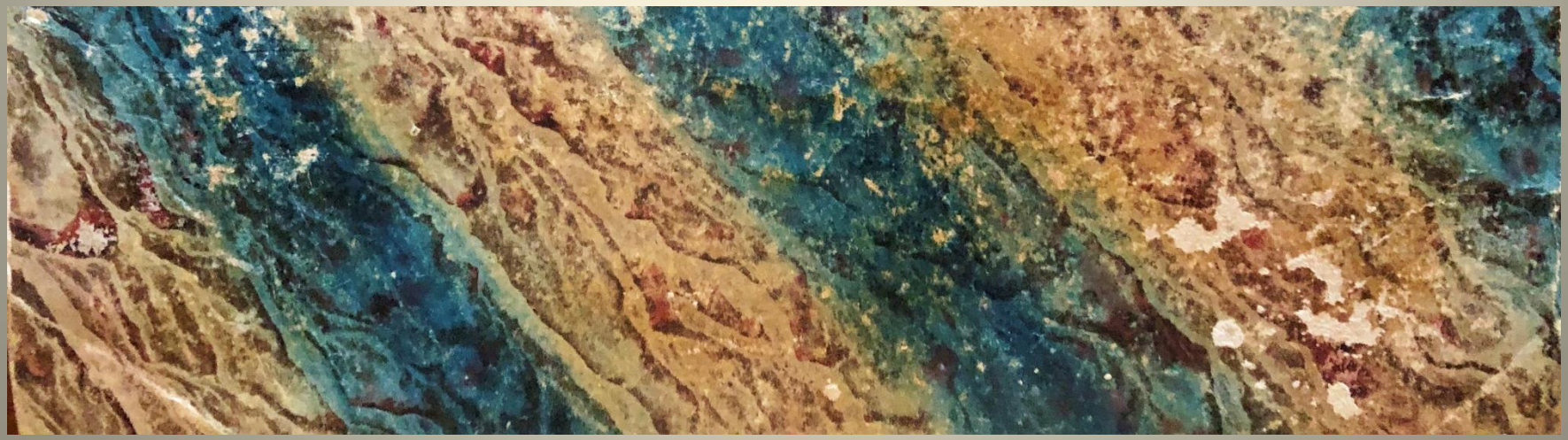
Immagini:
- Copertina: Digitized; original from University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections & University Archives.
- Frontespizio: Wesleyan University Special Collections & Archives.

Walt Whitman 1819-1892 - *Song of Myself (I Celebrate Myself)*
***Leaves of Grass* I edizione, Brooklyn 1855.**

Dalla Sezione 18 di *Song of Myself*, nell'ed. finale, 1891-92, p. 43; vers. it. di Aloma Bardi:

361 *With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,*
362 *I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches*
for conquer'd and slain persons.

361 *Con musica forte io giungo, con i miei cornetti e coi miei timpani,*
362 *Non suono marce soltanto per vincitori riconosciuti, io suono marce*
per le persone soggiogate e trucidate.

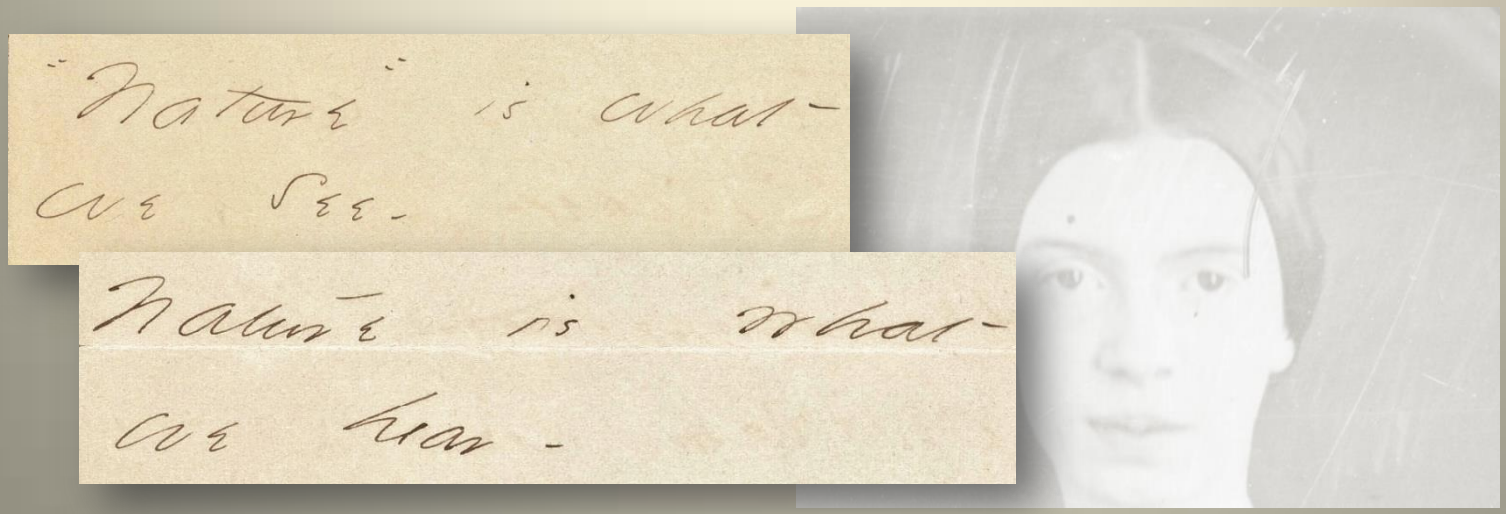


Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). *"Nature" is what we see*, 1863

Trascrizione dal ms. - Versione it. di Aloma Bardi

"Nature" is what we see –
The Hill – the Afternoon –
Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –
Nay – Nature is Heaven –
"Nature" is what we hear –
The Bobolink – the Sea –
Thunder – the Cricket –
Nay – "Nature" is Harmony –
"Nature" is what we know –
Yet have no art to say –
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

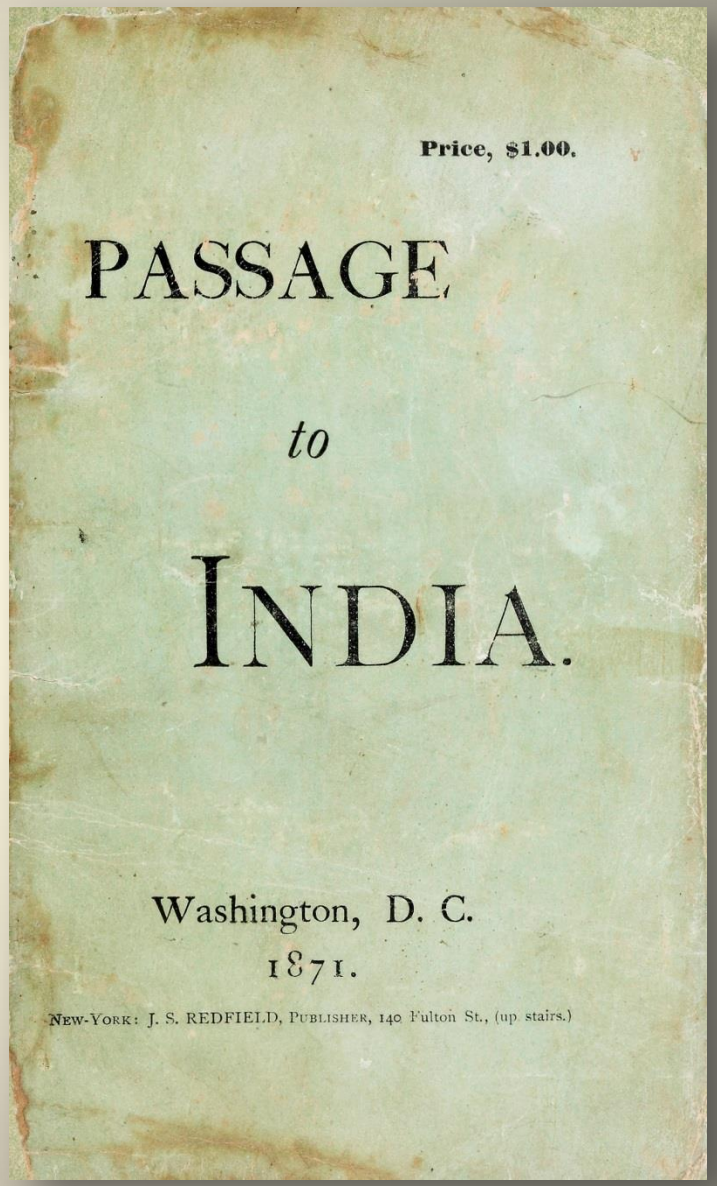
Chiamiamo "Natura" quello che vediamo:
il colle, il meriggio
lo scoiattolo, l'eclissi, il calabrone.
No: la Natura è il paradiso.
Natura è ciò che emette un suono:
l'uccello canterino, il mare
il tuono, il grillo.
Neppure: la Natura è armonia.
Natura è ciò che sappiamo
pur senza la maestria di esprimerlo
tanto impotente è la nostra sapienza
dinanzi alla semplicità di lei.



Walt Whitman
Passage to India

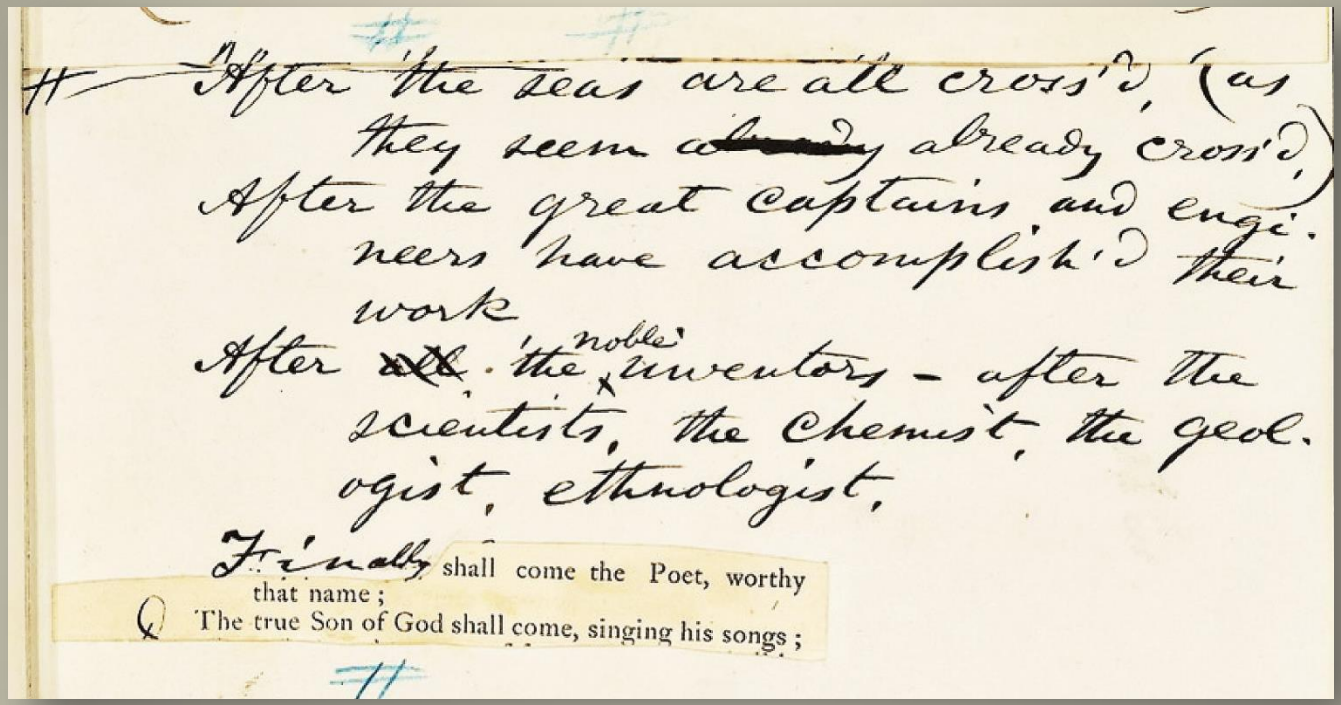
Immagine:
I ed., pubblicata come supplemento alla collezione *Leaves of Grass*, Washington, D.C., 1871; Copertina.

Digitized; original from the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.



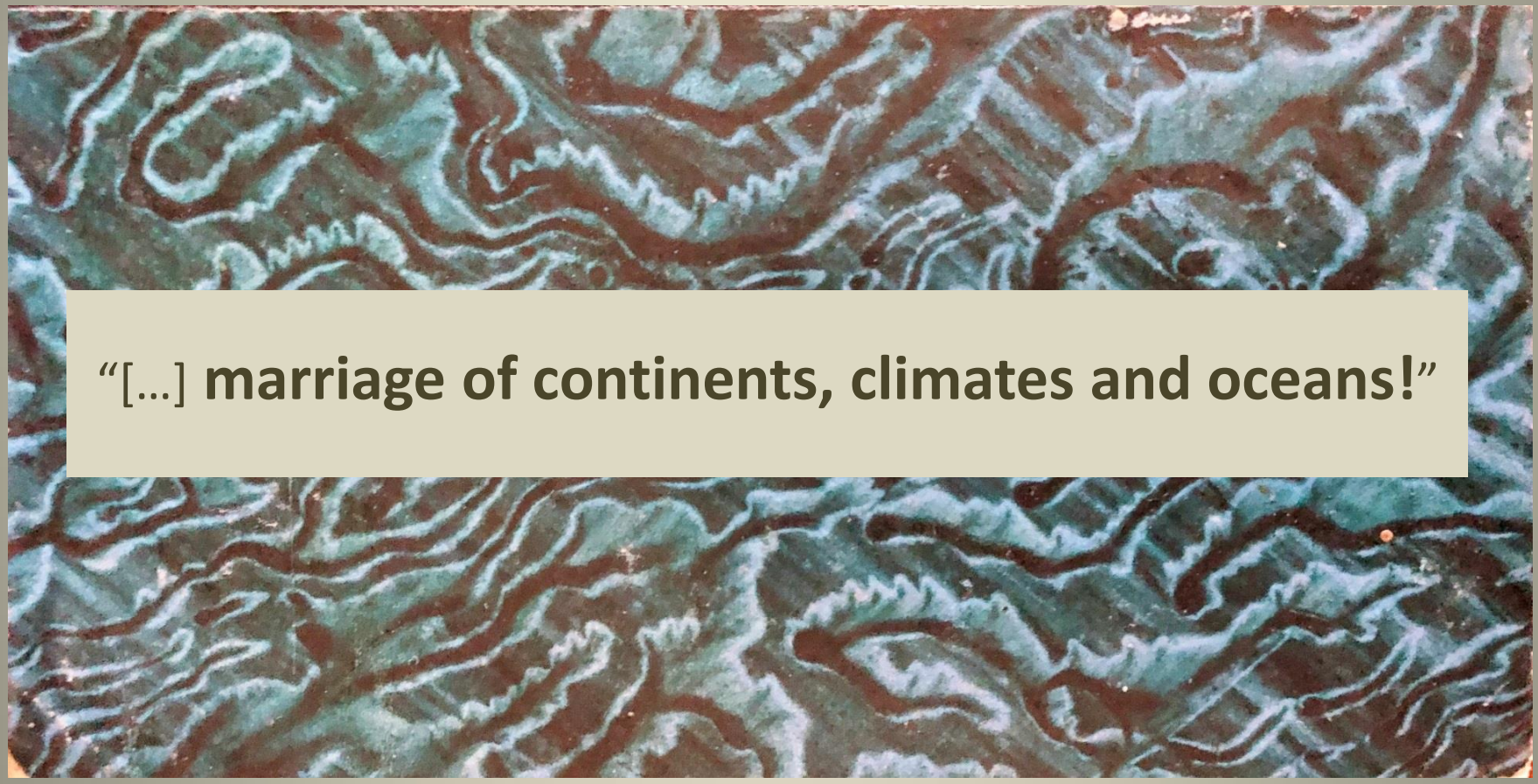
Walt Whitman - *Passage to India* - 1871

Dalla Sequenza 5; ms. autografo, p. 17; 1870; Houghton Library, Harvard University.
La vers. it. nella relazione è di Aloma Bardi.

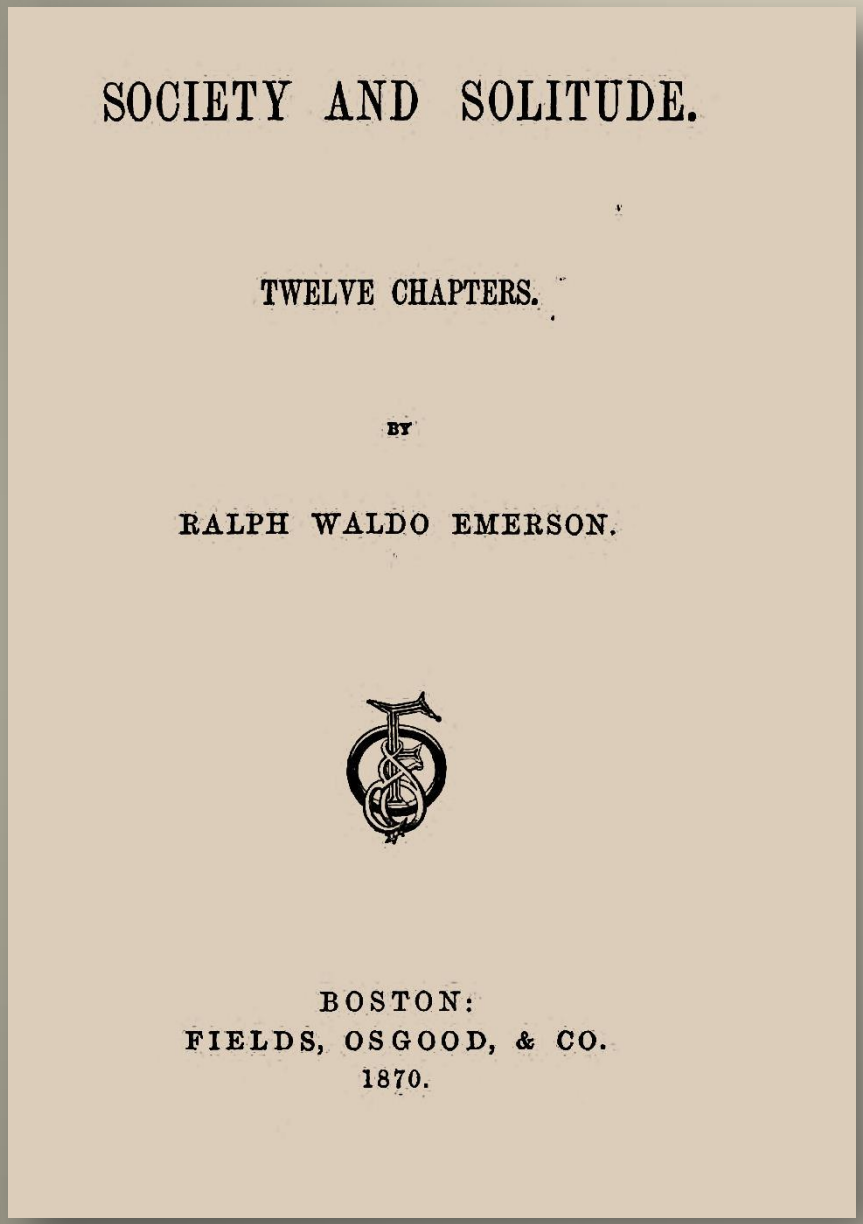

After the seas are all cross'd, (as
they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engi-
neers have accomplish'd their
work
After the noble inventors – after the
scientists, the chemist, the geol-
ogist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet, worthy
that name;
The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs;

After the seas are all cross’d, (as they seem already cross’d,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish’d their work,
After the noble inventors – after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet worthy that name;
The true Son of God shall come singing his songs;
[…]
Nature and Man shall be disjoin’d and diffused no more,
The true Son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

Walt Whitman
Passage to India 7:3



"[…] **marriage of continents, climates and oceans!**"


SOCIETY AND SOLITUDE.

TWELVE CHAPTERS.

BY

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

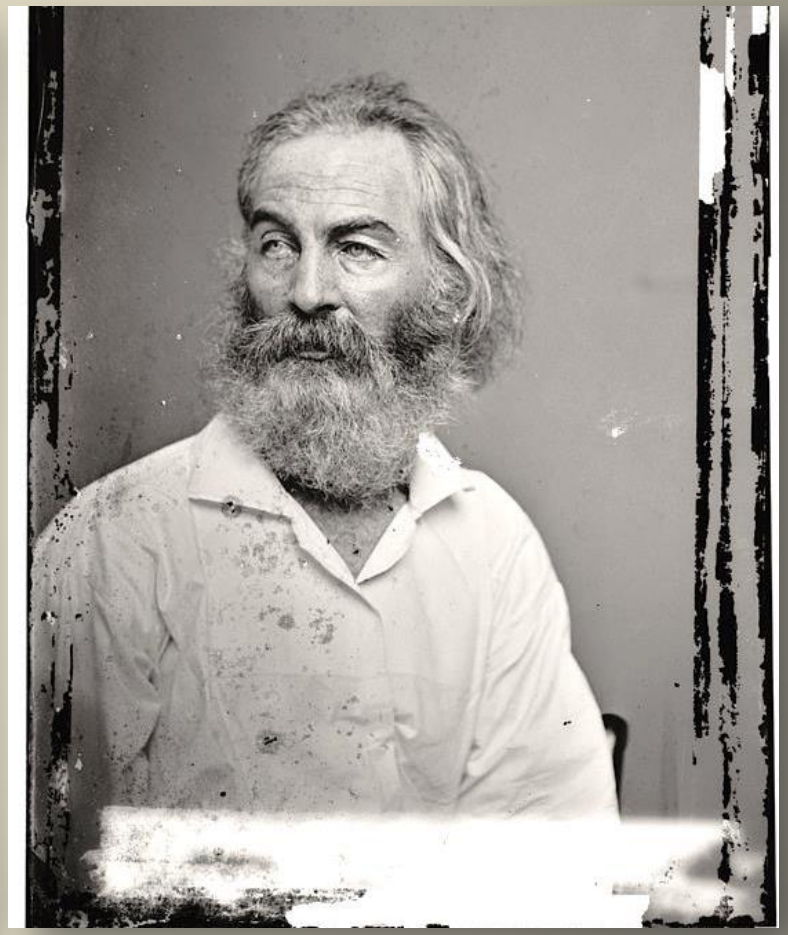
BOSTON:
FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.
1870.

Ralph Waldo Emerson
Society and Solitude
1870

Emerson individua il valore fondante di una moderna società responsabile nella ricerca di un equilibrio identitario tra partecipazione attiva alla vita sociale da un lato e, dall'altro lato, isolamento creativo e purificatore nella Natura.

Immagine:
R.W. Emerson, *Society and Solitude*, Fields, Osgood, & Co., Boston 1870. Digitized; original from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I GRANDI POETI DELL'800 AMERICANO CHE HANNO ISPIRATO I COMPOSITORI: WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892) E EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)



EMILY DICKINSON, dagherrotipo, ca. 1847; Amherst College Archives & Special Collections, gift of Millicent Todd Bingham, 1956.

WALT WHITMAN, ritratto fotografico ("carte-de-visite type") di Mathew Brady o Alexander Gardner; Brady Studio, New York, ca. 1862; Brady-Handy Photograph Collection, The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

PROGRAMMA LYCEUM-ICAMus, FIRENZE, 16 MAGGIO 2022

POETI E POETESSE

Mary Oliver (1935-2019)
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
James Agee (1909-1955)
Frederic Prokosch (1906-1989)

COMPOSITORI E COMPOSITRICI

Lori Laitman (1955)
Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Luigi Zaninelli (1932)
Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

MARY OLIVER

1935-2019

Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1984.

Foto: Mary Oliver con il cane Ricky nel 2013 nella loro casa a Hobe Sound, Florida.
©Angel Valentin - The New York Times.

LORI LAITMAN
1955

Ha composto centinaia di Art Songs, opere liriche e lavori corali.

Ciclo *EARLY SNOW* (2002-03)
I. *Last Night the Rain Spoke to Me*
II. *Blue Iris*
III. *Early Snow*

«Le tre poesie prescelte sono riflessioni sulla natura. Il mio obiettivo nel comporre liriche è sempre la preminenza del testo poetico. […]
Ogni parola di ogni poesia è indissolubilmente legata alla musica».
(Lori Laitman, dalle sue Note illustrative su *Early Snow*)

Foto: Christian Steiner.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Twelve Poemes of Emily Dickinson (1949-50)
Song cycle - 12 liriche

I. *Nature, the Gentlest Mother*

II. *There came a Wind like a Bugle*

III. *Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?*

IV. *The World feels Dusty*

V. *Heart! We will forget him*

VI. *Dear March, Come in!*

VII. *Sleep is supposed to be*

VIII. *When they come back*

IX. *I Felt a Funeral in my Brain*

X. *I've heard an Organ talk sometimes*

XI. *Going to Heaven!*

XII. *The Chariot (Because I could not stop for Death)*

Foto: Aaron Copland a Rock Hill, ca. fine anni '70. Aaron Copland Collection, Box Number 490/2; The Library of Congress Music Division.

Aaron Copland

Twelve Poemes of Emily Dickinson (1949-50)

XII. *The Chariot (Because I could not stop for Death)*

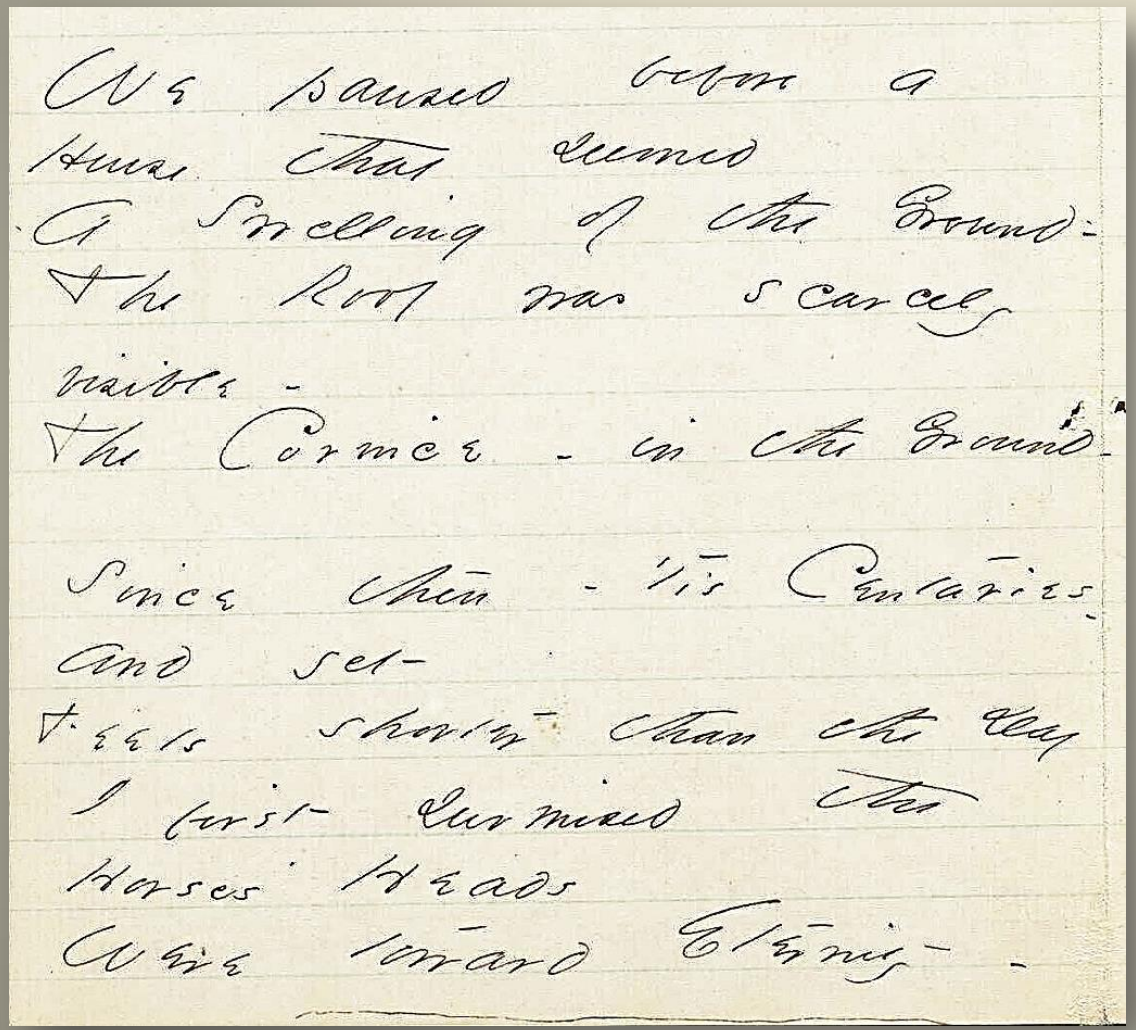
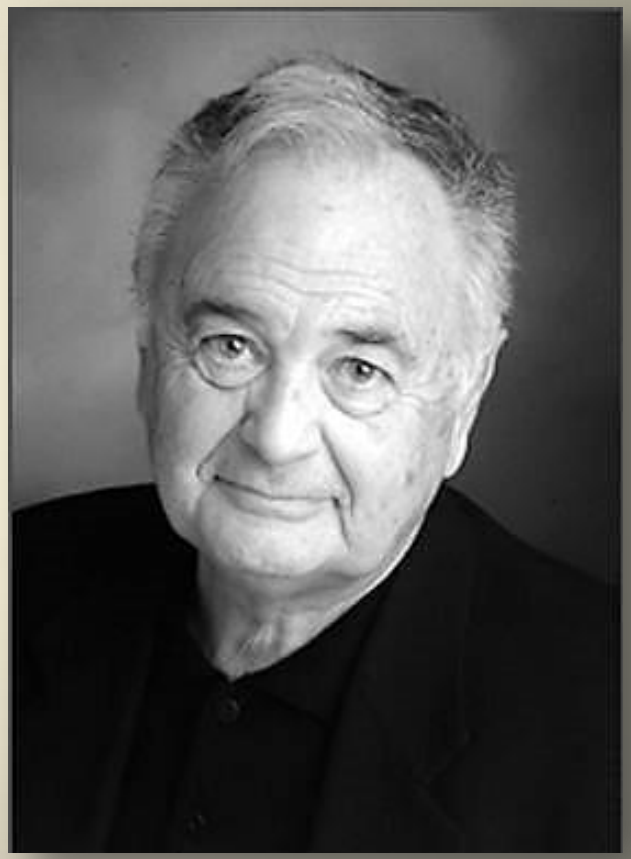


Immagine:
Emily Dickinson, Ms. di *Because I could not stop for Death* (part., ultime 2 strofe), J712, Fr479; in *Poems*: Packet XXXI, Fascicle 23, ca. 1862. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Digitized and accessible on Emily Dickinson Archive, http://www.edickinson.org.

Luigi Zaninelli (1932)
Seven Epigrams of Emily Dickinson (2001-2002)
Frammenti dall'Epistolario di Emily Dickinson



I. Had I a pleasure you had not

II. Who knows where our hearts go

III. I trust this sweet May Morning

IV. We wouldn't mind the sun dear

V. I am studying music now

VI. Till it has loved

VII. You might not know I remembered you

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

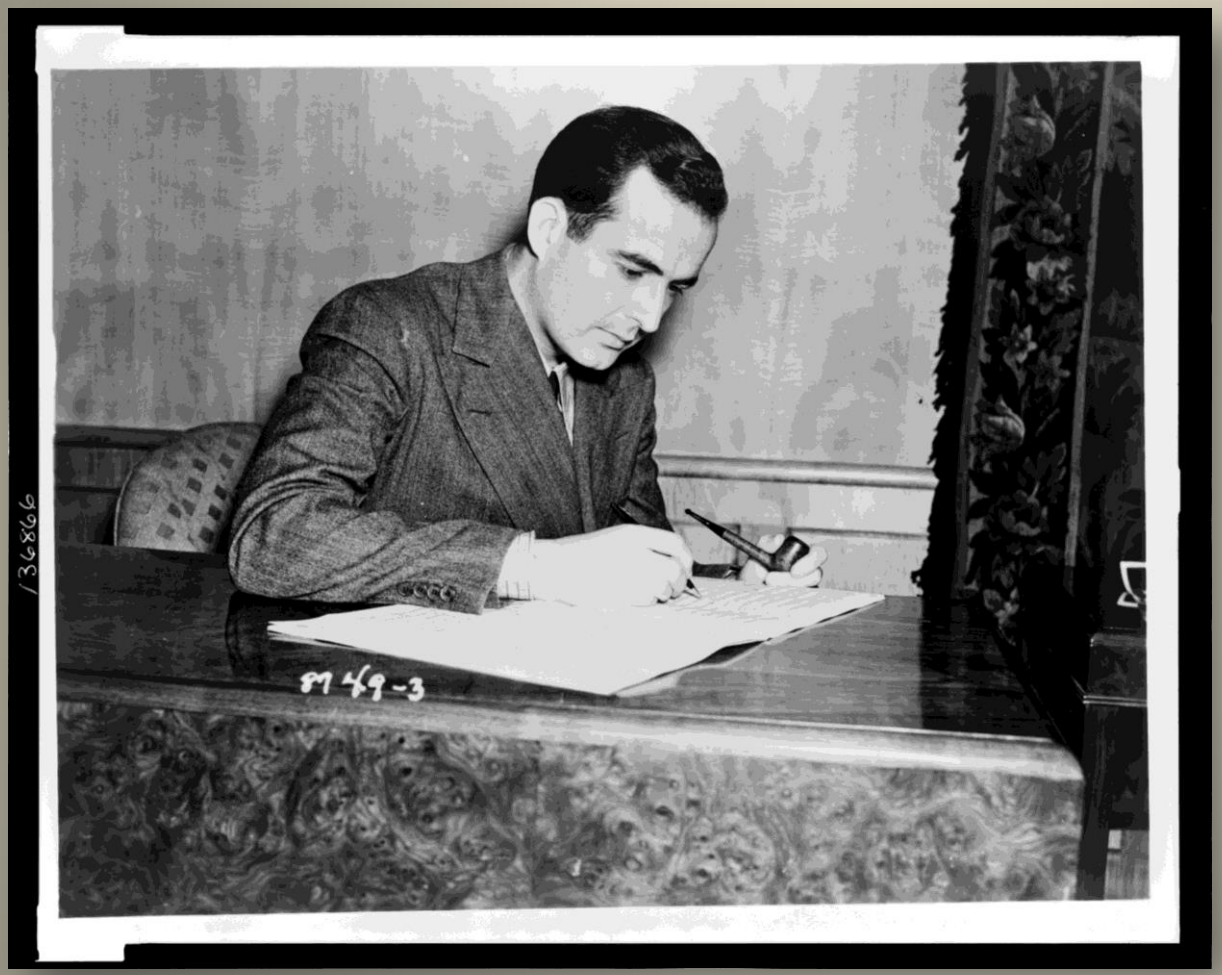


Foto: Samuel Barber corregge un ms. musicale; 26 Ottobre 1938; NBC Photo; New York World - Telegram & Sun Collection – BIOG, The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. © NBC.

Knoxville:
Summer of 1915
Op. 24, H-114 (1947-50).
Testo (poema in prosa)
di James Agee (1909-1955)
Versione per voce e pf.
del compositore (1949)

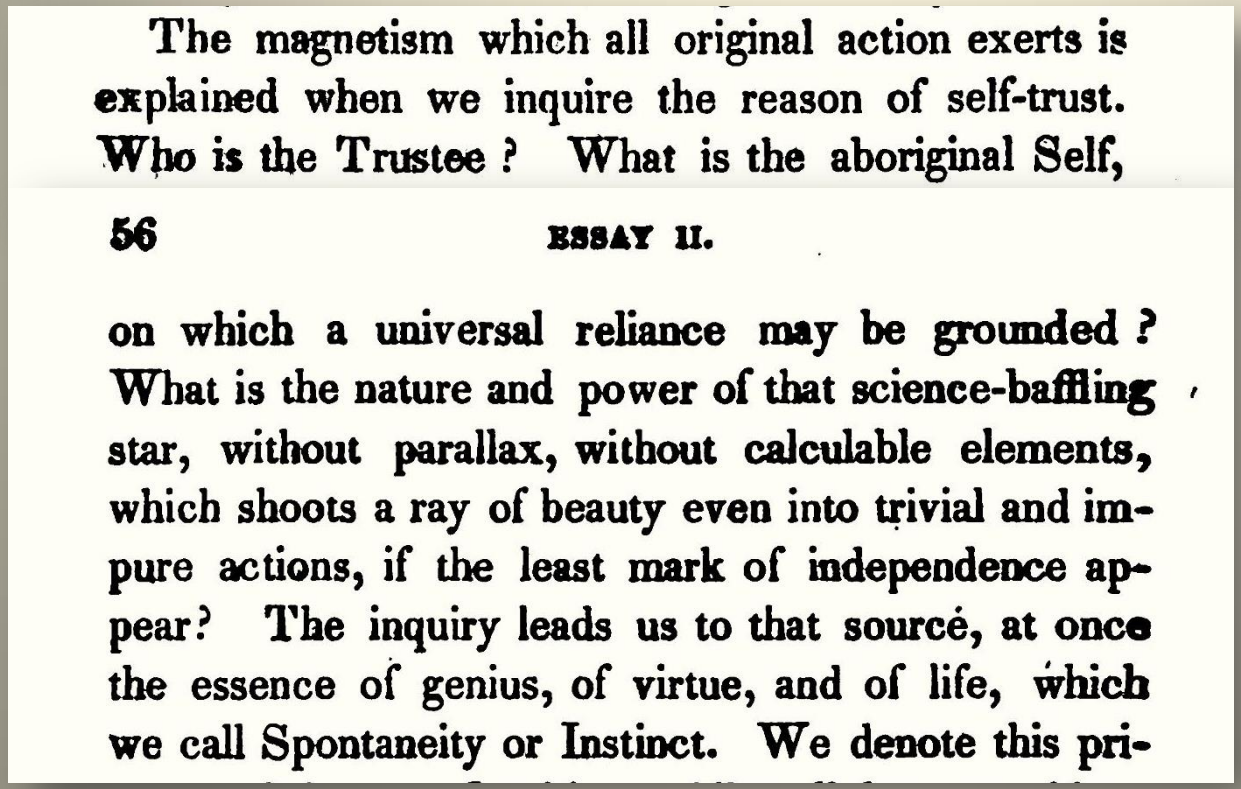
Sure on this shining night
Op. 13, No. 3. Testo poetico
da James Agee (1909-1955)

Nocturne
Op. 13, No. 4. Testo poetico
di Frederic Prokosch
(1906-1989)

***Da Four Songs*, Op. 13, H-93**
(1937-40)

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)
SELF-RELIANCE - Essays, I Serie, 1841

Tema dell'***aboriginal Self***: Emerson colloca nella nozione del sé ogni potenzialità di cambiare il mondo attraverso l'anticonformismo e il recupero di un autentico rapporto con la Natura.



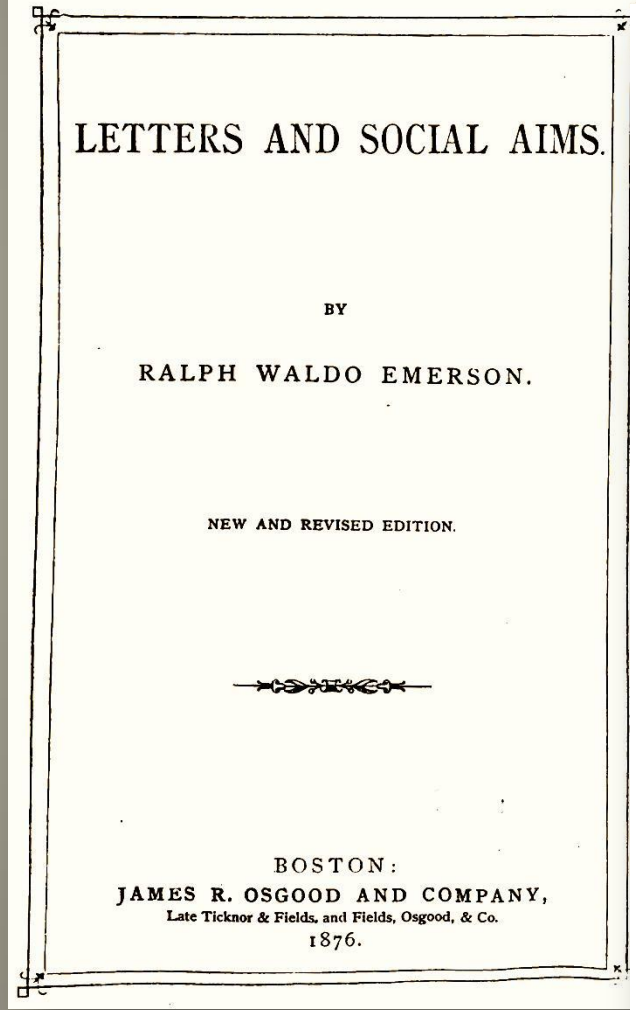
The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self,

56 ESSAY II.

on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this pri-

Immagine:
R.W. Emerson,
Self-Reliance;
Essays, I Series: 2;
I ed. Ticknor & Fields,
Boston 1841;
pp. 55-56.
Digitized; original from
Michigan State
University

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)
QUOTATION AND ORIGINALITY - 1859
Pubbl. in *Letters an Social Aims*, 1876



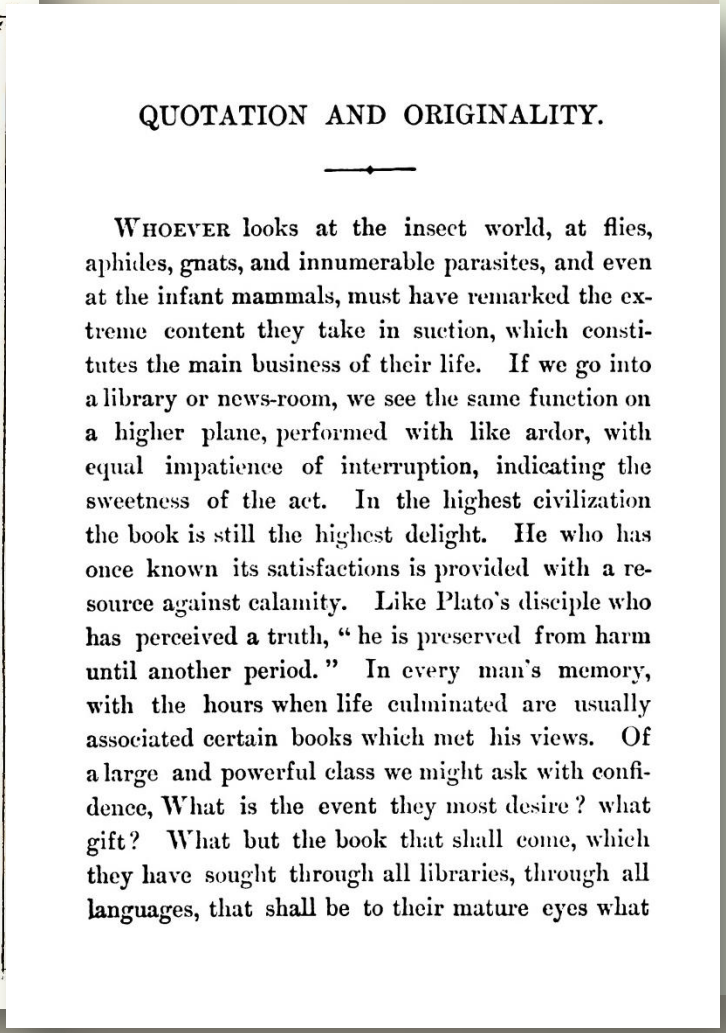
LETTERS AND SOCIAL AIMS.

BY

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood, & Co.
1876.

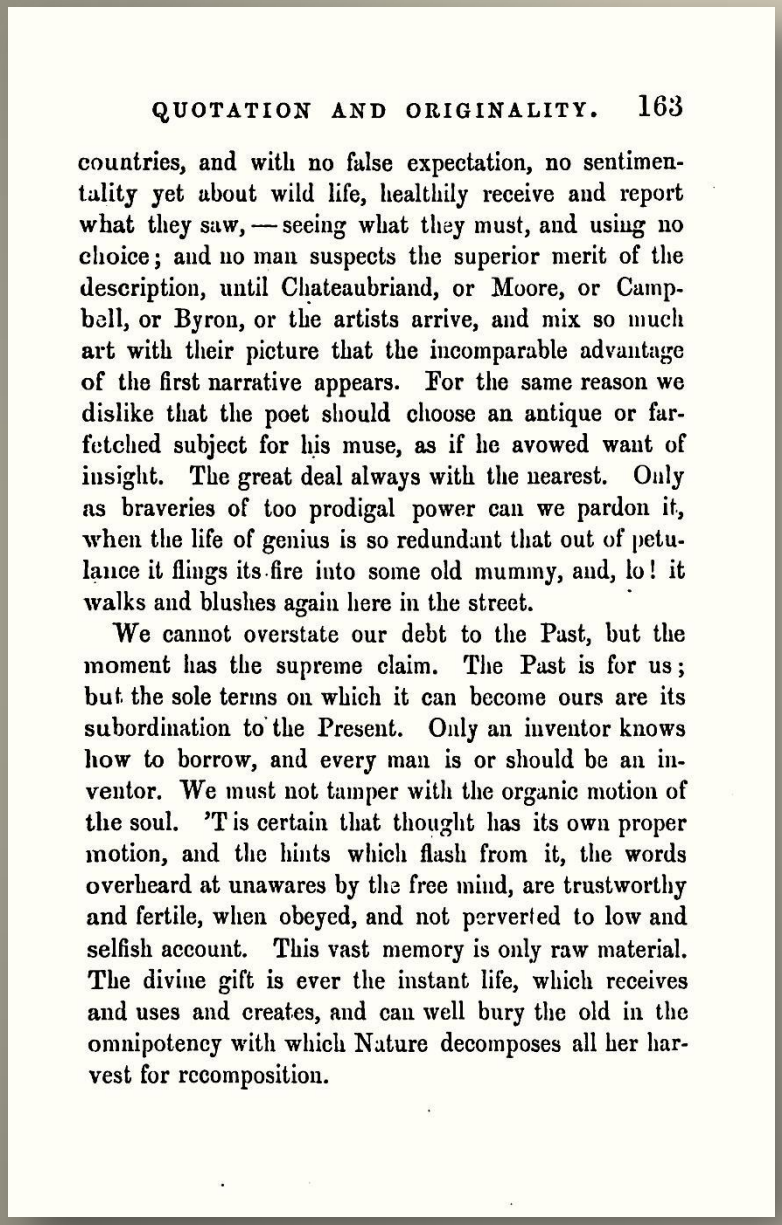


QUOTATION AND ORIGINALITY.

WHOEVER looks at the insect world, at flies, aphides, gnats, and innumerable parasites, and even at the infant mammals, must have remarked the extreme content they take in suction, which constitutes the main business of their life. If we go into a library or news-room, we see the same function on a higher plane, performed with like ardor, with equal impatience of interruption, indicating the sweetness of the act. In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity. Like Plato's disciple who has perceived a truth, "he is preserved from harm until another period." In every man's memory, with the hours when life culminated are usually associated certain books which met his views. Of a large and powerful class we might ask with confidence, What is the event they most desire? what gift? What but the book that shall come, which they have sought through all libraries, through all languages, that shall be to their mature eyes what

Emerson esprime la centralità della sfera dell'influenza, quella linea di continuità con il passato in cui si pone ciascun individuo che crea.

Immagini: R.W. Emerson, *Quotation and Originality*, in *Letters and Social Aims*, James R. Osgood & Co., Boston 1876, pp. 141-163. Digitized; original from University of Michigan.



QUOTATION AND ORIGINALITY. 163

countries, and with no false expectation, no sentimentality yet about wild life, healthily receive and report what they saw, — seeing what they must, and using no choice; and no man suspects the superior merit of the description, until Chateaubriand, or Moore, or Campbell, or Byron, or the artists arrive, and mix so much art with their picture that the incomparable advantage of the first narrative appears. For the same reason we dislike that the poet should choose an antique or far-fetched subject for his muse, as if he avowed want of insight. The great deal always with the nearest. Only as braveries of too prodigal power can we pardon it, when the life of genius is so redundant that out of petulance it flings its fire into some old mummy, and, lo! it walks and blushes again here in the street.

We cannot overstate our debt to the Past, but the moment has the supreme claim. The Past is for us; but the sole terms on which it can become ours are its subordination to the Present. Only an inventor knows how to borrow, and every man is or should be an inventor. We must not tamper with the organic motion of the soul. 'T is certain that thought has its own proper motion, and the hints which flash from it, the words overheard at unawares by the free mind, are trustworthy and fertile, when obeyed, and not perverted to low and selfish account. This vast memory is only raw material. The divine gift is ever the instant life, which receives and uses and creates, and can well bury the old in the omnipotency with which Nature decomposes all her harvest for recomposition.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

QUOTATION AND ORIGINALITY - 1859

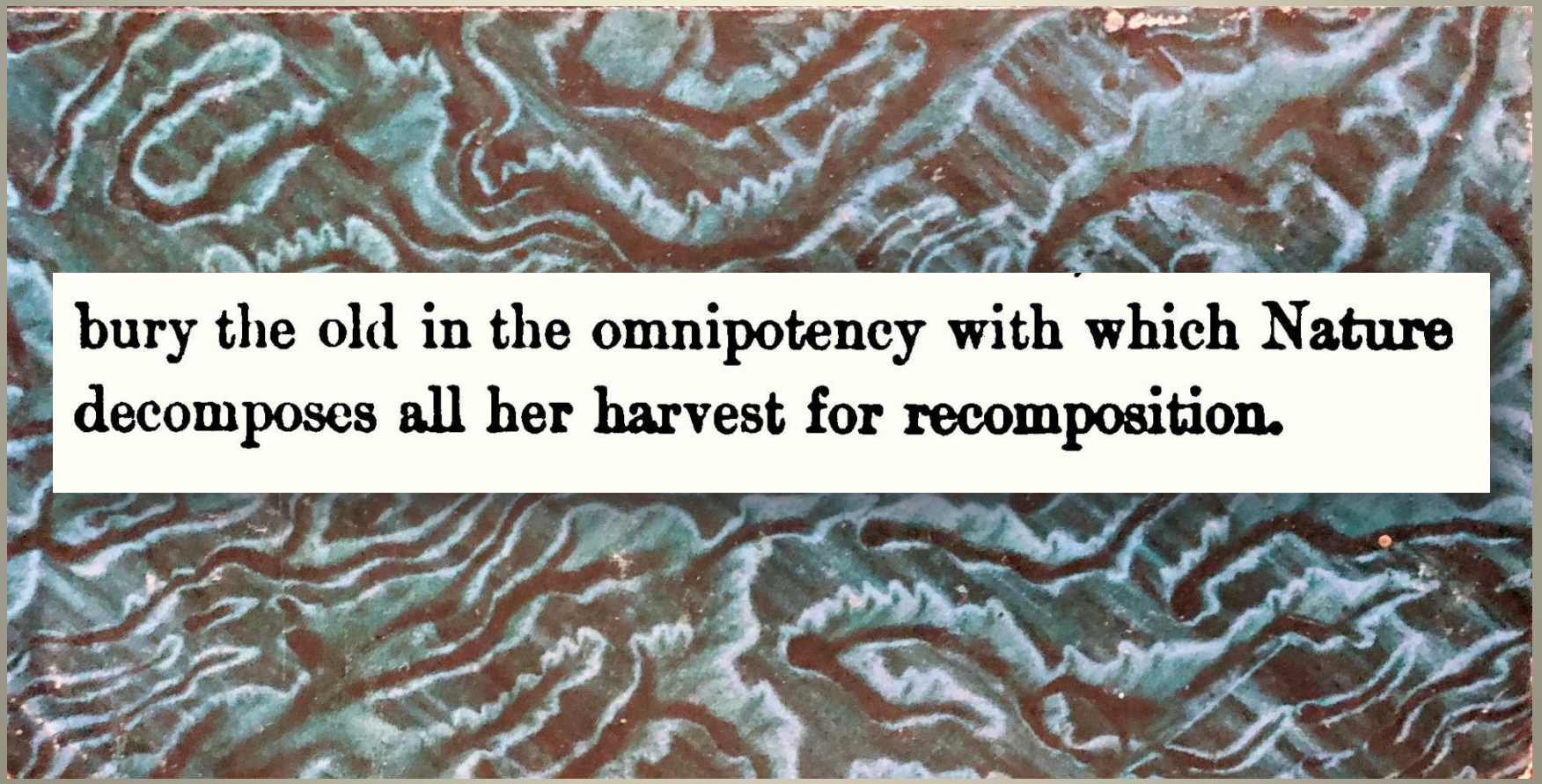
Pubbl. in *Letters an Social Aims*, 1876

Nel finale del saggio, il processo organico viene calato in una romantica visione ciclica di creazione continua, in cui agisce una incessante onda di transizione dal tema della Natura al tema altrettanto cruciale dell'Identità:

"Nature decomposes all her harvest for recomposition."

Immagine: R.W. Emerson, *Quotation and Originality*, in *Letters and Social Aims*, James R. Osgood & Co., Boston 1876, p. 163 (finale). Digitized; original from University of Michigan.

Il pensiero romantico statunitense rivela la propria ricerca di un equilibrio tra influenza del passato e libertà dell'innovazione, scoprendo ancora una volta nel rapporto con la Natura la chiave per definire tanto l'identità individuale quanto il progresso sociale.



Crediti e Ringraziamenti

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Grazie al Lyceum Club Internazionale di Firenze, alla Presidente Donatella Lippi e alle Presidenti e VicePresidenti delle Sezioni Musica e Letteratura, Eleonora Negri (con un ringraziamento speciale) e Irene Weber-Froboese, Annalisa Adami e Franca Fazzini;
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a Nicole Panizza;
a Stone Records, Boosey and Hawkes, Fostco Music Press, E.C. Schirmer;
a SguardiDanza-Centro per la Coreografia e le Arti Visive e alla Direttrice Artistica Antonella Bardi.

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