

I Become a Transparent Eyeball

from “**Nature**”

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky,
without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune,
I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration.
I am glad to the brink of fear.
In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough,
and at what period soever¹ of life is always a child.
In the woods is perpetual youth.
Within these plantations of God, a decorum² and sanctity reign,
a perennial festival is dressed,
and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years.
In the wood, we return to reason and faith.
There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -
no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair.
Standing on the bare ground,-
my head bathed by the blithe³ air and uplifted into infinite space,-
all mean egotism vanishes.

I become a transparent eyeball;
I am nothing;
I see all;
the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me;
I am part or parcel of God.

The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental:
to be brothers, to be acquaintances, master or servant,
is then a trifle and a disturbance.
I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty.
In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate⁴ than in streets or villages.
In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon,
man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

Glossary:

1 – soever: whatsoever

2 – decorum: dignity

3 – blithe: a happy, light-hearted feeling

4 – connate: congenial; agreeing in nature