

## Emerson Poems

### Concord Hymn

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF  
CONCORD MONUMENT, APRIL 19, 1836.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world,

The foe long since in silence slept,  
Alike the Conqueror silent sleeps,  
And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
We set to-day a votive stone,  
That memory may their deed redeem,  
When like our sires our sons are gone.

Spirit! who made those freemen dare  
To die, or leave their children free,  
Bid time and nature gently spare  
The shaft we raise to them and Thee.

### The Rhodora

*On being asked, whence is the flower.*

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,  
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,  
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,  
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.  
The purple petals fallen in the pool  
Made the black water with their beauty gay;  
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,  
And court the flower that cheapens his array.  
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why  
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,  
Tell them, dear, that, if eyes were made for seeing,  
Then beauty is its own excuse for Being;  
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!  
I never thought to ask; I never knew;  
But in my simple ignorance suppose  
The self-same power that brought me there,  
brought you.

### Brahma

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

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If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near,  
Shadow and sunlight are the same,  
The vanished gods to me appear,  
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;  
But thou, meek lover of the good!  
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

The Atlantic Monthly | November 1857

## Hamatreya

Minott, Lee, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint,  
Possessed the land, which rendered to their toil  
Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool, and wood.  
Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,  
Saying, "'Tis mine, my children's, and my name's.  
How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees;  
How graceful climb those shadows on my hill;  
I fancy those pure waters and the flags  
Know me as does my dog: we sympathize,  
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil."  
Where are those men? Asleep beneath their grounds,  
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.  
Earth laughs in flowers to see her boastful boys  
Earth proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;  
Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet  
Clear of the grave.—  
They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,  
And sighed for all that bounded their domain,  
"This suits me for a pasture; that's my park,  
We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,  
And misty lowland where to go for peat.  
The land is well, —lies fairly to the south.  
'Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and back,  
To find the sitfast acres where you left them."  
Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds  
Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.  
Hear what the Earth says:

### EARTH-SONG.

Mine and yours,  
Mine not yours.  
Earth endures,  
Stars abide,  
Shine down in the old sea,  
Old are the shores,  
But where are old men?  
I who have seen much,  
Such have I never seen.  
The lawyer's deed  
Ran sure  
In tail  
To them and to their heirs  
Who shall succeed  
Without fail  
For evermore.

Here is the land,  
Shaggy with wood,  
With its old valley,  
Mound, and flood.—  
But the heritors—  
Fled like the flood's foam;  
The lawyer, and the laws,  
And the kingdom,  
Clean swept herefrom.

They called me theirs,  
Who so controlled me;

Yet every one  
Wished to stay, and is gone.  
How am I theirs,  
If they cannot hold me,  
But I hold them?

When I heard the Earth-song,  
I was no longer brave;  
My avarice cooled  
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

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All above except "Brahma" from Emerson,  
Ralph Waldo. *Early Poems of Ralph Waldo  
Emerson*. New York, Boston, Thomas Y.  
Crowell & Company: 1899. [Introduction](#) by  
Nathan Haskell Dole.