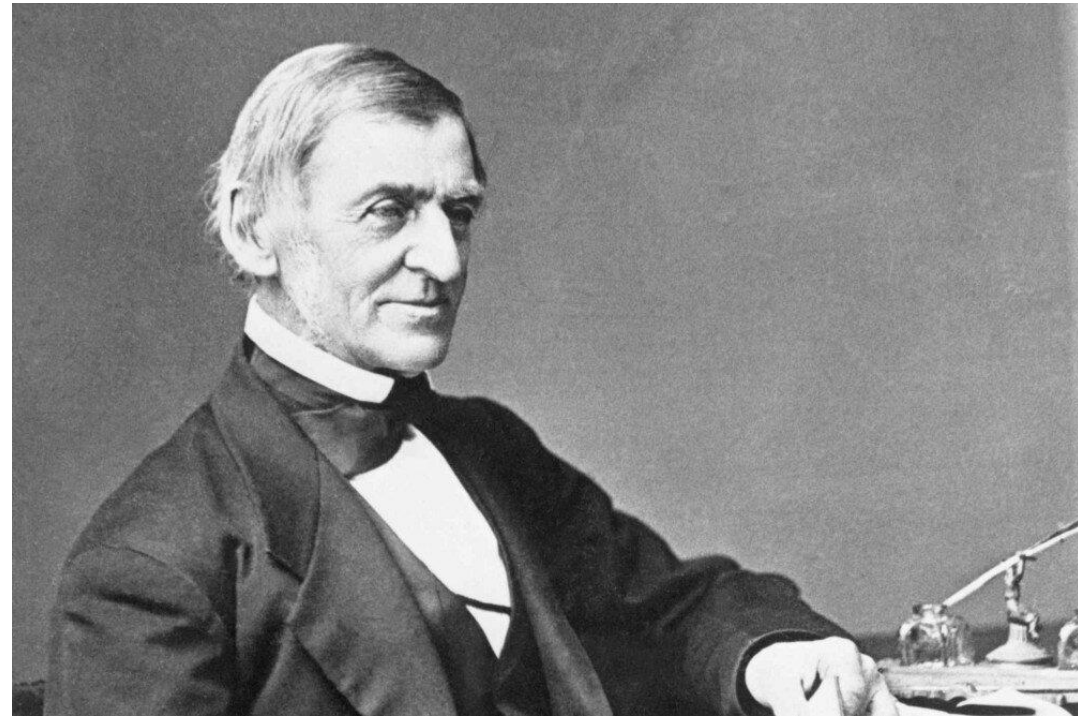


# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## Biography

- Born 1803 in Boston, Massachusetts
- 1811, dad dies of stomach cancer
- 1829, marries, but wife dies after two years of tuberculosis (age 20)
- With her death, he came to disagree with the church teachings
- 1833 toured Europe
- 1835, proposes by mail to Lydia, who agrees.
- 1850s. a strong abolitionist. He welcomed John Brown to his home
- 1867, health started to decline; memory problems by 1871. Possible stroke affecting ability to form sentences and at times could not recall his own name
- 1871, took the transcontinental railroad (barely two years after its completion) to California. Met Brigham Young when stopping in Salt Lake City, and also met John Muir
- 1872, home damaged in a fire. He travels to Europe as it rebuilds.
- 1879, ceased public appearances due to memory loss
- Died 1882 in Concord, Massachusetts or pneumonia



## Philosophy (major ideas)

He believed that all things are connected to God and, therefore, all things are divine.

Critics opined that he was removing the central nature of God.

The natural world is coursed through with the immanent flow of a deity – a “world soul” – both in and above the world

Spirituality cannot be achieved through reason and rationalism, but instead through self-reflection and intuition

Emerson asserts throughout Nature the primacy of spirit over matter. Nature's purpose is as a representation of the divine to promote human insight into the laws of the universe, and thus to bring man closer to God.

God does not have to reveal the truth, but that the truth could be intuitively experienced directly from nature