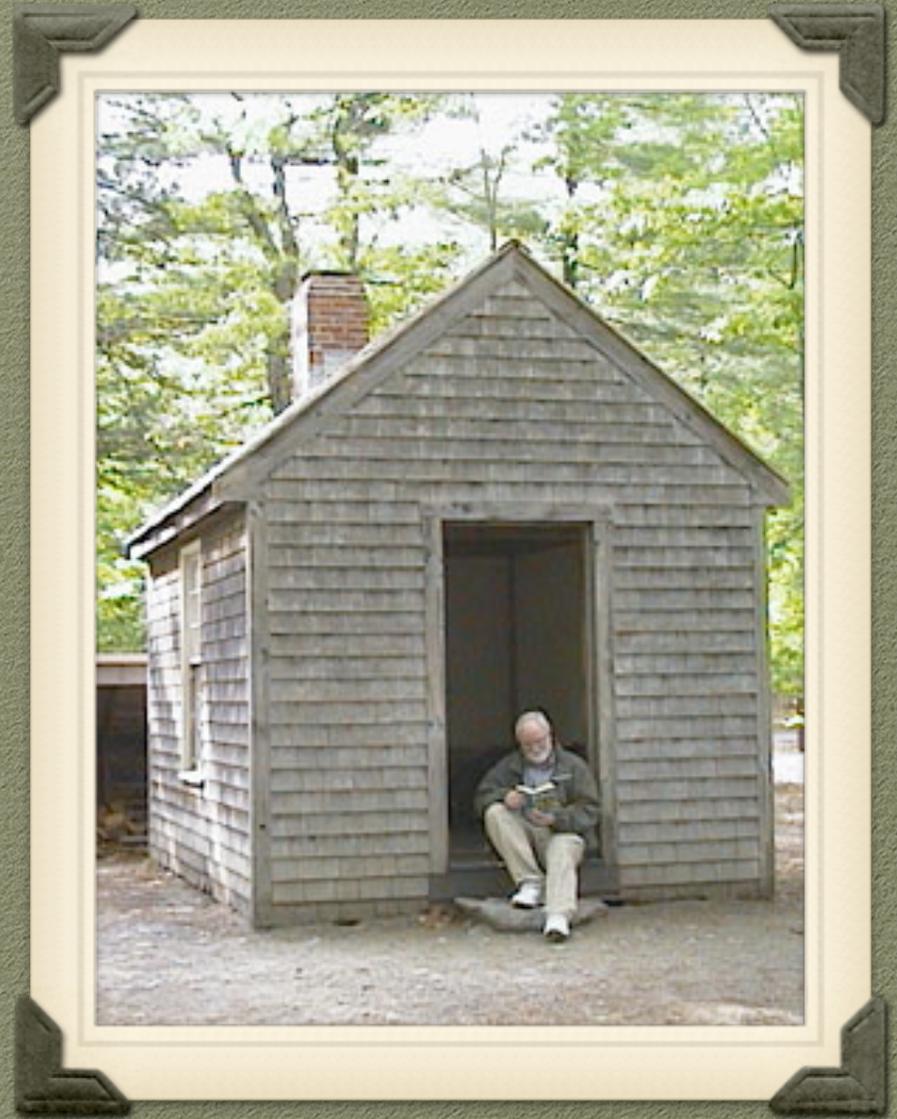


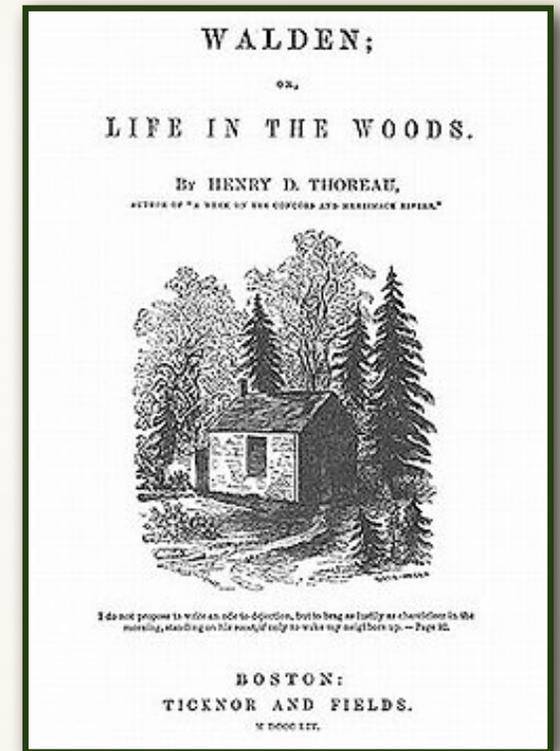
Henry David Thoreau

WALDEN



WALDEN

1. Thoreau & American Romanticism
2. Economy
3. Economy (continued)
4. Where I Lived, and What I lived For
5. Reading
6. Solitude
7. Visitors; The Village
8. Higher Laws
9. Brute Neighbors
10. Spring; Conclusion
11. Final Thoughts (Journals Due)



AGENDA

RW EMERSON & AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

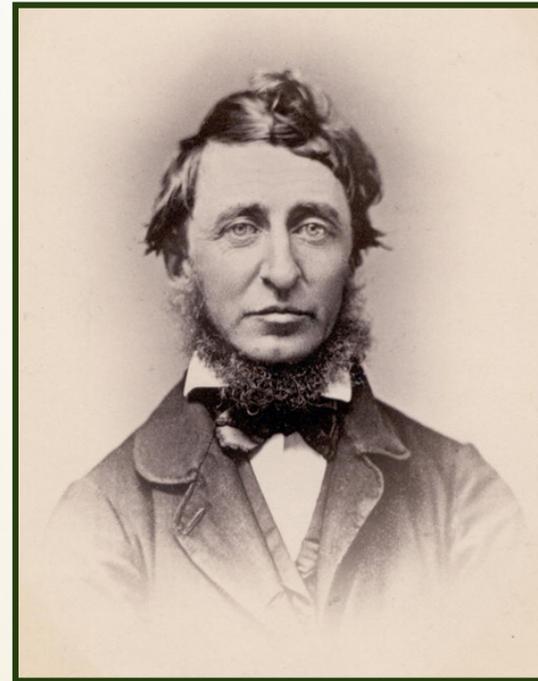
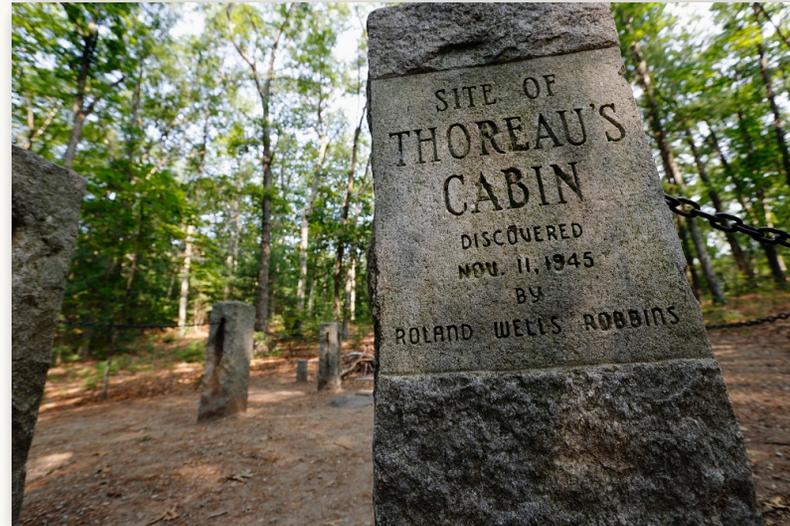


Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball--I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me--I am part or particle of God.

“THE TRANSCENDENTAL CLUB” CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

- the priority of individual conscience over law
- the doctrine of self-reliance and individualism
- the disregard of external authority & tradition
- the mandate to reform American society





THOREAU

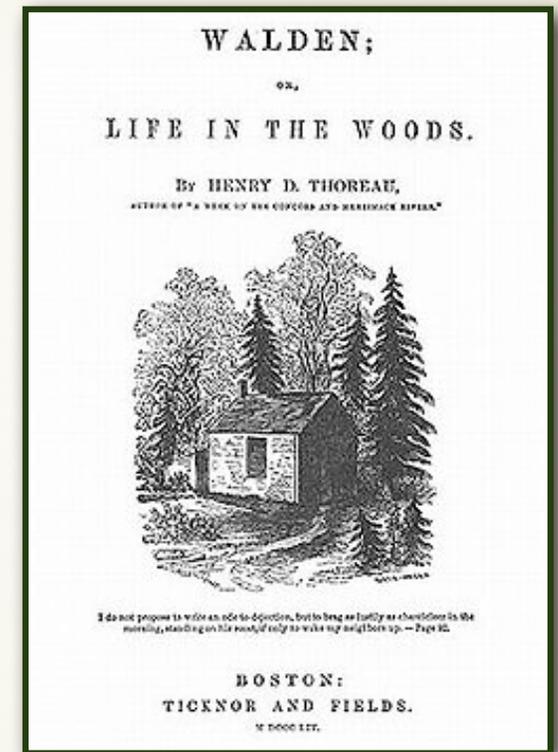
1817 -
1862

- 1817 - Born in Concord as David Henry Thoreau, July 12
- 1833 - Enrolls at Harvard College (graduating 19th of 44 students in 1837)
- 1836 - Reads Emerson's *Nature*
- 1837 - Hears Emerson's address, "The American Scholar"; reverses first and middle names
- 1837 - Teaches briefly in Concord Public School
- 1838 - Teaches in Concord with brother John (until 1841)
- 1839 - Excursion with John on Concord & Merrimack Rivers; first lecture at the Concord Lyceum
- 1840 - Poems and essays published in *The Dial*
- 1841 - Proposes marriage to 17 year-old Ellen Sewall and is rejected; moves in with Emersons
- 1842 - John cuts himself with razor on January 1, dies from lockjaw ten days later
- 1843 - Lives on Staten Island; tutors William Emerson's children
- 1844 - Works in family pencil factory; accidentally sets fire to Walden woods, burns down 300 acres
- 1845 - Moves to Walden Pond on July 4 (on Emerson's land)
- 1846 - Arrested and jailed for non-payment of poll tax
- 1847 - Leaves Walden Pond & moves back in Emerson's home while RWE lectures in England
- 1848 - Delivers "Resistance to Civil Government"
- 1849 - *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* is published
- 1854 - *Walden* is published
- 1860 - Catches cold while counting tree rings; gets bronchitis and ultimately tuberculosis
- 1862 - Dies in Concord, May 6, age 45

WALDEN



- Instead of an essay test or formal paper, your assessment for this unit will be in the form of a reflective journal.
- The journal will consist of 20 entries, each one being a quotation from *Walden*, with a brief statement to place it in context, followed by your reflection or personal application.
- You can write more than 20, and you should have at least one entry per chapter. Your journal should be handwritten, and should be as personalized as possible.
- Your reflections should be a minimum of a few *substantive* paragraphs; *think* before you write. The idea is to think like Thoreau did, philosophically or personally, in the context of your life and our times.
- Stay current in your reading/journaling; you will be expected to discuss the readings in class and there will inevitably be quizzes. Don't try to do this whole thing at the last minute!
- The journal will include one additional entry: a reflection chronicling what you learned from taking "The Thoreau Challenge." (see next screen)
- This is your formal assessment for this unit, but it is also something to keep. Be creative; make it meaningful.



JOURNAL

- Go without your cell phone for a week or more.
- Abstain from using social media for at least seven days (no looking!)
- Make a significant change in your diet that you may have wanted to do for some time.
- Deliberately practice solitude for an extended period (hours), several times...in your room, taking walks, etc. *Think deliberately* about your life.
- Take a detailed inventory of your stuff. How much do you really need? Give some stuff away. Resolve to live simpler. How will you keep your resolution?
- Embark on an ecological or environmental project.
- Take responsibility for your own care and feeding for at least one week...do your own cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. Ask nothing of anyone. Reflect: *How independent (self-reliant) am I, really?*
- “Go Thoreau” in any other way your reading leads you...and write honestly about it.

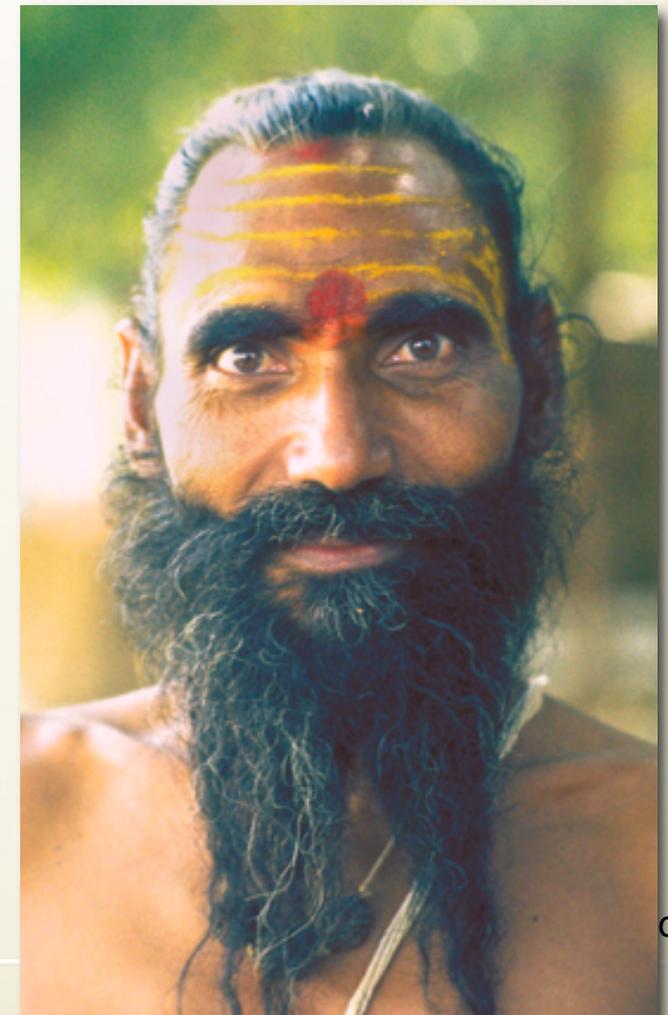
“Simplify, Simplify.”



THE THOREAU CHALLENGE

- What is Thoreau's purpose in going to the woods?
- What criticisms does Thoreau have of his fellow townsfolk in Concord? Are these criticisms justifiable, or is Thoreau just a wacko? Do these ideas apply to people in our society today?
- Identify Transcendentalist ideas in this chapter.
- How does Thoreau employ slave imagery?
- What is Thoreau's attitude toward education? Do you see any contradictions in his argument?
- What do you think of Thoreau's attitude towards older people? What has been your personal experience with this?
- What seems to be the central focus of this chapter?

ECONOMY



- What is Thoreau's definition of wealth?
- What is the point of comparing the farmer to the poet?
- What meanings does Thoreau assign to the concepts of morning and wakefulness?
- Why did Thoreau go to the woods?
- Note Thoreau's use of the word "sublime."
- Do you find Thoreau's ideas about simplicity extreme? What are the implications of progress in his mind?
- Who are the "sleepers"?
- What is Thoreau's opinion of the news? Do you agree?



WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

- What is “serious reading” as opposed to “easy reading”?
- What is Thoreau’s opinion on the classics? On languages? On novels? Where do you stand on these topics?
- Discuss the state of literacy in Thoreau’s day as he describes it. What’s changed?
- Are Thoreau’s ideas about the Lyceum valid today?
- What does Thoreau mean by desiring a “broad margin” to his life?
- What did the train represent to Thoreau? Was he speaking prophetically?
- Catalogue the various sounds of Walden and note their significance.



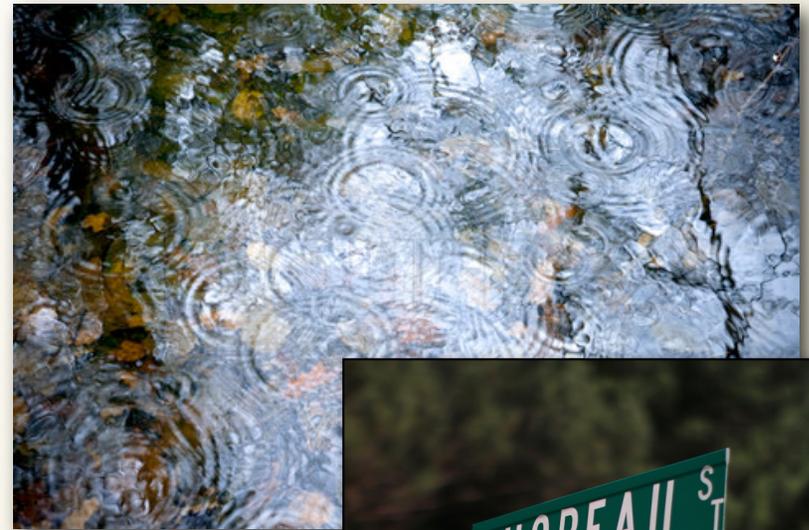
Concord Free Library

Screech Owl



READING; SOUNDS

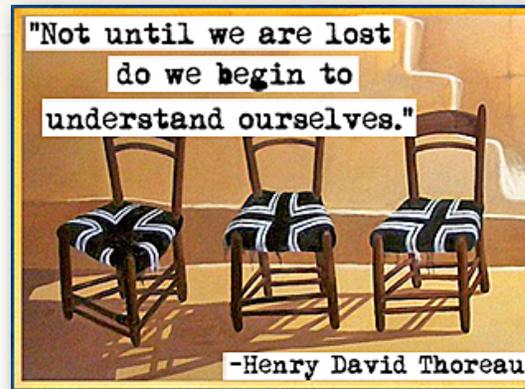
- What does Thoreau mean by “my serenity is rippled but not ruffled”? How do you define serenity?
- Why do you think Thoreau mentions the missed visitors?
- What does the concept of darkness seem to mean in this chapter?
- Thoreau says he doesn’t get lonely, and he gives several reasons. Does this work for you?
- What does Thoreau mean by saying that society is “too cheap”? Do you agree?
- For Thoreau, what is the key to contentment? How would most people today react to Thoreau’s ideas about solitude?



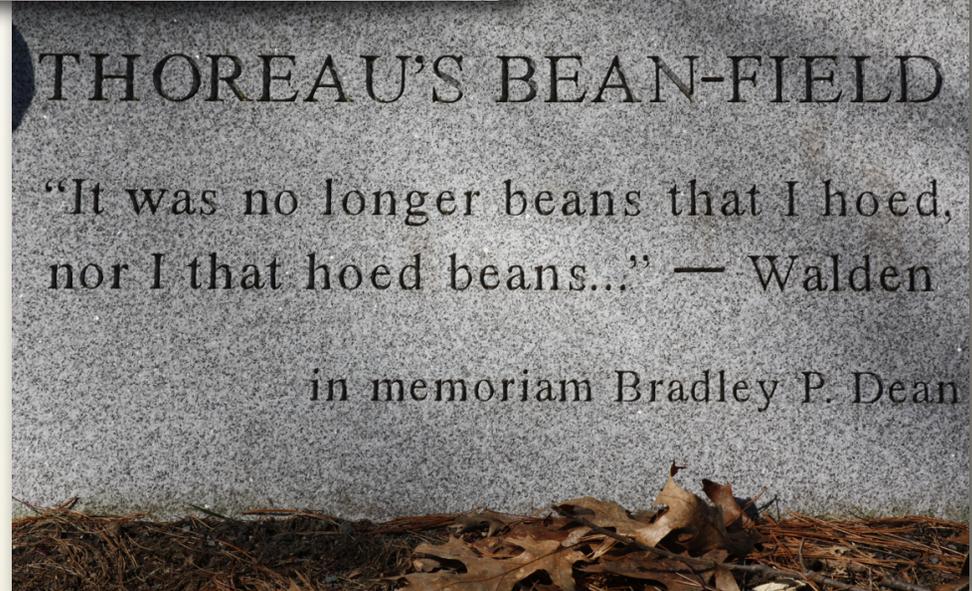
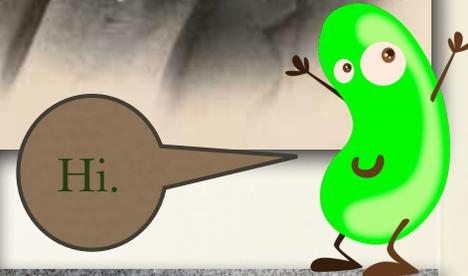
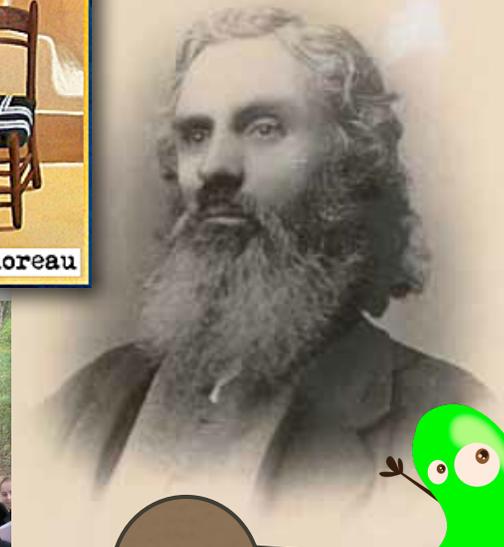
SOLITUDE

- How does the idea of the three chairs work?
- What are Thoreau's views on hospitality?
- What points are made about the "animal man" and "spiritual man" in the discussion about Alek Therien?
- What types of visitors come to the cabin? What does Thoreau conclude about these visits?
- Explore the moral lessons of Thoreau's experience with beans.

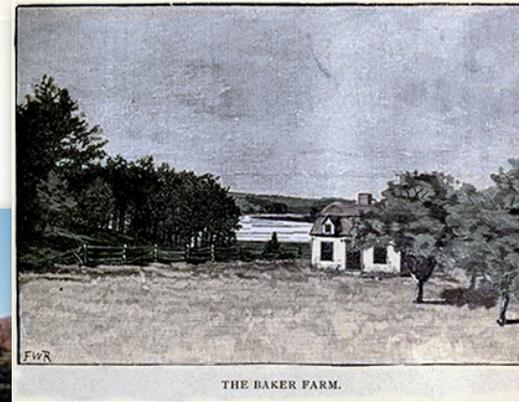
VISITORS; THE BEAN FIELD



Loring Moody



- Describe the overall impact of Thoreau's visits to town. What goes through his mind? What do the townsfolk think of him?
- What occupies the "worthies"?
- What does Thoreau learn from getting lost in the dark?
- What's up with Thoreau's arrest?
- Explain what Thoreau learns about himself from studying the ponds.
- How do you interpret the religious imagery in "Baker Farm"?
- What lessons emerge from the parable of John Field?

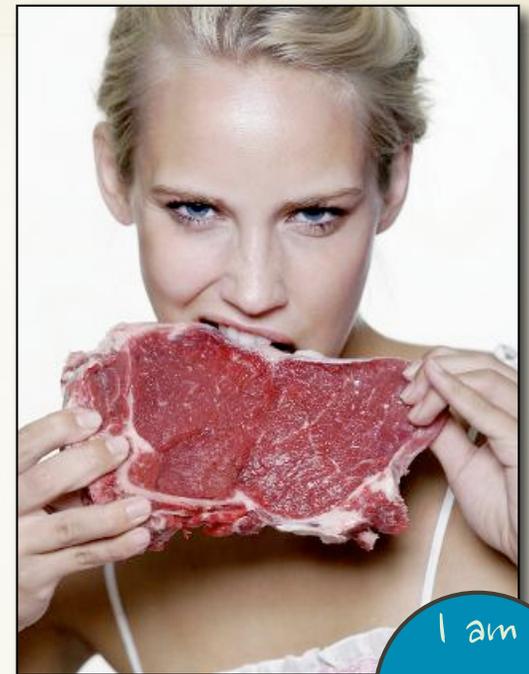


A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is Earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.



THE VILLAGE; THE PONDS; BAKER FARM

- How would you define Thoreau's concept of "wildness"?
- What is Thoreau's argument about teaching boys to hunt? Do you agree?
- What are Thoreau's principal objections to "animal food"?
- What is Thoreau suggesting by his analogy of man (and whole nations!) in the larva state?
- Do you agree with Thoreau's statement about coffee? (*What about tea?*)
- What does Thoreau's statement, "An unclean person is universally a slothful one..." have to do with the larger argument in this chapter?
- What's the point of the story about John Farmer?

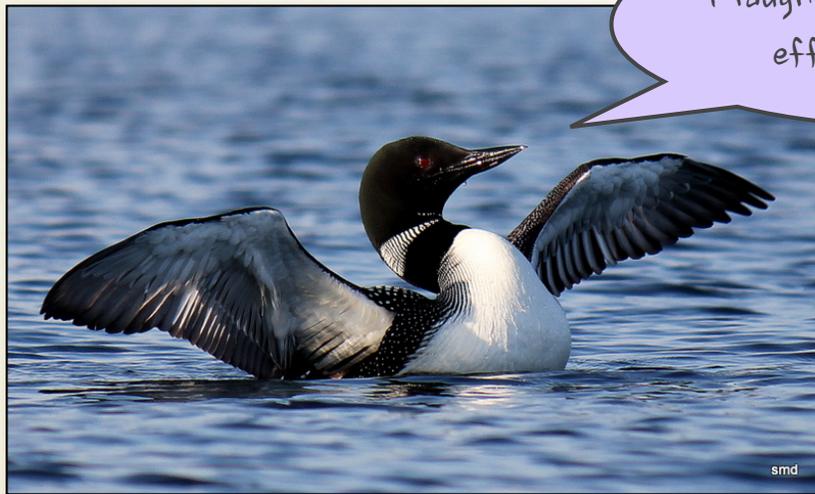
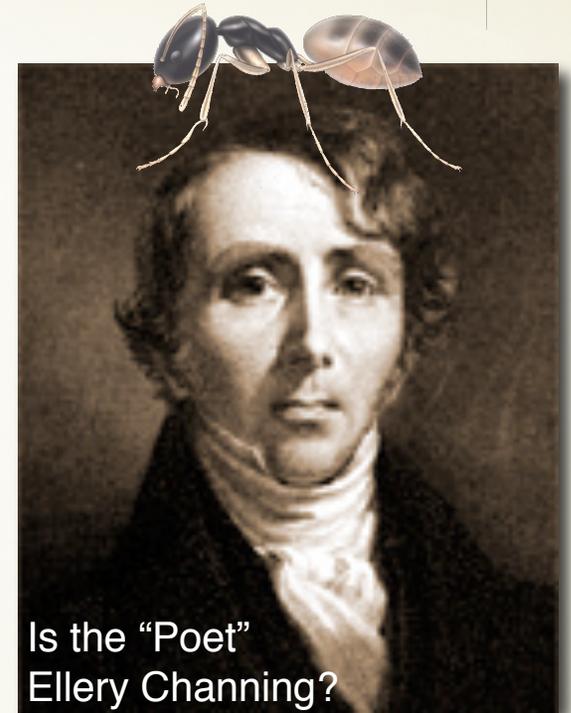


I am
NOT good
raw.



HIGHER LAWS

- What is the point of the dialogue between “hermit” and “poet”? Hint: might this have something to do with “Higher Laws”?
- Who are the various “brute neighbors”? Are there lessons to be learned in observing any of them?
- Analyze the battle of the ants in detail. Can you make applications or inferences from this?
- What does Thoreau learn from the loon?



I laugh in derision at your efforts, Thoreau!



BRUTE NEIGHBORS

He was indeed a silly loon.



The Barred Owl (*strix varia*)

- Do you sense a change in Thoreau as he prepares for winter? How can you tell?
- Interpret Thoreau's "dream house."
- What sort of characters formerly lived in the area? What inferences can be made from this?
- Among Thoreau's winter visitors were Ellery Channing, Bronson Alcott, and RW Emerson. Has Thoreau changed his views on the importance of solitude?

A wise old owl sat in an oak;
the more he saw the less he spoke;
the less he spoke the more he heard:
why can't we all be like that bird?

HOUSE WARMING / FORMER INHABITANTS; & WINTER VISITORS





- How do the sounds of winter seem to differ from those of summer? What might this mean?
- Do you see a larger meaning in Thoreau's discussion of the fox and the hounds?
- How do Thoreau's observations of the rabbit compare to those he makes of other winter animals?
- In what ways does the pond in winter relate to the point of Thoreau's experiment?



Ha! The pond farted! (Or, did I just eat too much corn?)

WINTER ANIMALS; THE POND IN WINTER

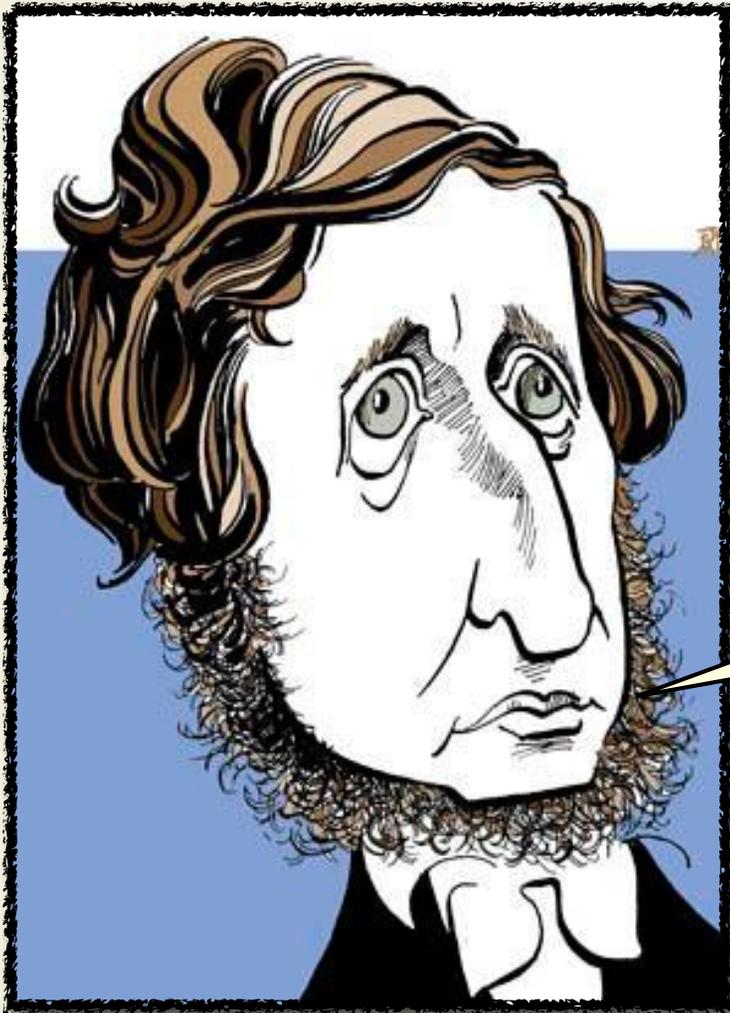




- “Walden was dead and is alive again.” Discuss all the possible implications of this statement.
- How does the style and content of Thoreau’s conclusion compare to that of the opening chapter?



SPRING; CONCLUSION



ONE OF THE ATTRACTIONS OF COMING TO THE WOODS TO LIVE WAS THAT I SHOULD HAVE THE LEISURE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SPRING COME IN—AND TWEET ABOUT IT.

omg is this really happening?



FINAL THOUGHTS ON WALDEN:

Was Thoreau's "Experiment" a success?