

# LE PRINTEMPS DE LA TRADUCTION 2015

HÔTEL DE MASSA - SAMEDI 13 JUIN 2015

## ATELIER DE TRADUCTION D'ANGLAIS

10H00 · 12H00

Animé par Brice Matthieussent, autour du *Journal* de Henry David Thoreau (Éditions Le Mot et le Reste).

1 Lambden discusses the artistry of this chapter. Stein (1972) analyzes this chapter from the standpoint of yoga.

2 Notice how the opening paragraph carries over the idea from the preceding chapter. This was one of the many devices T used to unify the seemingly unrelated essays of the book. Note also that the sounds described in the chapter follow a chronological order starting with morning, going on through afternoon, evening, night, and ending up with morning once more. Just as the whole book epitomizes the year, so this chapter epitomizes the day, and both end on the theme of renewal — the book on the renewal of spring, and the chapter on the renewal of dawn.

3 Although some suggest this refers to a camera shutter, mechanical shutters did not come into use until after the first publication of W. T is more likely referring to window shutters, which were used in New England to keep the sun off parlor rugs.

4 Seer: a favorite term among transcendentalists for a person with extraordinary perceptions.

5 This paragraph is considered by many to be one of the outstanding expressions of the mystical experience in literature. For an analysis of T's use of sound and silence in achieving the mystical experience, see Paul (1949).

6 T took his daily bath in the cove nearest his cabin.

7 The road from Concord to Lincoln was then the closest highway to T's cabin. Route 2, the road just north of the pond, was not constructed until well into the twentieth century.

8 Corn is among the fastest growing of the common garden vegetables.

## SOUNDS

- 1
- 2 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
- 3 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,
- 4 or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity.
- 5 I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon
- 6 on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of
- 7 time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and
- 8 they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life,

but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest. My days were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, <sup>1</sup> nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock; for I lived like the Puri Indians, of whom it <sup>2</sup> is said that 'for yesterday, today, and tomorrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday, forward for tomorrow, and overhead for the passing day.' This was sheer idleness to my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting. A man must find his occasions in <sup>3</sup> himself, it is true. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove his indolence.

I had this advantage, at least, in my mode of life, over those who were obliged to look abroad for amusement, to society and the theatre, that my life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel. It was a drama of many scenes and without an end. If we were always, indeed, getting our living, and regulating our lives according to the last and best mode we had learned, we should never be troubled with ennui. Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour. Housework was a pleasant pastime. When my floor was dirty, I rose early, and, setting all my furniture out of doors on the grass, bed and bedstead

<sup>1</sup> The days of our week are named after heathen deities — Thor, Woden, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Ida Pfeiffer, *A Lady's Voyage Round the World* (New York, 1852, 36). The Puri Indians are natives of eastern Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5:27).