

# Give All to Love

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

Give all to love;  
Obey thy heart;  
Friends, kindred, days,  
Estate, good-fame,  
Plans, credit and the Muse,—  
Nothing refuse.

'T is a brave master;  
Let it have scope:  
Follow it utterly,  
Hope beyond hope:  
High and more high  
It dives into noon,  
With wing unspent,  
Untold intent:  
But it is a god,  
Knows its own path  
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;  
It requireth courage stout.  
Souls above doubt,  
Valor unbending,  
It will reward,—  
They shall return  
More than they were,  
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;  
Yet, hear me, yet,  
One word more thy heart behoved,  
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—  
Keep thee to-day,  
To-morrow, forever,  
Free as an Arab  
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;  
But when the surprise,  
First vague shadow of surmise  
Flits across her bosom young,  
Of a joy apart from thee,  
Free be she, fancy-free;  
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,  
Nor the palest rose she flung  
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,

As a self of purer clay,  
Though her parting dims the day,  
Stealing grace from all alive;  
Heartily know,  
When half-gods go,  
The gods arrive.



Born in Boston, Ralph Waldo Emerson followed in his father's footsteps when he became a Unitarian minister. However, after his young wife died of tuberculosis in 1831, he found his faith shaken. The next year he traveled Europe where he formed the basis of his Transcendentalist philosophy — the intuitive belief in the oneness of the world rather than in scientific rationalism or formal religion. After returning to New England, Emerson published "Nature," "Self-Reliance," and "Experience," the essays that established him as one of the most important thinkers in America.

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