

Ralph Waldo Emerson



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.