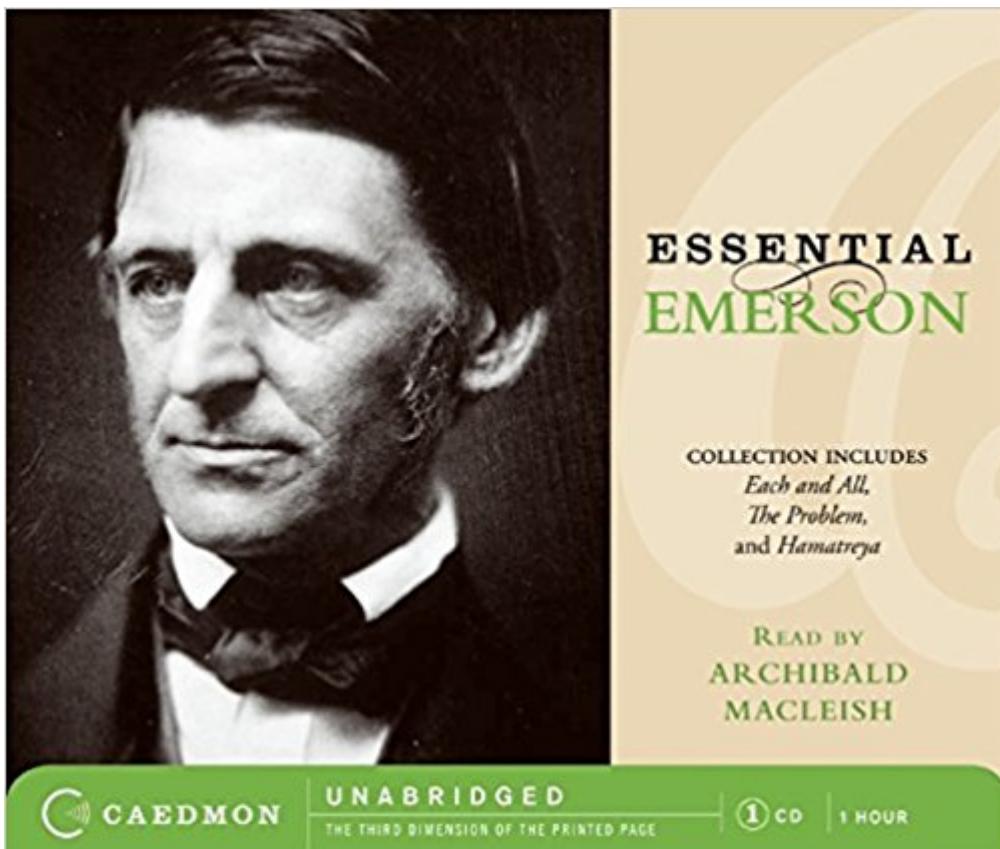


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Essential Emerson CD



Synopsis

Although Emerson's poetry reveals that he regarded life as a tragedy, he also had a belief in humanity, a pride in human life which gave America a brief revival of the nobility of spirit in which it was founded. On this CD, Archibald MacLeish, a distinguished poet himself, reads many of Emerson's best-known works.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1803. A self-proclaimed "Naturalist," Emerson founded a distinctly American philosophy emphasizing optimism, individuality, and mysticism. In the 1840's, his essays, speeches, and poetry defined him as a central character in the Transcendental movement, and ultimately shaped him into one of the most influential literary figures of the nineteenth century. He died of pneumonia in 1882 in Concord, Massachusetts. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was an essayist, poet, philosopher, and anti-slavery activist. Among his other notable books are *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and *Civil Disobedience*. Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982), was a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author of such eminent works as *Conquistador* and *J.B.*

This reissue of a Caedmon recording of Emerson's poems, read by poet Archibald MacLeish, is a rare treasure. An interesting predecessor to Whitman's *LEAVES OF GRASS*, it may also make an enlightening companion to Thoreau's *WALDEN*, as Emerson owned acreage at Walden Pond, and its natural setting may have inspired some of his verse. The title of this production is somewhat

misleading; Emerson was known as much for his essays as his poetry, and arguably the former are more crucial to understanding his contribution to American letters. Listeners should be aware that the dynamic range of this analog recording is limited. Also, MacLeish brings erudition but little resonance to his reading, so be prepared to turn up the volume. J.L.B. © AudioFile 2009, Portland, Maine

I expected a collection of Emerson's essays, but there are none on this disc--just his poetry. The poetry is interesting and the reader's voice and performance are good.

I knew Emerson was a great poet, but I didn't know he was this good. I'm really blown away.

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