

# RUFFED GROUSE *Bonasa Umbellus*

CREDIT



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WALDEN: As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by twos and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white-pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fishhawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge, conveying travellers from Boston to the country.... The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous country traders from the other side. As they come under one horizon, they shout their warning to get off the track to the other, heard sometimes though the circles of two towns.

RUFFED GROUSE

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**WALDEN:** When the ground was not yet quite covered, and again near the end of winter, when the snow was melted on my south hill-side and about my woodpile, the partridges came out of the woods morning and evening to feed there. Whichever side you walk in the woods the partridge bursts away on whirring wings, jarring the snow from the dry leaves and twigs on high, which comes sifting down in the sunbeams like golden dust; for this brave bird is not to be scared by winter. It is frequently covered up by drifts, and, it is said, "sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two." I used to start them in the open land also, where they had come out of the woods at sunset to "bud" the wild apple-trees. They will come regularly every evening to particular trees, where the distant orchards next the woods suffer thus not a little. I am glad that the partridge gets fed, at any rate. It is Nature's own bird which lives on buds and diet-drink.



RUFFED GROUSE



Greater Prairie-Chicken **Tympanuchus cupido cupido** (~~Pinnated-Grouse~~ or ~~Heath-Cock~~)

**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (~~Partridge~~)



Spruce Grouse **Dendragapus canadensis** (~~Black-Grouse~~)



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

WALDEN: Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

THE INNER LIGHT

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I'm sorry, but I need to issue a warning: this PDF may throw you for a loop!

You may be expecting this to be merely about a species of bird (the ruffed grouse) as it is featured in the Journal and other writings of Henry David Thoreau and only about that species. If you are expecting, for instance, a mere chronological extraction of Thoreau's comments about this species, "birder" style, if you are expecting the sort of appreciation than any mere "bird-book" like that of Helen Gere Cruickshank would deliver you, then you are going to wind up simply baffled – for this listing although entirely chronological includes far more than such easy stuff. If that's what you're after, please go away now. For the topic of the drumming of the male ruffed grouse will need to be allowed grow in your mind, until it encompasses as well Thoreau's talk about "stepping to the beat of" a different drummer, because A.) Thoreau made use of God's creatures as stand-ins for his thoughts, and because B.) Thoreau as a nonspeciesist awarded equivalent recognition to all of us rather than assigning some special elevated station in the universe to the ones of us who are human beings.

When the grouse drummed it was for Henry as if nature spoke – this sound activated both inward nature and outward nature. If you're not ready to go there you shouldn't read this.

Then, having stretched your mind and added, to the drumming woodland bird, the different or distant drummer, sorry, gentle reader, I won't be done with you yet – because I will then ask you to proceed onward to consider in addition not only the sound we can hear with our ears (drumming) but also the light we can see with our eyes, because of C.) Thoreau's deployment of synesthesia, in which he considers that his soul has a green color – in his creation of metaphors he freely alternates between visions and auditions. The claim will eventually be made here, that not only is Thoreau's "distant drummer" to be understood to be a woodland bird (rather than some human drummer-boy in military formation), but also, his "distant drummer" is to be understood as an exact aural match with Quakerly talk you may have heard about our need to "attend to the light," a light that shines within.

That is, where Quakers discourse in visual terms of the primary importance of the light within, and where Thoreau discourses in aural terms of stepping to the beat of a different drummer, I will hold it to be indeed accurate to describe these two quite different different metaphors as, guess what, offering precisely the identical thought!

Let the mind-stretching begin.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1620

The period from initial white settlement of the [ruffed grouse](#)'s habitat until the middle of the 19th Century would be the period in the existence of this bird in which it would be a creature of the forest edges, benefiting from opening of clearings and settlements in the forest and making itself a pest in gardens and orchards (then heavy market hunting would set in and populations would decidedly decline).



Matchlock muskets had been almost useless for hunting because blowing the match tended to frighten the game, so the white people had been relying on crossbows. At about this point the “snaphaunce” muskets began to be used to hunt birds (larger game was becoming scarce due to deforestation). While German marksmen had begun to attempt to shoot birds in flight as early as 1560, and Japanese hunters were doing this as early as 1612, aerial shooting would not be mentioned in English sporting literature until 1686 (the rule about “not shooting a sitting duck” was not yet invented; by the 1710s “sporting” aerial shooting would be all the rage in France, and during the 1720s it would become popular in Britain as well).



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

AN ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW-ENGLAND

*From the year of the World*

*to the year of Christ 1673.*

**The *Partridge* is larger than ours, white flesht, but very dry they are indeed a sort of *Partridges* called *Grooses*.**

*BY John Josselyn Gent.*

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1634

April: William Wood's NEW ENGLANDS PROSPECT. A TRUE, LIVELY, AND EXPERIMENTALL DESCRIPTION OF THAT PART OF AMERICA, COMMONLY CALLED NEW ENGLAND: DISCOVERING THE STATE OF THAT COUNTRIE, BOTH AS IT STANDS TO OUR NEW-COME ENGLISH PLANTERS; AND TO THE OLD NATIVE INHABITANTS. LAYING DOWNE THAT WHICH MAY BOTH ENRICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIND-TRAVELLING READER, OR BENEFIT THE FUTURE-VOYAGER,<sup>1</sup> published in this year in London by John Dawson, described Boston's bay: "The chiefe Ilands which keepe out the Winde and the Sea from disturbing the Harbours, are first Deare Iland, which lies within a flight-shot of Pullin-point. This Iland is so called, because of the Deare which often swimme thither from the Maine, where they are chased by the Woolves: Some have killed sixteen Deare in a day upon this Iland." Deer Island, Long Island, and Hog Island next to Noddle Island in the upper Boston Harbor were leased to the town for 21 years at a rent of £3 per year.<sup>2</sup> This NEW ENGLANDS PROSPECT featured a woodcut illustration entitled "The South part of New-England, as it is Planted this yeare, 1634" prepared by Thomas Cotes for John Bellamie. Said map would be reissued in conjunction with another early map, as a lithograph, in 1846 in Boston by William B. Fowle. This map, and the other one, a 1677 map by John Foster (1648-1681), were the 1st to show both the Algonquian name, "Musketaquid," and the English name, "Concord," for the 1st

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1. A text [Henry Thoreau](#) would be frequently citing, involving 17th-Century inventories of American resources. (I have "CNN-colored" the map from William Wood's NEW-ENGLAND'S PROSPECT of "The South part of New-England, as it is Planted this yeare, 1634," prepared by Thomas Cotes for John Bellamie.)

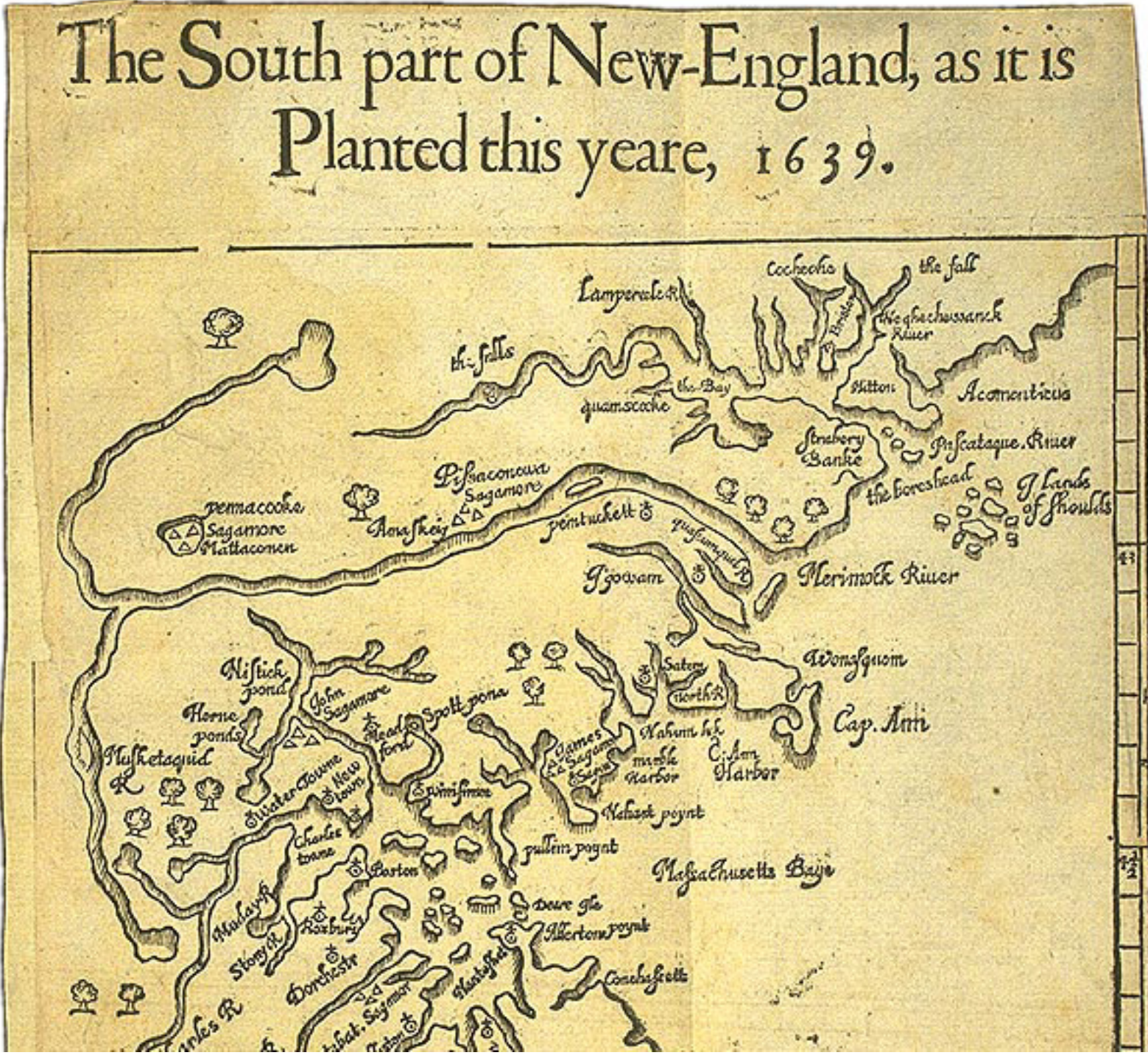
2. Note well that this Hog Island next to Noddle Island is not the Hog Island we know today as Spinnaker Island off the Hull peninsula to the southeast of Boston, nor is it the island that Thoreau referred to in his journal as "Hog Island" for he was speaking of the Isles of Shoals farther out on the waters, and of the one of those sea islands now known as Smuttynose Island on account of a dark mark on the side of the hill. There are three "Hog Island" islands which you will need to keep straight, the big one next to Noddle Island now under East Boston, the one now known as Spinnaker containing a condo community and connected by causeway to Point Allerton, and the Isles of Shoals one now known as Smuttynose.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

inland settlement. Copies of the original maps are at the Boston Public Library and at the Boston Athenaeum.





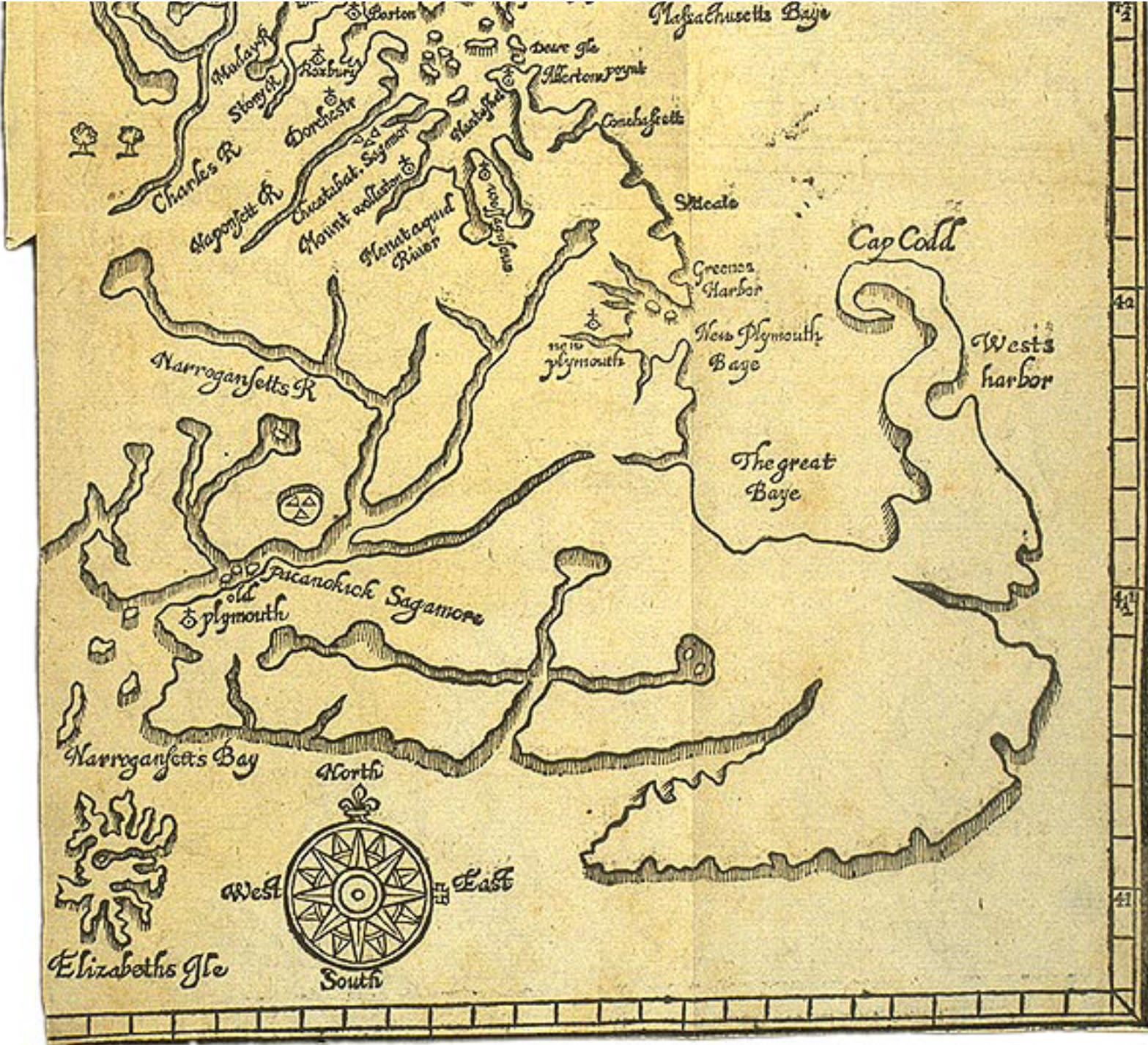
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WHAT?

INDEX

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



ALPHABETICAL BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

William Wood reported to the bloody English reading public –people who of course would be fascinated by this sort of thing, consider nothing so fine as to go out and blow away some defenseless innocent thing before their breakfast– that “Heathcockes [Heath Hen █ *Tympanuchus cupido cupido*] and Partridges [[Ruffed Grouse](#) *Bonasa umbellus*] be common: he that is husband, and will be stirring betime, may kill half dozen in a morning.”



On this woodcut illustration, “Deare Is.” off “*pullim poynt*” was the only island in the harbor to have a name attached to it:



At 214 acres Long Island is the largest, and at 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles the longest, of the harbor islands. Deer Island, the 2d-largest in the inner harbor, is nearly a mile long and 210 acres in extent. It, despite being only second in size, has become the island with –without any possibility of doubt or equivocation– the most disgusting history.

“The South part of New-England, as it is Planted this year, 1639,” used as the frontispiece in William Wood’s NEW ENGLANDS PROSPECT, was explained on pages 31-38:

The chiefe Ilands which keepe out the winde and the sea from disturbing the Harbours, are first Deare lland [Deer Island], which lies within a flight-shot of Pullin-point. This Iland is so called, because of the Deare which often swimme thither from





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the Maine, when they are chased by the Woolves. Some have killed sixteene Deere in a day upon this Iland. The opposite shore is called Pullin-point, because that is the usuall Channell. Boats use to passe thorow into the Bay; and the Tyde being very strong, they are constrained to goe a shore, and hale their Boates by the seasing, or roades, whereupon it was called Pullin-point. The next Iland of note is Long Island, so called from his longitude. Divers other Ilands be within these: viz. Nodles Ile, Round Ile, the Governours Garden, where is planted an Orchard and a Vine-yard, with many other conveniences; and Slate-Iland, Glasse-Iland, Bird-Iland, &c. These Iles abound with Woods, and Water, and Medow-ground; and whatsoever the spacious fertile Maine affords. The inhabitants use to put their cattle in these for safety, viz. their Rammes, Goates, and Swine, when their Corne is on the ground. Those Townes that lie without the Bay, are a great deale nearer the Maine, and reape a greater benefit from the Sea, in regard of the plenty both of Fish and Fowle, which they receive from thence; so that they live more comfortably, and at lesse charges, than those that are more remote from the Sea in the Inland-plantations.

**DEER ISLAND** 

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

As part of this book's elucidation of its frontispiece "The South part of New-England, as it is Planted this year, 1639" on pages 31-38, it described the settlement at [Ipswich](#):



Agowamme [Ipswich] is nine miles to the North from Salem, which is one of the most spacious places for a plantation, being neare the sea; it aboundeth with fish, and flesh of fowles and beasts, great Meads and Marshes and plaine plowing grounds, many good rivers and harbours and no rattle snakes. In a word, it is the best place but one, in my judgement, which is Merrimacke, lying eight miles beyond it, where is a river twenty leagues navigable, all along the river side is fresh Marshes, in some places three miles broad. In this river is Sturgeon, Sammon, and Basse, and divers other kinds of fish. To conclude, the Country scarce affordeth that which this place cannot yeeld. So that these two places may containe twice as many people as are yet in new England: there being as yet scarce any inhabitants in these two spacious places.

Three miles beyond the river of Merrimacke is the outside of our Patent for the Massachusetts Bay. These be all the Townes that were begun, when I came for England, which was the 15. of August 1633.



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

**1655**

In a metaphor for the [Inner Light](#) which [Henry Thoreau](#) would later exploit (transposed from vision to hearing) in [WALDEN](#), [Friend William Dewsbury](#) wrote that

*God alone is the Teacher of His people and hath given to everyone a measure of grace, which is the light....*

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1720

The house in which [Cynthia Dunbar](#) (Thoreau) would grow up and in which she would in 1817 give birth to her son David Henry would be constructed on the [Virginia Road](#) near [Concord](#) at some date between this year and 1740. The house would be constructed on the portion of the Sergeant Thomas Wheeler (1625-1704) farm that had been inherited by his son John Wheeler (1655-1736). In front of the house, on the far side of the Virginia road, ran Elm Brook, which is a source for the Shawsheen River. In 1755 the heirs of John Wheeler would sell this farm to Deacon Samuel Minot, their cousin who was living near Meriam’s Corner in Concord, and then it would pass “for love and affection” from Samuel to his son Jonas. When Captain [Jonas Minott](#) would die in 1813 this house and grounds would be involved in the “widow’s thirds” of his estate which would remain with his wife [Mary Jones Dunbar Minot](#), who when she married him had already several children by her previous marriage to the Reverend [Asa Dunbar](#). [Henry Thoreau](#) would have this to say to his Journal on May 26, 1857 in regard to his mother’s childhood in the Virginia Road home:



My mother was telling me to-night of the sounds which she used to hear summer nights when she was young and lived on Virginia Road. The lowing of cows or cackling of geese or the beating of a distant drum [this is a reference to the drumming of the male [Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) in the woods] as far off

CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

as Hildreth’s, but above all Joe Meriam whistling to his team, for he was an admirable whistler. She says she used to get up at midnight and go and sit on the doorstep when all in the house was asleep and she could hear nothing in the world but the ticking of the clock in the house behind her.



(Of course, nowadays one would be more likely to hear the roar of a military jet taking off or landing from nearby Hanscom Airfield. But back to our romantic story: This farmhouse and the 30 or so acres that remained with it would be sold at auction in Fall 1818. Eventually it would fall to the ownership of Colburn Hadlock, who would keep pigs, tipping there the garbage from his Middlesex House in Concord. Consequently the pigfield near the house would acquire so much shattered hotel refuse that Henry would christen it “Crockery Field.” In Winter 1878 the house would be placed on runners and moved down the road a bit, so there is now a newer farmhouse standing on its sacred original location.

THOREAU RESIDENCES

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1775

January 17, Tuesday: [Concord](#) held a town meeting during which Samuel Whitney, a member of the town's Committee of Correspondence and a Provincial Congress representative, was selected as the "muster master of the minute men in the Town." (Whitney was living in the house that would later be the Alcotts' and then the Hawthornes'.)



The first volunteer minute men, 52 in number (one being a fifer and another a drummer), consisted mainly of men from the South Quarter, and they proceeded to select one of their own, Charles Miles, to command them. "Concord, January 17th 1775, then we chose our officers and settled the Company of Minute Men under the command of Capt. Charles Miles."

Under Captain Charles Miles, the officers and NCOs of this first company were to be:

- LT Willaim Tidd
- LT Francis Wheeler
- SGT David Hartwell
- SGT Amos Hosmer
- SGT Silas Walker
- SGT Edward Richardson

The second company listed 42 members (one fifer) and voted to have David Brown as its captain. When training began, these two [Concord](#) units would be assigned to a local minute regiment commanded by Colonel Abijah Pierce of Lincoln and Major John Buttrick of Concord.

January 27, Friday: [Concord](#) had been raising two militia companies. Already, in all likelihood, the town militia had been marching to the beat of a drummer, and so during the Town Meeting they voted to provide a drum for these new minutemen. They also voted to return the drum which Captain Nathan Barrett had donated and to pay for any necessary repairs for that drum.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

On the 27th, a committee, chosen to examine them then exercising, reported that fifteen in the company were unable to furnish themselves with guns. They were supplied by the town [[Concord](#)]. One of the companies was called the *Alarm Company* and directed to take care and learn the exercise of the cannon. Much military enthusiasm prevailed.<sup>3</sup>

February 6, Monday: John Adams's *NOVANGLUS*.

In [Concord](#), steps were taken to ensure that Captain Miles's company of minutemen got its new drum.

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3. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)'s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD;...](#) Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)  
(On or about November 11, 1837 [Henry Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)






## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1800

 The period from the start of the century until 1870 would be for the [ruffed grouse](#) the period of greatest abundance (then heavy market hunting would begin to take its toll).

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

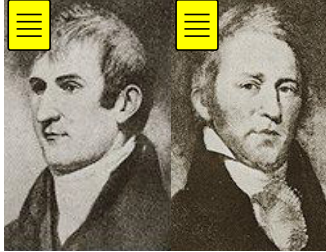
## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1806

➡ March 1, Saturday: France annexed the Kingdom of Naples.

In their journals, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark described [prairie chickens](#).



➡ March 2, Sunday: John Field made his highly successful performing debut in Moscow. He would reside in Moscow and St. Petersburg for some years.

Meriwether Lewis confided to his journal that he didn't much enjoy the "[cock of the Plains](#)." The meat was dark and its flavor only tolerable — it could not bear comparison either with the pheasant or the [ruffed grouse](#) of the east.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1831

 November: The following about a Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (“partridge”) is a snippet from Charles Haskell’s REMINISCENCES OF NEW YORK BY AN OCTOGENARIAN:

I shot a ruffed grouse (*vulgo* partridge) at Breakneck Hill on the estate of Madame Jumel, One Hundred and Forty-fourth Street and Ninth Avenue, and it was believed by sportsmen to be the last one to suffer a like fate on the Island. The Richmond Hill Theatre was opened with the “Road to Ruin,” a favorite opening play of that epoch, and not always inappropriate.... The little theatre enjoyed liberal favor from the public during the summer, until the cholera epidemic of 1832 ended this with all other forms of diversion.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1832

➡ Professor [Thomas Nuttall](#) reported in the initial volume, on land birds, of his A MANUAL OF THE ORNITHOLOGY OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF CANADA (Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown; Boston: Hilliard, Gray), that according to Governor Winthrop, the “Pinnated Grouse” [Heath Hen [Tympanuchus cupido cupido](#)] had been “so common on the ancient brushy site of Boston, that laboring people or servants stipulated with their employers not to have the *Heath-Hen* brought to table oftener than a few times in the week!”



## NUTTALL'S LAND BIRDS

[John James Audubon](#) traveled to Florida. Meanwhile, in Edinburgh, the firm of A. Black was issuing the initial



## ALPHABETICAL BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



## COW TROOPIAL, OR COW BLACK-BIRD.

(*Icterus pecoris*, TEMM. AUDUBON, pl. 99. *Emberiza pecoris*, WILSON, 2. p. 145. pl. 18. fig. 1. [male]. fig. 2. [female]. fig. 3. [the young]. Philad. Museum, No. 6378, 6379.)

SP. CHARACT.— Glossy black; head and neck blackish-brown.— *Female* wholly sooty-brown, beneath pale.— *Young* similar to the female, with the breast spotted.

THE Cow-pen Bird, perpetually gregarious and flitting, is observed to enter the Middle and Northern States in the latter end of March or the beginning of April. They make their migration now chiefly under cover of the night, or early dawn; and as the season becomes milder they pass on to Canada, and perhaps follow the Warblers and other small birds into the farthest regions of the north, for they are seen no more after the middle of June,



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

volume of the 5-volume ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, AND INTERSPERSED WITH DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY AND MANNERS. BY JOHN JAMES AUDUBON....

I feel pleasure in here acknowledging the assistance ... received from ... [Mr. William Macgillivray](#) ... in completing the scientific details ... of my ornithological biographies.  
– Author's "Introductory address," pages xviii-xix<sup>4</sup>

Here is a review of this initial volume, which appeared during May:

### REVIEW OF THE BOOK

And here is this initial Audubon volume, in its entirety:

### ORNITHO. BIOG. VOL. I

Volumes 2 through 5 would be published in Edinburgh by A. & C. Black, Volume 2 in 1834, Volume 3 in 1835, Volume 4 in 1838 (the title of this 4th volume would be ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED BIRDS OF AMERICA, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS OF MANY OF THE SPECIES, ILLUSTRATED BY ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD....), and Volume 5 in 1839.

The initial folio edition of THE BIRDS OF AMERICA was being published meanwhile, made up of the images only without text. This initial volume of ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY describing plates I-C, Volume 2 describing plates CI-CC, Volume 3 describing plates CCI-CCC, Volume 4 describing plates CCCI-CCCLXXXVII, and Volume 5 describing plates CCCLXXXVIII-CCCCXXXV and in addition containing, on pages 305-336, "Descriptions of species found in North America, but not figured in the BIRDS OF AMERICA," and, on pages 337-646, "Appendix: comprising additional observations on the habits, geographical distribution, and anatomical structure of the birds described in this work; together with corrections of errors relative to the species."

(Later, in followup editions entitled THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, FROM DRAWINGS MADE IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR TERRITORIES, Audubon would marry text with images.)

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4. Later on, better situated ornithologists would be able to charge that this upstart was plagiarizing from Audubon's famous ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY when the passages in question had in fact originated as his own writing (so goes the world).

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

In the month of April, the Ruffed Grouse begins to be recognised by his peculiar *drumming*, heard soon after dawn, and towards the close of evening. At length, as the season of pairing approaches, it is heard louder and more frequent till a later hour of the day, and commences again towards the close of the afternoon. This sonorous crepitating sound, strongly resembling a low peal of distant thunder, is produced by the male, who, as a preliminary to the operation, stands upright on a prostrate log, parading with erected tail and ruff, and with drooping wings in the manner of the Turkey. After swelling out his feathers, and strutting forth for a few moments, at a sudden impulse, like the motions of a crowing Cock, he draws down his elevated plumes, and stretching himself forward, loudly beats his sides with his wings, with such an accelerating motion, after the first few strokes, as to cause the tremor described, which may be heard reverberating, in a still morning, to the distance of from a quarter to that of half a mile. This curious signal is repeated at intervals of about 6 or 8 minutes. The same sound is also heard in autumn as well as spring, and given by the caged bird as well as the free, being, at times, merely an instinctive expression of hilarity and vigor. To this parading ground, regularly resorted to by the male, for the season, if undisturbed, the female flies with alacrity; but, as with other species of the genus, no lasting individual attachment is formed, and they live in a state of limited concubinage. The drumming parade of the male is likewise often the signal for a quarrel; and when they happen to meet each other in the vicinity of their usual and stated walks, obstinate battles, like those of our domestic fowls for the sovereignty of the dung-hill, but too commonly succeed. When this sound, indeed, (according to Audubon,) is imitated by striking carefully upon an inflated bladder with a stick, the jealous male, full of anger, rushes forth from his concealment, and falls an easy prey to the wily sportsman.








**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

**1834**

 The 2d volume, on water birds, of Professor [Thomas Nuttall](#)'s A MANUAL OF THE [ORNITHOLOGY](#) OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF CANADA (Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown; Boston: Hilliard, Gray). He resigned as curator of the [Botanical](#) Garden of [Harvard](#) in order to accompany the Wyeth Expedition to the Pacific coast.

**NUTTALL'S WATER BIRDS**

Horatio Cook Meriam received his A.M. degree from [Harvard College](#):

Horatio Cook Meriam; LL.B. 1831; A.M. 1834 1872

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

NEW "HARVARD MEN"

[James Russell Lowell](#) matriculated at [Harvard](#).

The Reverend Professor [Jared Sparks](#) of [Harvard](#) began the long-term task of editing a 10-volume series (Boston: Hilliard, Gray; London: Kennett) –and then a 15-volume series– of THE LIBRARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY.



LIBRARY OF AM. BIOG. I

# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

➡ June 26, Thursday: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal:

*Next door to us lives a young man who is learning to drum. He studies hard at his science every night. I should like to reward his music with a wreath of smilax peduncularis.*

Emerson’s “*Smilax peduncularis*” would be the *Smilax herbacea L.*, also known as “stinkweed” and “carrion flower” on account of its odor, and congratulations to Waldo for having been able to recognize at least one member of the vegetable kingdom! Do you suppose possibly that Emerson’s “drummer” would have been the male Ruffed Grouse [Bonasa umbellus](#), whirring his wing feathers atop a sounding log during the Concord night? Females can lose an initial clutch of eggs to predators and try again, so the males continue into the early summer to advertise their services with their “drum beat at dead of night” (Thomas Campbell’s 1800 poem “Hohenlinden”). –Not until slow-motion moving pictures could be made in 1931 would it be established that this woodland sound was being produced by the male grouse fanning the air.



**CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1838

➡ October: The Reverend Horatio Wood began his ministry in Lowell, Massachusetts (the reverend used to be a teacher in Concord — did Henry Thoreau remember him?).

The rivalry between the Concord Light Infantry company and the Concord Artillery company culminated in their hiring of two competing bands from Boston. As the two groups paraded, each attempted to crowd out their enemy’s marching formation and tangle their enemy’s feet by the beat from a different drummer (this happened on Concord common — did Henry witness this?).



THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



Ruffed Grouse

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**


**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1839

 September 2, Monday: A progressive Spanish Cortes opened, but would dissolve in 2 months.

Fromental Halevy's opera comique *Le sherif*, to words of Scribe after Balzac was performed for the initial time, at the Theatre de la Bourse, Paris. It was a failure.

"Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine."

A WEEK: (September 2, Monday, 1839) We had found a safe harbor for our boat, and as the sun was setting carried up our furniture, and soon arranged our house upon the bank, and while the kettle steamed at the tent door, we chatted of distant friends and of the sights which we were to behold, and wondered which way the towns lay from us. Our cocoa was soon boiled, and supper set upon our chest, and we lengthened out this meal, like old voyageurs, with our talk. Meanwhile we spread the map on the ground, and read in the Gazetteer when the first settlers came here and got a township granted.

COCOA



A WEEK: (September 2, Monday, 1839) The bass, *Tilia Americana*, also called the lime or linden, which was a new tree to us, overhung the water with its broad and rounded leaf, interspersed with clusters of small hard berries now nearly ripe, and made an agreeable shade for us sailors. The inner bark of this genus is the bast, the material of the fisherman's matting, and the ropes and peasant's shoes of which the Russians make so much use, and also of nets and a coarse cloth in some places. According to poets, this was once Philyra, one of the Oceanides. The ancients are said to have used its bark for the roofs of cottages, for baskets, and for a kind of paper called Philyra. They also made bucklers of its wood, "on account of its flexibility, lightness, and resiliency." It was once much used for carving, and is still in demand for sounding-boards of piano-fortes and panels of carriages, and for various uses for which toughness and flexibility are required. Baskets and cradles are made of the twigs. Its sap affords sugar, and the honey made from its flowers is said to be preferred to any other. Its leaves are in some countries given to cattle, a kind of chocolate has been made of its fruit, a medicine has been prepared from an infusion of its flowers, and finally, the charcoal made of its wood is greatly valued for gunpowder.

CHOCOLATE  
LINDEN TREE

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Although the following is an entry in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s JOURNAL of June 13, 1851, Thoreau ascribed this remark, while working on his [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) manuscript, to the night of his mystic experience, September 2, 1839: "I heard partridges drumming to-night as late as 9 o'clock. What singularly space penetrating and filling sound! Why am I never nearer to its source? We do not commonly live our life out and full; we do not fill all our pores with our blood; we do not inspire and expire fully and entirely enough, so that the wave, the comber, of each inspiration shall break upon our extremest shores, rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us, and the sound of the surf come back to us. Might not a bellows assist us to breathe? That our breathing should create a wind on a calm day! We live but a fraction of our life. Why do we not let on the flood, raise the gates, and set all our wheels in motion? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Employ your senses."

[TIMELINE OF A WEEK](#)

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5. However, when he had copied the penciled events of Sept. 2nd 1839 into his journal on June 21, 1840, the only reference Thoreau had copied was "Sept. 2nd Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine..." Presumably, then, he first heard these famous partridges drumming and thought these famous thoughts when they were camped near Penichook Brook and Nashville, on the west bank of the Merrimack River in the vicinity of a deep ravine and a pine wood, on September 2, 1839 as described on pages 171-7 of [A WEEK](#). Possibly, when young [Thoreau](#) lay on his pine branches, and then wrote as above of "some tyro beating a drum incessantly, preparing for a country muster," he was mistaking the sound of a ruffed grouse for the sound of some boy in a nearby village, practicing incessantly on a drum.

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

A WEEK: Far in the night as we were falling asleep on the bank of the Merrimack, we heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly, in preparation for a country muster, as we learned, and we thought of the line,—

“When the drum beat at dead of night.”

We could have assured him that his beat would be answered, and the forces be mustered. Fear not, thou drummer of the night, we too will be there. And still he drummed on in the silence and the dark. This stray sound from a far-off sphere came to our ears from time to time, far, sweet, and significant, and we listened with such an unprejudiced sense as if for the first time we heard at all. No doubt he was an insignificant drummer enough, but his music afforded us a prime and leisure hour, and we felt that we were in season wholly. These simple sounds related us to the stars. Ay, there was a logic in them so convincing that the combined sense of mankind could never make me doubt their conclusions. I stop my habitual thinking, as if the plough had suddenly run deeper in its furrow through the crust of the world. How can I go on, who have just stepped over such a bottomless skylight in the bog of my life. Suddenly old Time winked at me, — Ah, you know me, you rogue, — and news had come that IT was well. That ancient universe is in such capital health, I think undoubtedly it will never die. Heal yourselves, doctors; by God, I live.

Then idle Time ran gadding by  
And left me with Eternity alone;  
I hear beyond the range of sound,  
I see beyond the verge of sight,—

I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves; the one historic truth, the most remarkable fact which can become the distinct and uninvited subject of our thought, the actual glory of the universe; the only fact which a human being cannot avoid recognizing, or in some way forget or dispense with.

It doth expand my privacies  
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

I have seen how the foundations of the world are laid, and I have not the least doubt that it will stand a good while.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,  
And only now my prime of life.  
I will not doubt the love untold,  
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,  
Which wooed me young and woos me old,  
And to this evening hath me brought.

What are ears? what is time? that this particular series of sounds called a strain of music, an invisible and fairy troop which never brushed the dew from any mead, can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and he have been conversant with that same aerial and mysterious charm which now so tingles my ears? What a fine communication from age to age, of the fairest and noblest thoughts, the aspirations of ancient men, even such as were never communicated by speech, is music! It is the flower of language, thought colored and curved, fluent and flexible, its crystal fountain tinged with the sun's rays, and its purling ripples reflecting the grass and the clouds.

CAMPBELL

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

A strain of music reminds me of a passage of the Vedas, and I associate with it the idea of infinite remoteness, as well as of beauty and serenity, for to the senses that is farthest from us which addresses the greatest depth within us. It teaches us again and again to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct, and makes a dream our only real experience. We feel a sad cheer when we hear it, perchance because we that hear are not one with that which is heard.

Therefore a torrent of sadness deep,  
Through the strains of thy triumph is heard to sweep.

The sadness is ours. The Indian poet Calidas says in the Sacontala: "Perhaps the sadness of men on seeing beautiful forms and hearing sweet music arises from some faint remembrance of past joys, and the traces of connections in a former state of existence." As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. The hero is the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds fife and drum for us; we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe; then there is true courage and invincible strength.

Continuing with this material about the drumming of the ruffed grouse that night, Thoreau modernized the spelling of a snippet from Book II of the Reverend [John Milton](#)'s PARADISE LOST:



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**A WEEK:** Still the drum rolled on, and stirred our blood to fresh extravagance that night. The clarion sound and clang of corselet and buckler were heard from many a hamlet of the soul, and many a knight was arming for the fight behind the encamped stars.

“Before each van  
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears  
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms  
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.”

Away! away! away! away!  
Ye have not kept your secret well,  
I will abide that other day,  
Those other lands ye tell.  
Has time no leisure left for these,  
The acts that ye rehearse?  
Is not eternity a lease  
For better deeds than verse?  
'T is sweet to hear of heroes dead,  
To know them still alive,  
But sweeter if we earn their bread,  
And in us they survive.  
Our life should feed the springs of fame  
With a perennial wave,  
As ocean feeds the babbling founts  
Which find in it their grave.  
Ye skies drop gently round my breast,  
And be my corselet blue,  
Ye earth receive my lance in rest,  
My faithful charger you;  
Ye stars my spear-heads in the sky,  
My arrow-tips ye are;  
I see the routed foemen fly,  
My bright spears fixed are.  
Give me an angel for a foe,  
Fix now the place and time,  
And straight to meet him I will go  
Above the starry chime.  
And with our clashing bucklers' clang  
The heavenly spheres shall ring,  
While bright the northern lights shall hang  
Beside our tourneying.  
And if she lose her champion true,  
Tell Heaven not despair,  
For I will be her champion new,  
Her fame I will repair.

PEOPLE OF  
A WEEK

MILTON



Monday 2nd At noon we rested under the shade of a willow or maple which hung over the water, and drew forth a melon from our repast — and contemplated at our leisure the lapse of the river and of human life. The still unravelled fate of men ministered to the entertainment of our chance hours. As that current with its floating twigs and leaves so did all things pass in review before us— Far away in cities and marts and on this very stream the old routine was proceeding still— At length we would throw our rinds into the water for the fishes to nibble — and add our breath to the life of living men. Our melons lay at home on the sands of the merrimack, and our potatoes in the sun and water on the bottom of the boat — looked like a fruit of the country.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



Monday Sep 2nd Now & then we scared up a king-fisher or a summer duck.



“On Monday afternoon the Thoreaus saw their first basswood, a tree new to them. This reminded them that they had reached a strange land quite unlike Concord. Thoreau speculated on the wonderful variety of nature’s creations. The selection which follows cannot be called good science as far as the origin of species is concerned. If food chains are considered, a different light may be thrown on Thoreau’s remarks. Leaves may be eaten by insects, which in turn are consumed by song birds, and the song birds may be devoured by a hawk. Thus the leaves may truly become a hawk.”



WEEK 3



[Monday of WEEK] In all her products, Nature only develops her simplest germs. One would say that it was no great stretch of invention to create birds. The hawk which now takes his flight over the top of the wood was at first, perchance, only a leaf which fluttered in its aisles. From the rustling leaves she came in the course of ages to the loftier flight and clear carol of the bird.

**[HERE IS THE SMOKING GUN!!!]**

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



October 19, Saturday: On this Cornwallis Day –in order to avoid the excesses of military competition experienced in the previous year when the Concord Light Infantry and the Concord Artillery had hired two competing bands from Boston and had paraded on Concord Common, with each attempting to crowd out their enemy’s marching formation and tangle their enemy’s feet by the beat from a different drummer– instead of competing, the Concord Light Infantry unit and the Concord Artillery unit united and began to portray the British soldiers under the leadership of General Cornwallis. Meanwhile, the state militia, attired in clothing



from attics, portrayed the Americans under the leadership of General Washington. [James Russell Lowell](#), who

### DIFFERENT DRUMMER

was present, has reported that after firing blanks at each other, these citizen soldiers adjourned to taverns to fraternize and tell war stories. (This sort of training was the only experience the soldiers would receive in fighting, and the only experience their officers would receive in ordering men to fight, prior to some training they would conduct near Manassas Junction, Virginia on July 21, 1861!)

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER





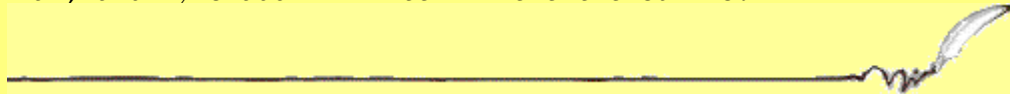
## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



December: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal, in a passage which may explain not only the title of the Transcendentalist periodical [THE DIAL](#), but also something about the nature of the [Transcendentalist](#) movement as a whole:

*I say how the world looks to me without reference to Blair's Rhetoric or Johnson's Lives. And I call my thoughts The Present Age, because I use no will in the matter, but honestly record such impressions as things make. So transform I myself into a Dial, and my shadow will tell where the sun is.*



The brave man's step corresponded to the movement of the heavenly bodies. The brave man's universal tunefulness compelled discord into concord everywhere. This would become, in [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), the hero's heart beating "in unison with the pulse of Nature," as he "steps to the measure of the universe."

[A WEEK](#): The sadness is ours. The Indian poet Calidas says in the Sacontala: "Perhaps the sadness of men on seeing beautiful forms and hearing sweet music arises from some faint remembrance of past joys, and the traces of connections in a former state of existence." As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. The hero is the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds fife and drum for us; we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe; then there is true courage and invincible strength.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

In [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), this would become the injunction that one should step to the music which one hears, “however measured or far away.”

[WALDEN](#): Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

DIFFERENT DRUMMER  
THE INNER LIGHT

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

(Some may consider that I am here deviating from my identification of the distant, different drummer as the ruffed grouse *Bonasa umbellus*, but I am not. You will note that those who provide a militaristic interpretation of this most famous citation from [WALDEN](#) commonly reduce “step” to “march,” as if they were insisting that



[Henry Thoreau](#) remain with his young-mannish military preoccupation and resisting the implications of “step” as in “dance step.” The advantage I see to the “drumming of the ruffed grouse in the woods” interpretation is

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

that it resists this simplification of the metaphor to a merely military signification.)



December: Bravery deals not so much in resolute action, as in healthy and assured rest. Its palmy state is a staying at home, and compelling alliance in all directions.

The brave man never heareth the din of war; he is trustful and unsuspecting, so observant of the least trait of good or beautiful that, if you turn toward him the dark side of anything, he will still see only the bright.

One moment of serene and confident life is more glorious than a whole campaign of daring. We should be ready for all issues, not daring to die but daring to live. To the brave even danger is an ally.

In their unconscious daily life all are braver than they know. Man slumbers and wakes in his twilight with the confidence of noonday; he is not palsified nor struck dumb by the inexplicable riddle of the universe. A mere surveyor's report or clause in a preëmption bill contains matter of quite extraneous interest, of a subdued but confident tone, evincing such a steadiness in the writer as would have done wonders at Bunker's Hill or Marathon. Where there is the collected eye, there will not fail the effective hand;

*χείρ δ' ὄρα τὸ δράσιμον.*

One tap of the drum sets the political and moral harmonies all ajar. His ethics may well bear comparison with the priest's.... When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took music along with it.... The brave warrior must have harmony if not melody at any sacrifice.... All sounds, and more than all silence, do fife and drum for us....

To the sensitive soul, The universe has its own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and as a regular pulse is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rhythm. In all sounds the soul recognizes its own rhythm, and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength.

The coward would reduce this thrilling sphere music to a universal wail — this melodious chant to a nasal cant. He thinks to conciliate all hostile influences by compelling his neighborhood into a partial concord with himself, but his music is no better than a jingle which is akin to a jar — jars regularly recurring....

But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord every where every where by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.

"Take a metallic plate" says Coleridge, "and strew sand on it; sound a harmonic chord over the sand, and the grains will whirl about in circles, and other geometrical figures, all, as it were, depending on some point relatively at rest. Sound a discord, and every grain will whisk about without any order at all, in no figures, and



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

with no points of rest.” The brave man is such a point of relative rest, over which the soul sounds ever a harmonic chord.



December: It was a conceit of [Plutarch](#), accounting for the preferences given to signs observed on the left hand, that men may have thought “things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine things, and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the left hand, the gods send down from their right hand.” If we are not blind, we shall see how a right hand is stretched over all, as well the unlucky as lucky, and that the ordering soul is only right-handed, distributing with one palm all our fates.

Men have made war from a deeper instinct than peace. War is but the compelling of peace. When the world is declared under martial law, every Esau retakes his birthright, and what there is in him does not fail to appear. He wipes off all old scores and commences a new account. The world is interested to know how any soul will demean itself in so novel a position. But when war too, like commerce and husbandry, gets to be a routine, and men go about it as indented apprentices, the hero degenerates into a marine, and the standing army into a standing jest.



December: Music is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul. I read that “Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beauteous fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many times, for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement.”

By dint of wind and stringed instruments the coward endeavors to put the best face on the matter, –whistles to keep his courage up.

There are some brave traits related by [Plutarch](#); e. g.: “Homer acquaints us how Ajax, being to engage in a single combat with Hector, bade the Grecians pray to the gods for him; and while they were at their devotions, he was putting on his armor.”

On another occasion, a storm arises, “which as soon as the pilot sees, he falls to his prayers, and invokes his



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

tutelar dæmons, but neglects not in the meantime to hold to the rudder and let down the main yard.”<sup>6</sup>



6. [Waldo Emerson](#) had in his library the 1822 edition in 8 volumes of [PLUTARCH](#)'S LIVES. TR. FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK, WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND A LIFE OF PLUTARCH BY JOHN LANGHORNE AND WILLIAM LANGHORNE, NEW ED., WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS... (New York: Samuel Campbell). [Henry Thoreau](#) himself had but a one-volume abridgment, perhaps the following one:

### PLUTARCH'S LIVES

Thoreau also had available to him in Emerson's library the 5-volume 1718 edition of [PLUTARCH](#)'S MORALS: TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK BY SEVERAL HANDS, THE FIFTH EDITION CORRECTED AND AMENDED (London: Printed for William Taylor, at the *Ship* in *Paternoster-Row*).

### PLUTARCH'S MORALS, I

### PLUTARCH'S MORALS, II

### PLUTARCH'S MORALS, III

### PLUTARCH'S MORALS, IV

### PLUTARCH'S MORALS, V

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1841



April 28: We falsely attribute to men a determined character — putting together all their yesterdays — and averaging them — we presume we know them Pity the man who has a character to support — it is worse than a large family — he is silent poor indeed. But in fact character is never explored, nor does it get developed in time — but eternity is its development — time its envelope. In view of this distinction, a sort of divine politeness and heavenly good breeding suggests itself — to address always the enveloped character of a man. I approach a great nature with infinite expectation and uncertainty, not knowing what I may meet. It lies as broad and unexplored before me as a scraggy hillside or pasture. I may hear a fox bark, or a partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] drum, or some bird new to these localities may fly up. It lies out there as old, and yet as new. The aspect of the woods varies every day, what with their growth and the changes of the seasons and the influence of the elements, so that the eye of the forester never twice rests upon the same prospect. Much more does a character show newly and variedly, if directly seen. It is the highest compliment to suppose that in the intervals of conversation your companion has expanded and grown. It may be a deference which he will not understand, but the nature which underlies him will understand it, and your influence will be shed as finely on him as the dust in the sun settles on our clothes. By such politeness we may educate one another to some purpose. So have I felt myself educated sometimes; I am expanded and enlarged.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1843

February 15, Wednesday: In Concord, Henry Thoreau wrote to Waldo Emerson in New-York, about the John Adolphus Etzler review intended for April's issue of The Dial, mentioning how they had heard thunder in the distance the previous summer during a walk and had presumed incorrectly that it was either falling rocks or the drumming of a Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus (Partridge):



As for Etzler - I dont remember any rude and snappish speech that you made - and if you did it must have been longer than anything I had written - However here is the book still and I will try. Perhaps I have some few scraps in my Journal which you may choose to print. The translation of AEschylus I should like very well to continue anon - if it should be worth the while. - As for poetry I have not remembered to write any for sometime - it has quite slipped my mind - but sometimes I think I hear the muttering of the thunder. Dont you remember that last summer we heard a low tremulous sound in the woods and over the hills - and thought it was partridges or rocks - and it proved to be thunder gone down the river - But sometimes it was over Wayland way and at last burst over our heads - So we'll not despair by reason of the drought.

DEMOCRATIC REVIEW

Lydia Maria Child stated that nonresistance to evil was "the idea which distinguishes the gospel of Christ from all other wise and philosophic utterance."



(I agree with her.)



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1844

THE BIRDS OF LONG ISLAND. BY [J.P. GIRAUD, JR.](#) (New York: Published by Wiley & Putnam, 161 Broadway; Tobitt's Print, 9 Spruce st.; xxi, 397 pages; plate). [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal copy of this book bound in dark brown cloth, with his signature on the front free endpaper plus a page of notes in his hand, is now in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.<sup>7</sup>

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jeff Cramer suggests that Thoreau might have derived from this source the factoid he mentions in the “Winter Animals” chapter of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), that **Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (“partridges”)

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7. The volume was presented by Sophia E. Thoreau to the Concord Free Public Library in 1874. Its accession number is 10411.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

come out of the woods at sunset to “bud” apple trees:<sup>8</sup>

**WALDEN:** When the ground was not yet quite covered, and again near the end of winter, when the snow was melted on my south hill-side and about my woodpile, the partridges came out of the woods morning and evening to feed there. Whichever side you walk in the woods the partridge bursts away on whirring wings, jarring the snow from the dry leaves and twigs on high, which comes sifting down in the sunbeams like golden dust; for this brave bird is not to be scared by winter. It is frequently covered up by drifts, and, it is said, “sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two.” I used to start them in the open land also, where they had come out of the woods at sunset to “bud” the wild apple-trees. They will come regularly every evening to particular trees, where the distant orchards next the woods suffer thus not a little. I am glad that the partridge gets fed, at any rate. It is Nature’s own bird which lives on buds and diet-drink.



RUFFED GROUSE

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8. Thoreau copied from this volume into his Fact Book and his Indian Notebook #9 while **WALDEN** was on bookstore shelves.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1845



Our national birthday, Friday the 4th of July: This was [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 41st birthday, and the flag was gaining another star as the State of Florida was entering the Union as our 27th state, making the score in this land of the free and home of the brave to amount to 14 states for human slavery versus 13 states agin it:



Ordinance of the Convention of Texas.

In [Washington DC](#), the cornerstone of Jackson Hall was being laid and a good time was being enjoyed by all these American patriots who were equating patriotism with [inebriation](#), but on the grounds south of the Executive Mansion, some [drunken](#) celebrant fired off a dozen rockets into the crowd, killing James Knowles and Georgiana Ferguson and injuring several others — collateral damage due to friendly fire.

In Ithaca, [New York](#), a celebration cannon, evidently overcharged with powder, blew apart, killing three.

[TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS](#)

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Ex-president John Tyler delivered an oration at William and Mary College.

In Nashville, Tennessee, the corner-stone of the State House was laid.

**CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY**

What to the slave is the 4th of July? On this day and the next Frederick Douglass was lecturing in Athol, Massachusetts.

[Henry Thoreau](#) began to sleep in the open frame of the new shanty “as soon as it was boarded and roofed...” not only on the anniversary of independence, but also on the day on which the US took the Texas territory from Mexico. Had he remained in Concord that day, he would have been subjected not only to offensive parades with flag-waving, but also to much offensive pro-war oratory.

**TIMELINE OF WALDEN**

**EMERSON'S SHANTY**

**WALDEN:** When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident was on Independence Day, or the fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where.

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

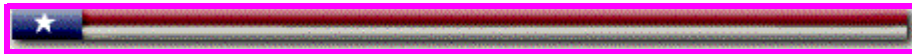
## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

We need not presume that he intended the date to have any metaphorical significance, as in the idea that moving to the shanty was his [Declaration of Independence](#) from human society. On this day of Thoreau's removal, an article appeared in the New-York [Daily Tribune](#) calling for a return to "the narrow, thorny path where Integrity leads." This article was authored in full awareness of the course Thoreau was following in Concord, for this sentiment had been penned by [Margaret Fuller](#).



Years later, on May 1, 1850 to be exact, Thoreau recollected an incident of this day, that "*The forenoon that I moved to my house –a poor old lame fellow who had formerly frozen his feet –hobbled off the road –came & stood before my door with one hand on each door post looking into the house & asked for a drink of water. I knew that rum or something like it was the only drink he loved but I gave him a dish of warm pond water which was all I had, nevertheless, which to my astonishment he drank, being used to drinking.*"



Thoreau lived

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER


“At Walden, July, 1845, to fall of 1847, then at R.W.E. ’s to fall of 1848, or while he was in Europe.”

At about this time, more or less, a number of people’s acquaintance’s lives were changing: for instance, Giles Waldo, whom Thoreau had chummed around with in New-York, was sailing to become vice consul at Lahaina in the Sandwich Islands, and George Partridge Bradford was abandoning the private school he had attempted to set up in [Waldo Emerson](#)’s barn to begin a private school in Roxbury MA.

[Thoreau](#) wrote the following sometime after he moved to his new shanty at Walden Pond, about the drumming of the ruffed grouse:



After July 4: {one-fifth page blank} When I behold an infant I am impressed with a sense of antiquity, and reminded of the sphinx or Sybil. It seems older than Nestor or Jove himself, and wears the wrinkles of Saturn.

Why should the present impose upon us so much! I sit now upon a stump whose rings number centuries of growth— If I look around me I see that the very soil is composed of just such stumps — ancestors to this. I thrust this stick many aeons deep into the surface — and with my heel scratch a deeper furrow than the elements have ploughed here for a thousand years— If I listen I hear the peep of frogs which is older than the slime of Egypt — or a distant partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] drumming on a log — as if it were the pulse-beat of the summer air.



CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

I raise my fairest and freshest flowers in the old mould.  
 –Why, what we call new is not skin deep — the earth is not yet stained by it. It is not the fertile ground we walk upon but the leaves that flutter over our head  
 The newest is but the oldest made visible to our eyes. We dig up the soil from a thousand feet below the surface and call it new, and the plants which spring from it.



After July 4: Night and day — year on year, / High & low — far and near, / These are our own aspects, / These are our own regrets.... / I hear the sweet evening sounds / From your undecaying grounds / Cheat me no more with time, / Take me to your clime. 1842, 1845, 1848: Night and day, year on year, / High and low, far and near, / These are our own aspects, / These are our own regrets.... / I hear the sweet evening sounds / From your undecaying grounds; / Cheat me no more with time, / Take me to your clime. (WEEK 389) (Johnson 388-9)



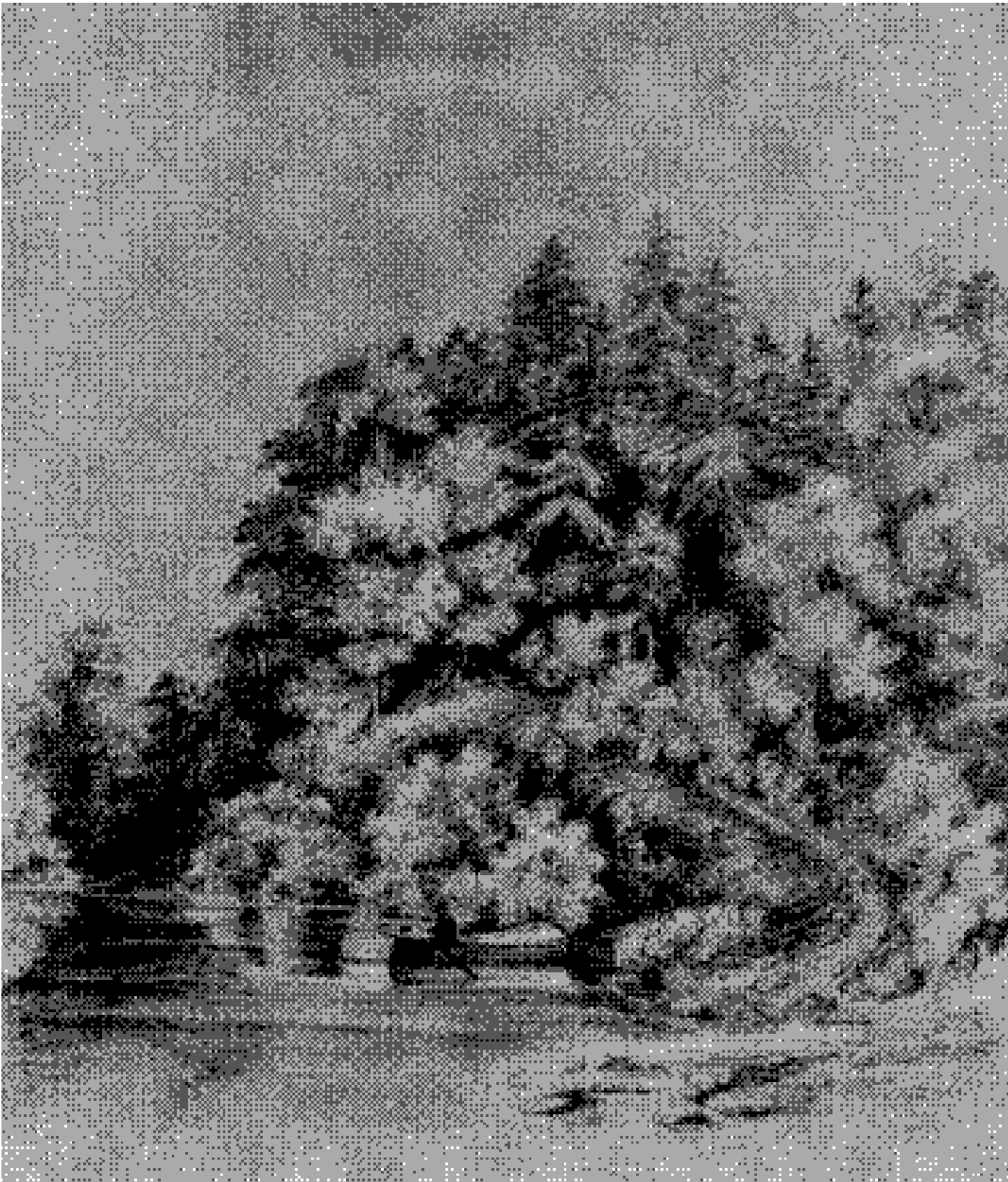
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER



1846

April 17, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) described Tom Fowler as “a young and ingenuous waterman with that indolent but mild and mellow expression of those who had had much intercourse with rude nature — the noble frankness of a forest child.” His watermen at Passamagamet, “Uncle George” McCauslin and Tom Fowler, exhibited, like voyageurs, the cunning of their craft as “Uncle George” sat in the stern and Tom crouched in the bow, poling with 12-foot, iron-shod spruce poles, both poling on the same side and the 30-foot batteau shooting up the rapids “like a salmon, the water rushing and roaring around.”

At this early point, we notice, in the cabin on Walden Pond, Henry was not doing direct birdwatching but was, rather, experiencing birds at secondhand through the eyes of the authors of ancient cultural materials: he was reading [Anacreon](#), Alcaeus, and [Homer](#) on birds in the spring:



Walden April 17 1846: Even nations are ennobled by affording protection to the weaker races of animals. When I read of some custom by which an ancient people recognized the migrations of birds and beasts, or any necessity of theirs, they seem not more savage but more god like— The Greeks were not above this humane intercourse with nature. They were as happy as children on the arrival of the swallow in the spring — and the passage of cranes from the sources of the Nile. They took note of and delight in such trifling events like Indians. [Anacreon](#) sings

Behold how the crane travels  
Behold how the duck dives.

The partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] & the quail the swan and the stork were also mentioned by the poets with distinction.

According to Hare “the children in Rhodes greeted the latter (i.e. the swallow) as herald of the spring in a little song. Troops of them, carrying about a swallow (χελιδονιζοντες), sang this from door to door, and collected provisions in return.” I give my own translation as most literal

The swallow has come,  
The swallow has come,  
Bringing beautiful hours,  
Beautiful seasons,  
White on the belly,  
Black on the back.  
—Wilt thou bring forth figs  
From thy fat house,  
And a cup of wine,  
And a canister of cheese,  
And wheaten bread? The swallow  
Does not reject even  
The yolk of eggs. Shall we go away or shall we receive something?  
If indeed thou wilt give anything —but if not we will not leave thee;  
We will carry away either the door, or the lintel, —  
—Or the wife sitting within  
She is little, easily we shall bear her off.  
But if thou wilt bring anything, then bring something ample.  
Open open the door to the swallow,  
For we are not old men, but children.

Athenaeus viii. c 60

The Greeks were such worshippers of beauty that this peculiarity is observable whenever the word *καλος* is used —as in *καλας ωρας καλωσ ενιαυτως* in the above— I take an unwearied delight in their repetition of this word— It does not degenerate into the French *bel* or *fine*. Theirs is a simple & temperate use of the word after

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

all. It is hard to be lovers of beauty without being sentimental.  
In the beginning of the 3d book of the Iliad sings [Homer](#)–

But when they were arrayed each under his leader,  
The Trojans rushed with a clang & a shout like birds;  
As when there is a clangor of cranes in the heavens  
Who avoid winter & unspeakable rain,  
They fly with clangor toward the streams of Ocean  
Bearing slaughter & Fate to Pygmaean men;  
Passing through the air these bear along disastrous strife.

the lexicon says ‘Ἡερίαι in the morning here  
Husbandry is universally a sacred art –pursued with too much heedlessness and haste by us- To have large farms and large crops is our object. Our thoughts on this subject should be as slow and deliberate as the pace of the ox.

“According to the early laws of Greece, the ploughing ox was held sacred, & was entitled, when past service, to range the pastures in freedom & repose. It was forbidden, by the decrees of Triptolemus, to put to death this faithful ally of the labors of the husbandman, who shared the toils of ploughing & threshing. Whenever, therefore, an ox was slaughtered, he must first be consecrated or devoted as a sacrifice (ιερείον), by the sprinkling of the sacrificial barley; this was a precaution against the barbarous practice of eating raw flesh (βουφαγία). A peculiar sacrifice (Διιπολία) at Athens, at which the slayer of the ox fled, and the guilty axe was thrown into the sea, on the sentence of the Prytanēs, yearly placed before the people a visible type of the first beginnings of their social institutions.”

Winter: Irish laborers stacked Walden Pond’s ice into “a vast blue fort or Valhalla.”


[Henry Thoreau](#) recorded to his journal:



It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself!”

Heroic books, “even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valor and generosity we have.”

As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so I had my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by twos and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white-pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fishhawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (~~Partridge~~)], conveying travellers from Boston to the country. For I did not live so out of the world as that boy, who, as I hear, was put out to a farmer in the east part of the town, but ere long ran away and came home again, quite down at the heel and homesick. He had never seen such a dull and out-of-the-way place; the folks were all gone off; why, you couldn’t even hear the whistle! I doubt if there is such a place in Massachusetts now:–

“In truth, our village has become a butt  
For one of those fleet railroad shafts, and o’er  
Our peaceful plain its soothing sound is –Concord.” (114-5)

When other birds are still the screech owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient *u-lu-lu*. Their dismal scream is truly [Ben Jonsonian](#). Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt *tu-whit tu-who* of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, the mutual consolations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



*Thoreau's Walden Cabin  
after a drawing by Sophia Thoreau*

responses, trilled along the wood-side, reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung. They are the spirits, the low spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen souls that once in human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, no expiating their sins with their wailing hymns or threnodies in their scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of variety and capacity of that nature which is our common dwelling. *Oh-o-o-o that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* sighs one on this side of the pond, and circles with the restlessness of despair to some new perch on the gray oaks. Then *-that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* echoes another on the farther side with tremulous sincerity, and *-bor-r-r-r-n!* comes faintly from far in the Lincoln woods. (124)

On gala days the town fires its great guns, which echo like popguns to these woods, and some waifs of martial music occasionally penetrate thus far. To me, away there in my bean-field at the other end of the town, the big guns sounded as if a puff ball had burst; and when there was a military turnout of which I was ignorant, I have sometimes had a vague sense all the day of some sort of itching and disease in the horizon, as if some eruption

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

would break out there soon, either scarlatina or canker-rash, until at length some more favorable puff of wind, making haste over the fields and up the Wayland road, brought me information of the “trainers.” It seemed by the distant hum as if somebody’s bees had swarmed, and that the neighbors, according to Virgil’s advice, by a faint *tintinnabulum* upon the most sonorous of their domestic utensils, were endeavoring to call them down into the hive again. And when the sound died quite away, and the hum had ceased, and the most favorable breezes told no tale, I knew that they had got the last drone of them all safely into the Middlesex hive, and that now their minds were bent on the honey with which it was smeared. (161)



After September 10: It was with pleasant sensations that we rowed over the North Twin lake by moonlight –now fairly beyond the last vestige of civilized, perhaps of human life –in the midst of such environment and such civility there as nature allows For still I could think of nothing but vaster cities there concealed on the distant shore and ports and navies –and the orient and occident –the levant and the Pacific of trade–

Over that high table land so open to the sun and light and yet uninhabited. Continuous forests bounded the view on every side –the shore rising into gentle wooded hills –and now and then a mountain reared itself above the level woods –Joe Merry or Double-top –or Ktadn.

The loon laughed and dived as we held on our way –the fir and spruce and cedar, occasionally hanging with moss, stood like the ghosts of trees on the distant shore– We sang, at least with enthusiasm, such boat song as we could remember –and listened to hear if any wolf responded –aware that we had perchance disturbed many a deer or moose quietly feeding on the shore –and even then gazing at us –but we heard only the hooting of owls On entering the lake we steered for a little dot of an island hardly visible in the dark –where we amused ourselves with planning that the light house should be –and how we should like to live and be the light-house man. At length we drew up our batteau upon a smooth white sandy shore at the head of the lake –gliding in between some large dark rocks and proceeded to make our camp–

It is difficult to conceive of an country uninhabited by man we naturally suppose them on the horizon everywhere– And yet we have not seen nature unless we have once seen her thus vast and grim and drear – whether in the wilderness or in the midst of cities –for to be Vast is how near to being waste.

Coming down the Mt perhaps I first most fully realized that that this was unhanselled and ancient Demonic Nature, natura, or whatever man has named it.

The nature primitive –powerful gigantic awful and beautiful, Untamed forever. We were passing over burnt lands with occasional strips of timber crossing it,<sup>9</sup> and low poplars springing up –open and pasture-like –with blue berries sloping away down toward the river –for our convenience I found myself traversing it familiarly like some pasture run to waste –or partially reclaimed by man –but when I reflected what a man –what brother or sister or kindred of our race farmed it –and made it firm ground and convenient for us to walk on– The earth seemed recent –and I expected the proprietor to dispute my passage– When then did my ancestors acquire the preemptive right? But only the moose browsed here, and the bear skulked –and the black partridge fed on the berries and the buds.

The main astonishment at last is that man has brought so little change– And yet man so overtops nature in his estimation.

The trout fishing at the mouth of the Aboljacknagesic –in that part of the river called the Sowdehunk still water, was as it were fabulous, to describe There those fishes made beautiful the lord only knows why, to swim there, leaped from he stream to our frying pan by some orphic process

It impressed me so like a vision that late at night or early in the morning I rose by moonlight to learn if I were indeed there and this dream were true. And there by the moonlight –in the wholly visionary dream land –the speckled trout again rose to the bait and the fable proved true again.– The outline of Ktadn was plainly visible a dozen miles off in the warm light –

I could understand the truth of mythology –and the fables of Proteus and all those beautiful sea monsters– How all history put to a terrestrial use is history, but put to a celestial is mythology ever.

There we lay where Indians once –and since adventurous loggers seeking the white pine had camped before us and caught trout like us. There were the moose on which some party had feasted, of which we brought away some teeth –and we used the birch poles that had been left by them.

One memorable evening and moon lighted dawn I first caught the trout in the Maine wilderness at the mouth of the Aboljacknagesic which comes into to the West Branch of the Penobscot from Mount Ktadn– And the fable of the trout was realized to me. I had long sought a larger specimen of its cousin the White Chivin or roach and here my first captive was the fish I sought –fishes large than the red distinctly white or silvery –swam here and were forward to take the bait –at the mouth of Murch Brook –in dark water. I had come so far to catch my

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

fish.

There are singular reminiscences in the life of every man –of seasons when he was leading a wholly unsubstantial and as it were impossible life –in circumstances so strange –in company so unfit and almost this time the creature of Chance. As the hours spent in travelling by steam boat night or day– It is a transient and dream like experience –for which I have no other place in any memory but such as I assign to dreams. In a longer voyage no doubt the circumstances and scenery would become familiar and we might realize how we too could be sailors –and so lead our lives. But in these voyages of a night in which the power of a new genius or demon steam –surpassing the relations of eastern fables are summoned to waft us to a distant spot –we pass too rapidly from our associations to a new era– All men but a few cooks and waiters and engineers and deck hands seem as much in a dream as yourself– All are as if they had taken something –wine or opium or been– All are familiar as in dreams and each represents a class is the best specimen of his class– See the man in a rich fur cap and velvet cloak– Now trying to get sleep –now pacing the deck and looking round upon us –with assurance as if he were some prince and travelled there rightfully and more entirely than we –we who are the same old six pences any where just as homely and simple the other side the Globe as where we belong –and the last day as this hour–

He is a fabulous man –not fed and sustained as we are– The Sea fareing man lighting his pipe at midnight and pacing the deck one more –guessing we are now about off white head whose light we see yonder –has often sailed this shore knows all the lights– By the bye Where’s Jim how many times has he been to bed and got up again –now knowing but it was day light –hoping it was– Now he’ll borrow your pipe if you please– Has he slept any –he says he slept well does’nt want any more –but here he is up at mid night– He declares he sees the day breaking –we shall be in the bay in an hour –that’s nigger Island –that’s Owl’s head-light– It grows light apace– We begin to trig up –slick hair –smooth pants snuff the breeze a little and shake ourselves– By the by what time is it? One says its 3 o clock one says its one –one says it’s only eleven– And the cook passing answers half past eleven gentlemen– And that light was the moon rising and the sailors who had sailed these

9. It is difficult to conceive

~~region~~

of an country uninhabited by man

~~habitually presume his~~ ~~exaggerate his influence~~

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~~pure~~

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Coming down the Mt perhaps

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~~or whater else men call it~~

Demonic Nature, *natura*, or

~~<name man has best applied>~~ while coming

~~<s>~~ down the Mt.

whatever man has named it.

~~<Titanic>~~

The nature primitive — powerful

~~<yet>~~

gigantic awful and beautiful,

Untamed forever. We were passing

~~burnt by lightning perchance~~

over burnt land ^ with occasional

strips of timber crossing it.... (Berg 89-90)

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

shores –excute to bed again and now determine to sleep this time– Some not abaft the shaft choose again a soft recess among the bales –some stagger down –seeming to the risen heads to have come upon the business of the boat –or as if going down town at leisure



Winter: *{pages missing}* shorter and more adventurous way.

I had thoughts of returning to this house the next day –which was neatly kept & so nobly placed –for the husband was not at home though the mistress entertained me kindly –and perhaps remaining a week in the valley.

As I passed the last house a man called out to know what I had to sell, for seeing my knapsack he thought that I might be a peddler who was taking this unusual route for nearness over the ridge at the head of the valley to South Adams. He told me that –it was 4 or 5 miles to the summit by the path, which I had left but not more than 2 miles in a straight line –but nobody ever went this way –there was no path and I should *{Two-fifths page missing}* I was of that age when an unexplored country road furnishes objects of interest enough –when any deeper ravine –or higher hill –or novel bridge and unknown stream –detains us a long time –and once we go on with the interest and adventurous feeling of childhood not knowing what we shall see next. I was interested by such sights for instants as pigs and geese with yokes, which were new to me –bridges whose side rails only were covered with a projecting eave –virginia fences –and guide boards –which said right and left or Rt. Lt. or if it chanced to say so many miles to Esqr M’Gaws *{MS torn}* charmed and felt myself *{Two-fifths page missing}* *{Thirty-two pages missing}* guage– And the vast majority of those who at one period of their lives have been compelled to study Latin & Greek –have remained as ignorant of the genius of their authors as those inhabitants of the early centuries of our era –who though they could speak the language of Rome –erased the monuments of her noblest children to make way for a Father –or a dull Romance.

I know it is advised by some to overlook at last and forget what ancient and heroic men have done, what wise and studious men have thought –what inspired poets have sung– The most valuable monuments of human labor and life– But it will be soon enough to forget when we have the experience which will enable us well to remember them– That age will be rich indeed when those relics shall have still further accumulated –when at some remote epoch the Vaticans shall be filled with Homers & [Shakespeares](#) –where the ages shall have successively deposited their trophies in a heap in the forum. This way may we plausibly hope to scale the heavens.

The works of the great poets have never yet been read, for only great poets can read them. There was never gathered an assembly of men who could appreciate them –but they have ever been read partially and by snatches in solitude as men view the stars. Only they talk of forgetting the ancients who never knew them.

Ovid thus describes Chaos

“And where there was Earth there also was there sea & air;  
So was the earth not to be stood upon, the waves not to be swum in,  
The air without light.”

And he secreted the liquid heavens from the thick air

And he confined the descending rivers within slipping banks;  
Which in different places, are part absorbed by the earth,  
Part reach the sea, and being received within the plain  
Of its freer water, beat the shores for banks.

The East Wind withdrew to Aurora & the Nabothaeon kingdom  
And the Persian, and the ridges placed under the morning rays

Scarcely had he fenced off all these with certain *{MS torn}*  
When the stars, which had long lain hid pressed down under  
That mass, began to effervesce into every part of the heavens  
The beautiful story of Phaeton and Apollo adds–

The first part of the way is steep, and where scarcely the steeds  
Fresh in the morning strive; in the mid heaven it is highest;  
Whence to behold Sea and earth there is often fear  
To me myself, and my breast trembles with fearful dread

(He cannot translate a foreign language or even read his own –who does not simply by his ear distinguish some





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

of the meaning of a word)

The last part of the way is descending; and requires sure management  
Then even Tethys herself, is wont to fear, who receives  
Me with waves placed underneath, lest I be borne headlong.  
Add, that heaven is whirled with constant revolution;  
And draws the lofty stars, and whirls them with swift revolution  
I strive against it; nor does the impetus which conquers the rest,  
Conquer me; and I am born contrary to the rapid sphere.  
Suppose the charriot granted. What canst thou do? wilt thou be able  
To go against the rotating poles, that the swift axis may not carry thee away,  
Perhaps you conceive in your mind that there are groves there,  
And cities of the gods and shrines rich with gifts. –  
Through snares is the way, and the forms of wild beasts.  
And although You should keep the way, and with no error be borne,  
Nevertheless you will advance through the horns of Taurus, opposite.  
And the Haemonian bows, and the features of the raging lion  
And the Scorpion curving with long circuit its dread  
Arms, and the Crab –ending its arms in another way  
Nor is it possible for thee without preparation to manage the steeds  
Excited with those flames which they have in their breasts  
And breath forth from their mouths & nostrils. Scarcely do they endure me  
When their sharp spirits have grown hot, and their necks spurn the reins.  
Apollo tells his son he need not doubt of his descent  
Some proofs thou askest; I give sure proofs by fearing  
And prove myself father by my paternal fear–  
His father cannot reveal his oath sworn by the sacred marsh of Styx –but he may persuade–  
Nevertheless he resists his words  
And holds fast his purpose: and he burns with desire of the chariot.  
Therefore the father having delayed as far as it was lawful, conducts  
The youth to the lofty chariot –the work of Vulcan  
The axle was golden –the beam golden, golden the extreme  
curvature of the wheel, of the spokes a silvery order –  
About the yokes chrysolite and gems placed orderly  
reflecting Phoebus gave back clear rays  
And while high-minded Phaeton admires these things & surveys  
The work; lo, wakeful Aurora from the glittering east  
Opened the purple doors and the halls full of roses  
The stars disperse; whose troops Lucifer  
Drives away, and the last of all withdraws from his station in the heavens,  
But the father Titan when he saw the lands and world grow red  
And the extremities of the moon's horns as it were to vanish  
Commands the swift hours to yoke the horses.  
The swift Goddesses perform his orders; and they lead the steeds  
From the high stalls, breathing fire,  
Filled with the juice of ambrosia; and they add the sounding bridles.  
Then the father anointed the face of his son with the sacred  
Tincture, and made it patient of the fervid flame.  
And unfixd the rays in his hair.

Of the late the victor whom all our Pindars praised –has won another palm contending with

PINDAR

“Olympian bards who sung  
Divine Ideas below,  
Which always find us young,  
And always keep us so.”

Aspiring to guide that chariot which coursed olympia's sky.– What will the Delphians say & Eleusinian priests  
–where will the Immortals hide their secrets now –which earth or Sea –mountain or stream –or Muses spring  
or grove –is safe from his all searching eye –who drives off apollo's beaten track –visits unwonted zones –&  
makes the serpent writhe {*MS blotted*} a Nile-like river of our day flow back –and hide its head.

Spite of the eternal law, from his

“lips of cunning fell

The thrilling Delphic oracle.”

I have seen some impudent connecticut or Down east man in his crack coaster with tort sail, standing beside his  
galley with his dog with folded arms while his cock crowed aboard –scud through the surf by some fast

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

anchored Staten island farm –but just outside the line where the astonished Dutchman digs his clams, or half ploughs his cabbage garden with unbroken steeds & ropy harness.– while his squat bantam whose faint voice the lusty shore wind drownnd responded feebly there for all reply

I have awaked in the morning with the impression that some question had been put to me which I had been struggling to answer in my sleep –but there was dawning nature, in whom all creatures live –looking in at the window, with serene & satisfied face and no question on *her* lips.

Men are not commonly greatly servicable to one another –because they are not servicable to themselves– Their lives are devoted to trivial ends, and they invite only to an intercourse which degrades one another. Some are too weakly sensitive by a defect of their constitution, magnifying what

{*Twenty-eight pages missing*} grown; –hoary tower –of azure tinted marble.– an acre yielded about 1000 tons. They stacked up in a good day about 1000 tons.

The parched inhabitants of Madras Bombay –Calcutta –Havana –charleston & New Orleans drink at my well– While I incredulous read the vast cosmogonal philosophy of Ancient India –in modern New England The Brahmen’s Stoic descendant still sits in his native temples and cools his parched lips with the ice of my Walden well.

Though incredible ages ages have intervened –I am a denizen of the same earth with their descendants.

The descendant of the religious devotee who dwelt at the roots of trees with his crust of bread and water jug cools his water today with ice from my well. If I am not a modern hindoo we are near neighbors –and by the miracle of commerce we quench our thirst and cool our lips at the same well.

And concord fixed air is carried in that ice to mingle with the sultry zephyrs of the Indus & the Ganges.

I bathe my intellect in the stupendous wisdom of the Bhagvat Geeta –the Puranas –the Vedas –the laws of menu –which last three make the Dharma Sastra of the Hindoos– Since whose composition years of the gods have lapsed –and in comparison with which this modern world and its literature seem puny & trivial– And I wonder if those are not to be referred to another state of existence than this of ours.– So remote is that religion & sublimity from our conceptions–

Where is that India where these sons of Brahma dwelt– Alexander seems the most recent traveller to it.

Wondering at the remoteness of this my modern N E. life from that fabulous life of theirs –and if by any link I am related to them –I go to my well for a bucket of water and there I meet the servant of the modern Brahmin priest of veeshnoo & Indra & Brahma –come to draw a bucket full for his master also.– And I refuse not to fill his water-jug. {*Six pages missing*} for shoes. If the cormorant family would but begin with this little reading for I suppose it is elementary and introductory to better things –& read a little it would be a promising sing– The result is dullness of sight –a stagnation of the vital circulations and a general deliquium of the intellectual faculties–

The “Skip of the tip-toe Hop” by the celebrated author of Tittle-tol-tan &c&c a romance –to appear in monthly parts –a great rush –dont all come together. —

There was such a rush I hear at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival as broke several large squares of plates glass– News which I seriously think a ready wit might right a twelve month –or 12 years before hand with sufficient accuracy– As for foreign news if one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers I should say that nothing new ever does happen in foreign parts– As for spain for instance, if you know how to throw in Don carlos and the Infanta and don pedro & Seville & Gibraltar from time to time skilfully & serve up a bull fight when other entertainments fail –it will be true to the letter– —

The best books ar not read even by those who have learned their letters. What does our Concord culture amount to? There is in this town –with a very few exceptions no taste for the best or the very good books even in English literature which all can red– Even college bred –& so called liberally educated men here & elsewhere have no acquaintance with the English Classics.– and as for the recorded wisdom of mankind –which accesible to all who will know of it –there are but the feeblest efforts made to study or to become acquainted with it. One who has just come from reading perhaps the best of English books will find how few to converse with respecting it! It is for the most part foreign & unheard of. One who comes from reading a Greek –or Latin book –in the original –whose praises are familiar even to the illiterate will find nobody at all to speak to and must keep silence about it.

Indeed there is hardly the professor in our colleges who if he has mastered the difficulties of the language has in any like proportion mastered the difficulty of the wisdom & the poetry. And the zealous morning reader of Homer or of the Greek Dramatic poets might find no more valuable sympathy in the atmosphere of Cambridge A man –any man will go considerably {*Thirty-four pages missing*} your gone –pull it up –pull it up But this –was Beans and not corn & so it was safe from such enemies as he

-In summer days which some devoted to the fine arts –away in Italy –and others to contemplation away in India and some to trade in London & New York –I with other farmers of N.E. devoted to field-labor

ICE

INDIA

INDIA

INDIA

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

### ITALY

When my hoe tinkled on a stone it was no longer beans that I hoed nor I that hoed beans.— But such sugar plums they tempt us to live this life of man —however mean and trivial

Or it was my amusement when I rested in the shrub oaks to watch a pair of hen-hawks circling high in the sky as silently as the humors on my eye —alternately soaring and descending —approaching and leaving one another —the imbodiment of some of my won thoughts which some times soar as high & sail & circle as majestically there. —

I should not care if our village life were greatly modified or totally changed It would be agreeable to me if men dwelt more in the country —a more rural life a life in the fields— I love to see a house standing in the middle of a field away from any road —it is an evidence of originality & independance in its inhabitants —& that they do not in other respects copy their neighbors. The state & the town should be a confederacy of independant families living apart each with is own territory —or small families may be united —like separate principalities A true family is in my eyes more commanding of respect —& of more authority and importance than the state— It is the older and more venerable state— The nobility of every country belong to families which are behind & prior to and in some sense independent on the state & the state can confer no honor equal to that of the family.

While the Robins are building their nest & rearing their family in the apple tree in the orchard they attract the favor and the interest of man —& represent all their tribe —but when they are about to migrate in the fall and have no further interest in the soil they band together in flocks with a forlorn & alien look —commanding the respect of none, and are at the mercy of every sportsman. A flock {*MS torn*} hundred robins is not so interesting {*MS torn*} me as a single family.

I could even dispense with the post office— I hardly receive more than one letter a year— And I think that there are very few important communications made through the post office— I am infinitely more interested in the old books than in the new I had rather wait for the new to become old before I read them than for the old to become new— I never read any memorable news in a newspaper in my life.— If we have read that one man was robbed or murdered or killed by accident —or one house was burned —or one mad dog killed or one vessel wrecked —why need one ever read of another —one is enough. I think that every man's private affairs his bargains his adventures his accidents & his thoughts or whims from morning till night are fully —as interesting as uncle Sams— But every man unless he is naturally stupid & a bore knows better than to trouble us with these things. Why should we live with such hurry & bustle —let us spend one day as deliberately as nature— Let us rise early & fast or break fast gently and without noise— What if the milk-man does not come in season {*MS torn*} white wash our coffee —let us murmur an inward prayer that we may be sustained under this trial & forget him Let company come & let company go determined to make a day of it. Let the bells ring & the children cry why should we knock under —& go with the stream. The sun has not got to the zenith yet. Let us not be upset & overwhelmed in that terrible rapid & whirlpool called a dinner —situated in the meridian shallows —weather this danger and you are safe for the rest of the way is down hill— with unrelaxed nerves —with morning vigor sail by it looking another way —ties to the mast— If the engine wistles let it whistle for its pains —and we will consider what kind of music it is like Let us not be starved before we are hungry.— Men have the st Vitus' dance. & cant possibly keep their heads still— Why if I should only give a few pulls at the bell-rope yonder fiery like —i.e. without setting the bell why there is not a man on his farm in the outskirts of the town notwithstanding that press of engagement {*One-half page missing*} sympathy with the devouring element. As for our work we havent any —any thing can command— hardly a man takes a half hour's nap after dinner but when he wakes he holds up his head and inquires whats the news— some give directions to be waked every half hour, doubtless for no other purpose. & then in return they tell what they have dreamed. Let us not be thrown off the track by every nut-shell & mosquito's wing that comes in our way.

Men say that a stitch in time saves nine —and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow — They do nothing to stitch in time —when possibly there may be {*One-half page missing*}


In these woods ranged the {*MS torn*} fox the wood chuck & the raccoon —the crow & the wood cock —in this hollow willow & alder thicket the muskrats builded & burrowed —along this meadow side the blackbirds congregated— Under the grove of Elms & buttonwoods in the horizon there was a village of busy men.— I went there frequently to observe their habits.— Mine was a solitary fox or woodchuck hole —

In the fall before my house was plastering but a fire had become necessary in the cool evenings I passed ...

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1850

 The 2d half of the 19th Century would be the period of market hunting, often by means of snares, of the Ruffed Grouse.<sup>10</sup>



After January 5, 1850: ... Make your will before you come to see me –that there may be no interruption– Take leave of your wife & children –receive extreme unction– One *friend* will go *professedly* to see another and if in five minutes he has not success –he will take his hat and come away saying to himself – that after such a disappointment he will *never* try again. The sportsman will lie curled up & motionless an hour or more under a bush in the snow in a winter afternoon –waiting for a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] to come out of the woods to bud on an apple tree.



The first goes home without any game in his bag –the last is rarely disappointed.– Muffled up and rubbing his hands & feet to keep them warm.  
He who remembers engagements is not here.  
Watching under a bush till the stars come out –with no companion but his fowling piece.  
Though the seasons quicken their pace I will not be hurried.



After January 5, 1850: My love for another is my affinity for him –it is the love of Quick lime for water. It is an enlargement of myself. I am pleased at the extension of my domains.



After April 19: I do not feel permanently related to any one.  
There is one hill in the west part of Sudbury which I call Rock Seat from a singularly square stone on the top of it well adapted for a seat amid the walnut trees –where many a walnut has evidently been cracked if one may judge from the shells lying around.  
Audubon says that the partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] “is often snowed up and covered over; or sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two.”



After April 19: there be no access on that side to citizens. I have thought how vain are all your labors citizens there you have labored these hundred years and I would rather have my house front on a natural swamp –for front yards are not made to walk in –but at most *through* –I would have so fertile a spot under my windows



After April 19: used to turn logs on. In a pleasant rocky part of the Shawshine. Ind corn hills many places are pointed out where the Ind cultivated corn –??  
I found today lying close together as in the hand about a dozen chips of arrow heads & among them one imperfect arrow head about a foot below the surface where an Ind. had sat to make them once –the perfect ones of course were carried off. It was close to the burnt stone’s & ashes of an Ind. Lodge. I think that the Ind. cultivated only the very light & sandy soil It frequently happens that where there is at present a desert & the farmers go for sand you will the traces of their wigwams & chip of arrowhead stone & arrowheads–

10. The record “bag” would be 167 grouse in a single day, by a team of two men operating between Worcester and Framingham MA.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

The oldest monuments of the white settlers hereabouts are probably some dilapidated & now undistinguished stone walls –laid long before Philip’s war–not houses certainly perhaps not cellars –but old unhonored stone walls & ditches– But it is difficult to find one well authenticated. I respect a stone wall therefore.

The catkins of the aspens –dismal Dantean funereal trees, look like mulberries large & red. or like caterpillars In April –excepting the Epigaea catkins are the flowers willows aspens birches hazles &c



After April 19: made as much for the passer by as the dweller in.

vegetation begins first at any rate it is now most forward at the bottom of shallow water in the ponds & ditches, the pads and other water plants are already nearly a foot high when the buds in the air above have not expanded –Spring comes earliest to the bottoms of stagnant pools –there no cool winds blow –no hoar frosts penetrate – but they grow protected as under a glass– There are fewer disturbing influences to rob them of the full advantage of the sun’s increased altitude.

The speckled & painted tortoises come out like the plants push out like the buds of the lilies Plants there are as much more forward as things in a hot bed are in advance of those in the open air natural hot beds –the skunk cabbage is not so far advanced as the lily pads–

It is dryest next to the brook. (in meadows) I have noticed that in most of our pastures and on the hills the rocks show the marks of fire being burned white & bare of lichens & some times cracked on their sides.– the lichens being left only on their tops. So extensively is fire applied as an agent to decompose the rocks. So is the earth cheapened & whitened & the spirit burned out of it by the white man.– when we shall we get new rocks again? Rocks which have not felt the clearer’s fires? A poor singed pealed bleached parboiled earth!

I visited today an old mill on the shawshine in Bedford said by Shattuck to have been built before Philip’s war & to have been owned by Michael Bacon then –& garrisoned by two soldiers at his request –now owned by a Fitch. Fitch the miller son of owner said the original mill had been burnt a great may years ago –but showed us a wall which he thought was as old as the first & many old oak timbers much decayed. His Grandmother there had been a mill there 200 years– I was most struck by some stairs made of sollid oak timber sawed diagonally the hypotenuse resting on a straight backed oak horse– The miller thought them a hundred years old at least–

They commanded my respect. old times had stout men. There was an old oak block shaped somewhat like a chair & used as such –its use not now known.– Also something like a solid wheel barrow wheel of oak, use not known, now

LEMUEL SHATTUCK

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

June 4, Tuesday: The [Fox Sisters](#), Katherine and Margaret, appeared in New-York and caused a sensation. [Horace Greeley](#) received them in his home, and his newspaper reported that “it would be the basest cowardice not to say that we are convinced beyond a doubt of their perfect integrity and good faith.”



Kate

Maggie

The Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) and other residents at the [Hopedale](#) intentional community were receptive to this spiritualism. They readily listened to the Universalist Spiritualist minister John Murray Spear and would publish some of his work on the Hopedale Community Press. During this year there was a flurry of spirit activity in Hopedale. After investigating and testing these phenomena to his own level of satisfaction, the Reverend announced himself to be a [Spiritualist](#).



Today June 4th I have been tending a burning in the woods. Ray was there. It is a pleasant fact that you will know no man long however low in the social scale however poor miserable, intemperate & worthless he may appear to be a mere burden to society—but you will find at last that there is something which he understands & can do better than any other. I was pleased to hear that one man had sent Ray as the one who had had the most experience in setting fires of any man in Lincoln— He had experience & skill as a burner of brush. You must burn against the wind always & burn slowly— When the fire breaks over the hoed line—a little system & perseverance will accomplish more toward quelling it than any man would believe.

—It fortunately happens that the experience acquired is oftentimes worth more than the wages. When a fire breaks out in the woods & a man fights it too near & on the side—in the heat of the moment without the systematic cooperation of others he is disposed to think it a desperate case & that this relentless fiend will run through the forests till it is glutted with food; but let the company rest from their labors a moment—& then proceed more deliberately & systematically giving the fire a wider berth—and the company will be astonished to find how soon & easily they will subdue it. The woods themselves furnish one of the best weapons with which to contend with the fires that destroy them—a pitch pine bow. It is the best instrument to thrash it with. There are few men who do not love better to give advice than to give assistance.

However large the fire let a few men go to work deliberately but perseveringly to rake away the leaves and hoe off the surface of the ground at a convenient distance from the fire while others follow with pine boughs to thrash it with when it reaches the line & they will finally get round it & subdue it and will be astonished at their own success. A man who is about to burn his field in the midst of woods—rake off the leaves & twigs for the breadth of a rod at least making no large heaps near the outside—and then plough around it several furrows—& breake them up with hoes—& set his fire early in the morning before the wind rises.

As I was fighting the fire to day in the midst of the roaring & crackling for the fire seems to snort like a wild horse—I heard from time to time the dying strain the last sigh, the fine clear shrill scream of agony as it were of the trees breathing their last—probably the heated air escaping from some chink— At first I thought it was some bird or a dying squirrels note of anguish.— or steam escaping from the tree. You sometimes hear it on a small scale in the log on the hearth. When a field is burned over the squirrels probably go into the ground.

The fire stopped within a few inches of a partridge’s nest [[Ruffed Grouse](#) █ [Bonasa umbellus](#) ([Partridge](#))] today June 4th—whom we took off in our hands and found 13 cream colored eggs. I started up a woodcock when I went to a rill to drink—at the westernmost angle of R.W.E.’s woodlot.

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

William M. White's version of a portion of the above journal entry is:

*As I was fighting the fire to-day,  
In the midst of the roaring and crackling,—  
For the fire seems to snort like a wild horse,—  
I heard from time to time the dying strain,  
The last sigh,  
The fine, clear, shrill scream of agony, as it were,  
Of the trees breathing their last,  
Probably the heated air  
Or the steam escaping from some chink.*

*At first I thought it was some bird,  
Or a dying squirrel's note of anguish,  
Or steam escaping from the tree.  
You sometimes hear it on a small scale  
In the log on the hearth.*



**A Grouse Nest with 10 Eggs Found by Herbert W. Gleason  
at the Base of a Tree Near Brister's Spring**

**FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A "HISTORICAL CONTEXT" IS WHAT  
THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES  
DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE  
TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST  
CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS**

THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.

June 8, Saturday: An issue of Chambers' Edinburgh Journal:

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL  
ISSUE OF JUNE 8



June 8: Here it is the 8th of June and the grass is growing apace— In the front yards of the village they are already beginning to cut it— The fields look luxuriant and verdurous but as the weather is warmer the atmosphere is not so clear. In distant woods the partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] sits on her eggs.



& at evening the frogs begin to dream & boys begin to bathe in The river & ponds.  
Cultivate the habit of early-rising— It is unwise to keep the head long on a level with the feet  
On the western railroad the farmers set their clocks by the cars—says newspaper  
The cars come & go with such regularity & precision—and the whistle & rumble are heard so far—that town clocks & family clocks are already half dispensed with— And it is easy to foresee that one extensive well conducted & orderly institution like a rail-road will keep time & order for a whole country. The startings & arrivals of the cars are the epochs in a village day.  
Not till June can the grass be said to be waving in the fields. When the frogs dream & the grass waves and the butter cups toss their heads—& the heat disposes to bathe in the ponds & streams—then is summer begun.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

August 14, Wednesday: US Senator [Lewis Cass](#) wrote to [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#), welcoming him to America.

[Abba Alcott](#) opened an “intelligence service” on Atkinson Street. That is, what we would refer to as an upscale and decent “employment agency,” one not preoccupied with a project of attracting poor young girls off the street and into brothels, or making promises to poor people and working them and then discharging them without their pay. Abba began to talk about how the relation between mistress and maid was a “false relation” with which she hated to be in any way associated.

Best American and Foreign Help. Families provided, at the shortest notice, with accomplished COOKS, good PARLOR and CHAMBER GIRLS, NURSERY MAIDS, SEAMSTRESSES, TOILETTE WOMEN, and DRESS MAKERS. Any person paying the Subscription of \$1 shall be furnished with a ticket, entitling her to a choice of Help for six months from Mrs. Alcott's rooms.



Middle of August: {*One leaf missing*} unexpected pleasure.

I knew a clergyman who when any person died was wont to speak of that portion of mankind who survived as living monuments of Gods mercy. A negative kind of life to live!

I can easily walk 10 15 20 any number of miles commencing at my own door without going by any house—without crossing a road except where the fox & the mink do. Concord is the oldest inland town in New England, perhaps in the States. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant.— First along by the river & then the brook & then the meadow & the wood-side— Such solitude from a hundred hills I can see civilization & abodes of man afar. These farmers & their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks

As I was going by with a creaking wheelbarrow, one of my neighbors who heard the music ran out with his grease pot & brush and greased the wheels

That is a peculiar season when about the middle of August the farmers are getting their meadow hay. If you sail up the river you will see them in all meadows raking hay and loading it onto carts great lorry teams—under which the oxen stand like beetles chewing the cud waiting for men to put the meadow on—with the heaviest load they dash aside to crop a daisy.—(the half-broken steers

There was reason enough for the first settlers selecting the elm out of all the trees of the forest with which to ornament his villages It is beautiful alike by sunlight & moonlight—and the most beautiful specimens are not the largest— I have seen some only 25 or 30 years old, more graceful and healthy I think than any others. It is almost become a villageous tree—like martins [*Purple Martin Progne subis*] & blue birds.

The high blue-berry has the wildest flavor of any of the huckle-berry tribe— It is a little mithridatic— It is like eating a poisonous berry which your nature makes harmless. I derive the same pleasure as if I were eating dog wood berries & night-shade wild parsnip with impunity.

—Man & his affairs—Church & state & school trade & commerce & agriculture—Politics for that is the word for them all here today—I am pleased to see how little space it occupies in the landscape—it is but a narrow field—that still narrower highway yonder leads to it— I sometimes direct the traveller{*One leaf missing*}





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

And once again  
When I went a maying—  
For there grow the May flower  
Epgaea repens  
& the Mt Cranberry

---

Jake Lakin!<sup>11</sup>

O whither dost thou go?  
Which way dostest thou flow  
Thou art the way—  
Thou art a rode  
Which Dante never trode  
Not many they be  
Who enter therein

---

For thou leadest nowhere  
But to the Irish man Quin:

---

Only the guests of the  
Irishman Quin

There was a crossed-eyed fellow used to help me survey—he was my stake-driver—and all he said was—at every stake he drove—“There, I should’nt like to undertake to pull *that* up with my teeth.”  
It sticks in my *crop*—thats a good phrase—many things stick there.


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11. In the birth records for the town of Lincoln there is a 1777 entry for a Jacob Lakin. It appears that nobody has any idea why Thoreau jotted this name down in his journal at this point.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

The man of wild habits  
Partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] & Rabbits

Who has no cares  
Only to set snares  
Who liv'st all alone  
Close to the bone—  
And where life is sweetest  
constantly eatest.

Where they once dug for money  
But never found “any”

To market fares  
With early apples & pears.

When the spring stirs my blood  
With the instinct to travel  
I can get enough gravel  
on the Old Marlboro' Road.  
If you'll leave your abode  
With your spirits unfurled  
You may go round the world  
By the old Marlboro Road.  
Nobody repairs it—  
For nobody wears it—  
It is a living way  
As the Christians say—  
What is it—what is it  
But a direction out there  
And the bare possibility  
O going somewhere—  
Great guide *boards* of stone  
But travellers none.  
It is worth going there to see  
Where you might be  
They're a great endeavor  
To be something for ever.  
They are a monument to somebody  
To some select man  
Who thought of the plan  
What king (did the thing)  
I am still wondering—  
Cenotaphs of the towns  
Named on their Crowns  
Huge as Stone henge  
Set up how or when  
By what select men?  
Gourgas or Lee  
Clark or Darby?  
Blank tablets of stone  
Where a traveller might groan  
And in one sentence  
grave all that is known  
Which another might read  
In his extreme need.  
I know two or three  
That might there be.  
Literature that might stand  
All over the land.  
Which men might remember  
Till After December.  
And read again in the spring



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

After the thawing.

Old-meeting-house bell  
I love thy music well  
It peals through the air  
Sweetly full & fair  
as in the early times  
When I listened to its chimes.

I walk over the hills, to compare *great* things with *small*, as through a gallery of pictures—ever and anon looking through a gap in the wood, as through the frame of a picture, to a more distant wood or hill side, painted with several more coats of air— It is a cheap but pleasant effect.

To a landscape in picture, glassed with air.

What is a horizon without *Mts!*

A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air— It has new life & motion. It is intermediate between land & sky.— On land only the grass & trees wave—but the water itself is *rippled* by the wind. I see the breeze dash across it in streaks & flakes of light. It is somewhat singular that we should look down on the surface of water.—

We shall *look down* on the surface of air next—& mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over *it*  
When I go out of the house for a walk uncertain as yet whether I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instincts to decide for me {*Two leaves missing*} {*Two-thirds page missing*}

Is consigned to the nine.  
I am but the Jackes of myself.  
Without inlet it lies  
Without outlet it flows  
From & to the skies  
It comes & it goes  
I am its source—  
& my life is its course  
I am its stoney shore,  
& the gale that passes oer

{*Two-thirds page missing*} {*MS torn*}s man & womans {*MS torn*}  
All that the money digger had ever found was a pine-tree-shilling. Once as he was dunging out. He was paid much more for dunging out—but he valued more the money which he found. The boy thinks most of the cent he found—not the cent he earned— {*One leaf missing*}

Among the worst of men that ever lived  
However we did seriously attend  
A little space we let our thoughts ascend  
Experienced our religion & confessed  
'Twas good for us to be there—be anywhere  
Then to a heap of apples we addressed  
& cleared a 5 rail fence with hand on  
But by a natural law our thoughts returned to ground  
And we went on to heaven by the long way round.

What's the rail-road to me?  
I never go to see  
Where it ends  
It fills a few hollows  
And makes banks for the swallows  
It sets the sand a flowing  
And blackberries a growing



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

November 8, Friday: Eugene Ring decided to spend the winter in Panama, and to return in the spring to the mines in [California](#). He embarked in San Francisco on the barque *Powhatten*.

[Caroline H. Dall](#)'s open letter to Mrs. [Paulina Wright Davis](#), president of the Worcester Convention, appeared in [The Liberator](#):

Every thing is dangerous that has efficacy and vigor for its characteristics;  
nothing is safe but mediocrity.

— Sydney Smith

I do not know, my dear Mrs. Davis, whether you will thank me for addressing to you the words of encouragement which I find it necessary to give to the movement lately commenced at Worcester. But it is because I feel grateful to you, whom I do not personally know, that I find it necessary to do so. I thank you for the able, prudent and graceful address with which you opened the Convention. It is of immense importance that an effort of this kind should be made in a spirit of gentleness, which shall give the immediate lie to the slanders most probable concerning it. The popular idea of such a movement is, that woman expects to be reinstated in her rights by trampling upon man's — that nothing can be claimed for her but what is stolen from him. The truth is, that woman desires merely to be left free to act according to the demands of her nature, as man is; and she desires this, not for her sake, merely, but for his. She desires it for no individual and selfish gratification, but because well convinced that the great work of civilization cannot, otherwise, go on; that the world will suffer, and its spirit grow blustering and 'mannish' for lack of the feminine elements. What she wants is not woman's rights, but human rights; not power for herself, but for her race. The popular idea is, that the women immediately engaged in this reform expect to reap personal advantages from it. The truth is, that a more thankless task was never undertaken than theirs.

Women are shocked at those of their own sex, who speak freely of the social evils which grow out of the present condition of affairs, and husbands, brothers and lovers talk to those who love them best, as if no better motive than the love of notoriety could ever lead to such a result. No — it is our stern duty to insist upon the privilege of an education for women yet to be born, which we can never share; to claim that control over our own earning which we are, few of us, in a condition to profit by; to bear witness to an influence which the world needs, without ever hoping for a wide opportunity to exert it. And I am well aware that, in spite of the womanly tone that I desire we should preserve in doing this, there will be moments when, for the sake of our down-trodden and suffering sisters, we must needs speak stern and bitter truth. I am especially anxious that those who feel as if bound to speak in this matter should show themselves womanly and delicate, and capable of fulfilling, as they should be fulfilled, the duties of mother, wife and sister. Let no slattern seek the public gaze, claiming for a wider sphere of duty, when it may be easily seen that she is not faithful to







## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the narrow field lying just about her. Let no scolding wife, nor impatient mother, bring her neglected home and moaning little ones before our view, by crying out for a license that she has already taken.

It does not seem to be generally understood that a woman's duty is determined by what are popularly called her rights. Men are little aware how much woman would help them bear the burden of life, if they had not themselves prescribed for her so low an ideal. It is the low ideal of woman's nature which prevails in society, that lies at the bottom of the most serious evils in it. I do not mean at this moment, snatched from hours of suffering which unfit me for any thorough discussion of the subject, to speak at length of woman's possibilities; to assert that her intellect may climb like Lucifer, yet never fall; that her voice may quell a political storm, yet never grow harsh or noisy; for I hold such questions to be of small importance. When we have given to women all the advantages of education, and the same freedom of action which are given to men, it will be time enough to discuss what they may naturally become. We cannot contravene the laws of God. Let us leave woman free; and if, in her first efforts to go alone, she trip like the nursling just out of her arms, there is no fear that she will perseveringly attempt a work for which she is too weak, or desire a field of action unsuited to her natural powers. Those who are contented with the present condition of the sex, need not dread any thing that may come after. Many women who have no desire for political influence, might be driven to exert it, if they found they could defeat a Fugitive Slave Bill, but no harm can come of investing them with open and sacred responsibility in regard to matters over which they now have a secret and dangerous power.

First of all, I am desirous that the women of this country should claim fitting provision for their own education. It is a stale truth now, that the safety of a republic depends upon the intelligence of its citizens; for the time is coming when the means of education, being wholly inefficient, the welfare of this republic, and the character of its citizens, will depend chiefly upon its mothers. Few persons know how difficult it is for a woman to procure an education. What is barely possible to wealth, is wholly impossible to poverty. Even men who teach mathematics and the languages to both sexes, teach them superficially to women, and take no pains to lay a solid foundation for such superstructures as they may afterward wish to rear. I speak from experience, for no money was spent on my own education, and I am, to this hour, daily mortified by its insufficiency, and the bad modes of investigation into which I was allowed to fall. If the poorer class of females in a community could receive a good education, they would be able to earn a living more successfully than they are now, and many of them would be spared lives of ignominy and sin. Now that the laws of Massachusetts have been somewhat altered with regard to property, I think that the subject next in importance is that of the rates of remuneration paid to women. It seems to me that



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the men and women in this country should imperatively demand, that when women do the same work as men, and are even acknowledged to do it better, they should be paid at the same rate. Why I feel particularly interested in this matter, will partly appear from the following remarks.

In every large city, there is a class of women, whose existence is a terror and reproach to the land in which they are born; whose name no modest woman is supposed to know; whose very breath is thought to poison the air of the sanctuary. I pass over the fact, so generally ignored, that there is a class of men corresponding to these women, and far viler in the sight of God, I doubt not. I avoid dwelling on the social death which is the lot of these miserable creatures, and which is often the reward of their first efforts for a better life. I know that many whom I love will blame me bitterly for speaking on this subject at all, but that blame I must bear as God permits, for I feel bound to draw your attention to a few facts. Whatever elevates woman will diminish this class; but proper remuneration for her labor would draw many from it at once, almost all, in fact, who had not reached the lowest deep. Most women, -if they dare to think about them at all,- suppose that these miserable creatures are always the victims of their own bad natures, or want of principle; that they find their life a life of pleasure, and that they would not forsake it if they could, unless under the influence of religious conviction. If such thinkers would study their own unpolluted natures more closely, they would understand the position of the despised class far better than they do; and the more intelligent and religious they themselves become, the more distinctly will they perceive, that to undertake the regeneration of such, is imperatively the duty of the women rather than the men of the community.

The facts of the matter, for which I refer you to Duchatelet in Paris, and James Talbot and Dr. Ryan in London, are these: - Nine-tenths of the women of this class in any community will be found to consist of two sub-divisions. First, those who are born to this life as naturally and inevitably as the robin is born to cleave the air. Of such are foundlings, orphans, and the children of the extremely poor, whose habits of lodging are fatal to modesty, in most instances. Second, those who began life honestly, but were compelled to sell themselves for bread. Of such are young exposed persons afraid to die, widows with large families dependent upon them, and single women burdened with the care of the infirm or aged. Many of this class have been known to leave this wretched life for months together, when it became possible for them to earn what is called an honest livelihood. Again, instead of leading a life of pleasure, such women suffer intensely, and twelve out of every fifteen examined testify, that they could not sustain its physical horrors without their daily dram. It is stated on good authority, that the strongest constitutions sink under this life in less than three years, and the cases are numerous in which, after a much shorter period, the victim commits suicide.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I have stated these facts to show that no woman will remain in this life who can quit it, that there is hope for those who will hold out hope to them, and to show that inadequate remuneration for honest labor is one great reason why their number is so large. In making this statement, I depend not merely on the statistics published at Paris and London, but on my own observation in New England. Many persons imagine that the horrors detailed of foreign cities find no parallel here. This is not true. The public sense of decorum in Boston drives vice into close corners, but terrible indeed would be the revelation that a Duchatelet of our own must make. Passing the other evening through a street at the North end of the city, I saw three children, under ten years of age, cuddled close together for warmth, and sound asleep on the brick pavement, at the base of building erected to store flour. Returning, at a late hour, I found, not far from them, three of the most wretched of the women alluded to. They were scantily clothed and starving. Their breaths bore witness that, even in this extremity, they had preferred their daily dram to their daily bread; yet such was their eagerness for food and rest, that they almost clutched the garments of passers by.

These children slept and these women walked within the compass of the Swedish singer's voice [Jenny Lind], and many times that night, as the latter trod their dreary round, her clear notes swelled full upon their ears, the waves of her spiritual song floated round their dishonored heads, like dreams of their far-gone childhood, and the wonderful echo of the Herdsman's Song thrilled through the soul of more than one, I doubt not, like the cattle-call of her early companions, or the twittering of the swallows under the eaves of her home. These women had no roof to call their own, and the children who slept under God's unwinking eye on that cold stone, inherit their homelessness and their sin. Such women are redeemable, and better wages or a better education would save thousands from their fate. Need I say any more to induce women to strain every nerve to secure these two ends, at least?

It has been no small satisfaction to see that the presses which had least sympathy with the late movement, have reported respectfully the proceedings of the Convention. It has pained me not a little to find that a paper like the Christian Inquirer should take a different tone in this matter, and refuse to believe that any lofty motive could have brought the pioneers in this work together. The Inquirer says that woman has 'long possessed' an equality with man. I commend that sentence to the serious consideration of the editor whose superscription it bears. It seems to me that he never could have written it, if he had seen as much of human misery as I have, if he had known what are the rights and duties of the women of the lower classes. I can understand how a woman, delicately reared and carefully protected from the rough blasts of this world, may feel, in her selfish life, but little sympathy with me in this matter; but how a minister of the gospel, or any Christian man, conversant

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

with the bitter realities of New York and Boston, can speak harshly of any honest effort for a change, I know not. Least of all do I understand how one, who has heard the voice of Lucretia Mott or Elizabeth Fry, can believe that every woman who speaks in public weakens the position and influences of her sex. Why can he not understand the injustice of one sex prescribing the sphere and duties of the other? What would be thought of the woman, I wonder, who should so prescribe for man? Nay, God made Elizabeth Barrett to write poetry; Jenny Lind He marvelously gifted to sing it; but Lucretia Mott He just as much gifted to urge on an erring race the doctrines of personal holiness, the duty of personal philanthropy. Forgive me if I intrude upon your time, and continue to help all who are interested in this matter to be at once true to themselves and generous to others; acting calmly and quietly, yet nevertheless energetically, according to their highest convictions.

CAROLINE W.H. DALL  
Boston, Nov. 2, 1850.



November 8 -50: The stillness of the woods & fields is remarkable at this season of the year. There is not even the chirp (creak) of a cricket to be heard. Of myriads of dry shrub-oak leaves, not one rustles. Your own breath can rustle them, yet the breath of heaven does not suffice to.— The trees have the aspect of waiting for winter The autumnal leaves have lost their color—they are now truly sere & dead—and the woods wear a somber color. Summer & harvest are over. The hickories—birches—chestnuts, no less than the maples have lost their leaves— The sprouts which had shot up so vigorously to repair the damage which the choppers had done have stopped short for the winter— Everything stands silent and expectant. If I listen I hear only the note of a chickadee—our most common and I may say native bird—most identified with our forests—or perchance the scream of a jay—or perchance from the solemn depths of these woods—I hear tolling far away the knell of one departed. Thought comes to fill the vacuum— As you walk however the partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] still bursts away. The silent dry almost leafless—certainly fruitless woods. You wonder what cheer that bird can find in them. The partridge bursts away from the root of a shrub-oak like its own dry fruit, immortal bird! This sound still startles us. Dry golden rods now turned grey & white lint our clothes as We walk. And the drooping downy seed vessels of the epilobium remind us of the summer— Perchance you will meet with a few solitary asters in the dry fields with a little color left. The sumack is stripped of everything but its cone of red berries



This is a peculiar season—peculiar for its stillness—the crickets have ceased their song. The few birds are well nigh silent— The tinted & gay leaves are now sere and dead and the woods wear a sombre aspect. A carpet of snow under the pines & shrub-oaks will make it look more cheerful— Very few plants have now their



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

spring But thoughts still spring in man's brain. There are no flowers nor berries to speak of. The grass begins to die at top— In the morning it is stiff with frost. Ice has been discovered in somebody's tub very early this morn of the thickness of a dollar. The flies are betwixt life & death. The wasps come into the houses & settle on the walls & windows All insects go into crevices. The fly is entangled in a web and struggles vainly to escape—but there is no spider to secure him— The corner of the pane is a deserted camp.

When I lived in the woods the wasps came by thousands to my lodge in November—as to winter quarters, and settled on my—windows & on the walls over my head sometimes deterring visitors from entering— Each morning when they were numbed with cold I swept some of them out. But I did not trouble myself to get rid of them they never molested me, though they bedded with me—and they gradually disappeared into what crevices I do not know.— avoiding winter

I saw a squash-bug go slowly behind a clapboard to avoid winter—as some of these melon-seeds come up in the garden again in the spring—so some of these squash bugs come forth— The flies are for a long time in a somnambulant state— They have too little energy or vis vitae to clean their wings or heads which are covered with dust. They buzz and bump their heads against the windows or lie on their backs and that is all—two or three short spurts— One of these mornings we shall hear that Mr Minot had to break the ice to water his cow. And so it will go on till the ground freezes. If the race had never lived through a winter what would they think was coming?

Walden Pond has at last fallen a little— It has been so high over the stones quite into the bushes that walkers have been excluded from it. There has been no accessible shore— All Ponds have been high— The water stood higher than usual in the distant ponds which I visited & had never seen before. It has been a peculiar season. At Goose-Pond I notice that the birches of one years growth from the stumps standing in the water are all dead apparently killed by the water—unless like the pine they die down after springing from the stump.

It is warm somewhere anyday in the year— You will find some nook in the woods generally at midforenoon of the most blustering day where you may forget the cold. I used to resort to the North east shore of Walden where the sun reflected from the pine woods on the stoney shore made it as warm as a fireside. It is so much pleasanter and wholsomer to be warmed by the sun when you can than by a fire.

I saw today a double reflection on the pond of the cars passing—one beneath the other—occasioned—by a bright rippled streak on the surface of the water from which a second reflection sprang.

One who would study lichens must go into a new country where the rocks have not been burned.

Therien says that the Canadians say March-donc to their horses—

And that the acid fruit must be spelled painbèna— He says that the French acre or arpent is 10 perches by 10 of 18 ft each

December 19, Thursday: Otto Theodor, Baron von Manteuffel replaced Friedrich Wilhelm, Count of Brandenburg as prime minister of Prussia.

In Paris, at the Comédie-Française, incidental music to Augier's comédie en vers *Le Joueur de flûte* by Jacques Offenbach was performed for the initial time.

The [Reverend Henry Augustus Boardman, D.D.](#) repeated the Thanksgiving Sermon he had delivered during the previous week, this time in the sanctuary of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This was the sermon in which he had traced the hand of GOD (he capitalized important words for emphasis) in the creation of the federal union of the United States of America, in such manner as to indicate that SLAVERY, as a divisive force which might annul this work of the hand of GOD, was therefore an evil which it was imperative that we destroy. It was the will of GOD that the United States of America be one nation and therefore it was the will of GOD that the southern states not be allowed to secede, and that the American



RUFFED GROUSE


DIFFERENT DRUMMER

south's peculiar institution of SLAVERY be destroyed by the American north.

THE AMERICAN UNION

Now to change the subject –ahem– I am going to begin to describe [Henry Thoreau](#) as a nonspeciesist and to insist that this characteristic of his is one that that not only is seldom commented on, but little understood. Everybody now does grasp that Henry was nonracist, that he desired that there not be special treatment for special human races, but nobody seems as yet to have grasped that this desire that we all live at parity with one another was but one small segment of a more general desire, that there not be special standing for special species such as this human one, but that instead all of God's creatures should be allowed to share equally at the table of the Lord's bounty. I will begin this thread by instancing the surprise he expresses in his journal at this point, that nonhumans such as the ruffed grouse seemed not to have discovered the delight in the little frozen wild-apples of the New England winter that he himself found in them:



Dec 19th Yesterday I tracked a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] in the new fallen snow till I came to where she took to flight & I could track her no further. I see where the snow-birds have picked the seeds of the Roman wormwood & other weeds and have covered the snow with the shells & husks.– The smilax berries are as plump as ever. The catkins of the alders are as tender & fresh looking as ripe mulberries. The dried choke-cherries so abundant in the swamp are now quite sweet. The witch-hazel is covered with fruit & droops over gracefully like a willow –the yellow foundation of its flowers still remaining– I find the sweet gale myrica by the river also. The wild-apples are frozen as hard as stones and rattle in my pockets but I find that they soon thaw when I get to my chamber & yeield a sweet cider– I am astonished that the animals make no more use of them.



"The formation of different languages and of distinct species, and the proofs that both have been developed through a gradual process, are curiously the same."  
 – Charles Darwin, THE DESCENT OF MAN, AND SELECTION IN RELATION TO SEX, 1871



We will track this nonspeciesist attitude in the following months in [Thoreau's](#) journal:



December 22, 1850 ...Here is a stump on which a squirrel has sat & stripped the pine cones of a neighboring tree– Their cores & scales lie all around He knew that they contained an almond before the naturalist did– He has long been a close observer of nature...



May 6, 1851: ...How important is a constant intercourse with nature and the contemplation of natural phenomenon to the preservation of Moral & intellectual health. The discipline of the schools or of business – can never impart such serenity to the mind. The philosopher contemplates human affairs as calmly & from as great a remoteness as he does natural phenomena– The ethical philosopher needs the discipline of the natural philosopher. He approaches the study of mankind with great advantages who is accustomed to the study of nature.–...


## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



June 14, 1851: ...Where there was only one firefly in a dozen rods –I hastily ran to one –which had crawled up to the top of a grass head & exhibited its light –& Instantly another sailed in to it showing its light also –but my presence made them extinguish their lights –the latter retreated & the former –crawled slowly down the stem. It appeared to me That the first was a female who thus revealed her place to the male who was also making known his neighborhood as he hovered about –both showing their lights that they might come together It was like a mistress who had climbed to the turrets of her castle & exhibited there a blazing taper for a signal –while her lover had displayed his light on the plain. If perchance she might have any lovers abroad...



July 19, 1851: ...I see that hens too follow the cows feeding near the house like the cowtroopial [Brown-headed Cowbird  *Molothrus ater*] –& for the same object. They cannot so well scare up insects for themselves. This is the dog the cowbird uses to start its insect game....



July 25, 1851: ...I saw some horses standing on the very top of the ramparts the highest part of Hull, where there was hardly room to turn round –for the sake of the breeze. It was excessively warm, and their instincts –or their experience perchance guided them as surely to the summit as it did me....

1851

January 10, Friday: [Richard Wagner](#) completed [OPER UND DRAMA \(OPERA AND DRAMA\)](#).



January 10: The snow shows how much of the *mts* in the horizon are covered with forest– I can also see plainer as I stand on a hill what proportion of the township is in forest.

Got some excellent frozen thawed apples off of Anurnsack– Soft & luscious as a custard –and free from worms & rot Saw a partridge (**Ruffed Grouse** [Bonasa umbellus](#)) budding –but they did not appear to have pecked the apples

There was a remarkable sunset a mother of pearl sky seen over the Price farm Some small clouds as well as the edges of large ones most brilliantly painted with mother of pearl tints through & through. I never saw the like before. Who can foretel the sunset –what it will be?

The near and bare hills covered with snow look like mountains –but the *mts* in the horizon do not look higher than hills.

I frequently see a hole in the snow where a partridge has squatted the mark or form of her tail very distinct.

The chivalric & heroic spirit which once belonged to the chevalier or rider only seems now to reside in the walker– To represent the chivalric spirit we have no longer a knight –but a walker errant– I speak not of Pedestrianism, or of walking a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours–

The Adam who daily takes a turn in his garden

methinks I would not accept of the gift of life If I were required to spend as large a portion of it sitting bent up or with my legs crossed as the shoemakers and tailors do. As well be tied head & heels together & cast into the sea– Making acquaintance with my extremities

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art taking walks daily –not exercise –the legs or body merely –nor barely to recruit the spirits but positively to exercise both body & spirit –& to succeed to the highest & worthiest ends by the abandonment of all specifics ends.– who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering– – And this word saunter by the way is happily derived “from idle people who roved about the country [in the middle ages] and asked charity under pretence of going à la sainte terre,” to the holy land –till perchance the children exclaimed There goes a sainte terrer a holy lander– They who never go to the holy land in their walks as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers & vagabonds–

{*Two leaves missing*}

than usually jealous of my freedom I feel that my connexions with & obligations to society are at present very slight & transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood & by which I am serviceable to my contemporaries are as yet a pleasure to me and I am not often reminded that they are a necessity. So far I am successful –and only he is successful in his business who makes that pursuit which affords him the highest pleasure sustain him. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery– If I should sell both my forenoons & afternoons to society neglecting my peculiar calling there would be nothin left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birth-right for a mess of pottage

[F. Andrew Michaux](#) says that “the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe: in the U S there are more than 140 species that exceed 30 feet in height – – ; in France there are but 30 that attain this size, of which 18 enter into the composition of the forests, & seven only are employed in building.”

The perfect resemblance of the Chestnut Beech & hornbeams in Europe & the U S rendered a separate figure unnecessary.

He says the white oak “is the only oak on which a few of the dried leaves persist till the circulation is renewed in the spring.”

Had often heard his father say that “the fruit of the common European walnut, in its natural state, is harder than that of the American species just mentioned [the Pacanenut Hickory] and inferior to it in size & quality.”

The arts teach us a thousand lessons. Not a yard of cloth can be woven without the most thorough fidelity in the weaver. The ship must be made *absolutely* tight before it is launched.

It is an important difference between two characters that the one is satisfied with a happy but level success but, the other as constantly elevates his aim. Though my life is low, if my spirit looks upward habitually at an





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

elevated angle –it is, as it were redeemed– When the desire to be better than we are is really sincere we are instantly elevated, and so far better already

I lose my friends of course as much by my own ill treatment & ill valuing of them (prophaning of them cheapening of them) as by their cheapening of themselves –till at last when I am prepared to them justice I am permitted to deal only with the memories of themselves –their ideals still surviving in me –no longer with their actual selves–

We exclude ourselves– As the child said of the stream in which he bathed head or foot V Confucius

It is something to know when you are addressed by divinity and not by a common traveller.

I went down cellar just now to get an armful of wood –and passing the brick piers with my wood & candle –I heard methought a common place suggestion –but when as it were by accident –I reverently attended to the hint –I found that it was the voice of a God who had followed me down cellar to speak to me.

How many communications may we not lose through inattention?

I would fain keep a journal which should contain those thoughts & impressions which I am most liable to forget that I have had Which would have, in one sense the greatest remoteness –in another the greatest nearness, to me.

'Tis healthy to be sick sometimes,<sup>12</sup>

I do not know but the reason why I love some Latin verses more than whol English poems –is simply in the elegant terseness & conciseness of the language –an advantage which the individual appears to have shared with his nation.

When we can no longer ramble in the fields of Nature, we ramble in the fields of thought & literature. The old become readers– Our heads retain their strength when our legs have become weak.

English literature from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets [Chaucer](#) & Spencer & Shakspeare & Milton included breathes no quite fresh & in this sense wild strain It is an essentially tame & civilized literature reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a greenwood her wild man a Robinhood. There is plenty of genial love of nature in her poets but

Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her became extinct

There was need of America

I cannot think of any poetry which adequately expresses this yearning for the wild. the *wilde*.

Ovid says

Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,  
Occulitque caput, quod adhuc latet.–  
Nilus terrified fled to the extremity of the globe,  
And hid his head, which is still concealed –

And we moderns must repeat –quod adhuc latet.

Phaeton's Epitaph

Hic situs est Phaëton, currûs auriga paterni;  
Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis.

His sister Lampetie –

subitâ radice retenta est.

All the sisters were changed to trees while They were in vain beseeching Their mother not to break their

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12. The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward a snippet from this day's entry as:

### THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION BY W.H. AUDEN...

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
212	The Professions	'Tis healthy to be sick sometimes.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

branches  
cortex in verba novissima venit.

His brother Cycnus lamenting the death of Phaeton –killed by Joves lightning –& the metamorphosis of his sisters –was changed into a Swan –

Nec se caeloque, Iovique  
Credit, ut injustè missi memor ignis ab illo.

Reason why the swan does not fly –

Nor trusts himself to the heavens  
Nor to Jove, as if remembering the fire unjustly sent by him

i.e. against Phaeton.

precibusque minas regaliter addit.

II-397

Jove –

royally adds threats to prayers.

Callisto –

Miles erat Phoebes

i.e. a huntress

– – (neque enim coelestia tingi  
Ora decet lachrymis) II-621  
For it is not becoming that the faces  
of the celestials be tinged with tears

How much more fertile a Nature has Grecian Mythology its root in than English Literature! The nature which inspired mythology still flourishes– Mythology is the crop which the old world bore before its soil was exhausted– The west is preparing to add its fables to those of the east. A more fertile nature than the Mississippi valley. None of your four hour nights for me me– The wise man will take a fool's allowance– The corn would not come to much if the nights were but four hours long  
The soil in which those fables grew is deep and inexhaustible.  
Lead cast by the Balearian sling.

Volat illud, et incandescit eundo;  
Et quos non habuit, sub nubibus invenit, ignes.

II-728

That flies & grows hot with going,  
And fires which it had not finds under the clouds.

The old world with its vast deserts –& its arid & elevated steppes & table lands contrasted with the new world with its humid & fertile valleys & savannahs & prairies –& its boundless primitive forests– Is like the exhausted Ind corn lands contrasted with the peat meadows, America requires some of the sand of the old world to be carted onto her rich but as yet unassimilated meadows  
I went some months ago to see a panorama of the Rhine It was like a dream of the Middle ages– I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination under bridges built by the Romans and repaired by later heroes past cities & castles whose very names were music to me made my ears tingle –& each of which was the

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

subject of a legend. There seemed to come up from its waters & its vine-clad hills & valleys a hushed music as of crusaders departing for the Holy Land— There were Ehrenbreitstein & Rolandseck & Coblenz which I knew only in history. I floated along through the moonlight of history under the spell of enchantment It was as if I remembered a glorious dream as if I had been transported to a heroic age & breathed an atmosphere of chivalry Those times appeared far more poetic & heroic than these  
 Soon after I went to see the panorama of the Mississippi and as I fitly worked my way upward in the light of today —& saw the steamboats wooding up —& looked up the Ohio & the Missouri & saw its unpeopled cliffs —& counted the rising cities —& saw the Indians removing west across the stream & heard the legends of Dubuque & of Wenona's Cliff—still thinking more of the future than of the past or present —I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind that the foundations

{*One leaf missing*}

all this West —which our thoughts traverse so often & so freely. We have never doubted that their prosperity was our prosperity— It is the home of the younger-sons As among the Scandinavians the younger sons took to the seas for their inheritance and became the Vikings or Kings of the Bays & colonized Ice land & Greenland & probably discovered the continent of America

[Guyot](#) says —“the Baltic Sea has a depth of only 120 feet between the coasts of Germany and those of Sweden;”  
 p 82

“The Adriatic, between Venice & Trieste, has a depth of only 130 feet.”

“Between France & England, the greatest depth does not exceed 300 feet;”

He says

The most extensive forest “the most gigantic wilderness” on the earth is in the basin of the Amazon & extends almost unbroken more than 1500 miles

South America the kingdom of palms no where a greater number of species “This is a sign of the preponderating development of leaves over every other part of the vegetable growth; of that expansion of foliage, of that leafiness, peculiar to warm & moist climates. America has no plants with slender shrunken leaves, like those of Africa and New Holland. The Ericas, or heather, so common, so varied, so characteristic of the flora of the Cape of Good Hope, is a form unknown to the New World. There is nothing resembling those *Metrosideris* of Africa, those dry Myrtles (*Eucalyptus*) and willow-leaved acacias, whose flowers shine with the liveliest colors, but their narrow foliage, turned edgewise to the vertical sun, casts no shadow.”

my own

The white man derives his nourishment from the earth from the roots & grains The potatoe & wheat & corn & rice & sugar —which often grow in fertile & pestilential river bottoms fatal to the life of the cultivator The Indian has but a slender hold on the earth— He derives his nourishment in great part but indirectly from her through the animals he hunts

—“compared with the Old World, the New World is the humid side of our planet, the *oceanic*, *Vegetative* world, the passive element awaiting the excitement of a livelier impulse from without.” [[Guyot](#)]

{*One leaf missing*}

“For the American, this task is to work the virgin soil;”—

“Agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else.” [[Guyot](#)]

February 9, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote something in his journal on this day that Dr. Alfred I. Tauber would consider relevant to an understanding of his attitude toward time and eternity: “My desire for knowledge is intermittent but my desire to commune with the spirit of the universe —to be intoxicated even with the fumes, call it, of that divine nectar —to bear my head through atmospheres and over heights unknown to my feet —is perennial & constant.”



February 9, Sunday: The last half of January was warm & thawy. The swift streams were open & the muskrats were seen swimming & diving & bringing up clams leaving their shells on the ice. We had now forgotten summer & autumn, but had already begun to anticipate spring. Fishermen improved the warmer weather to fish for pickerel through the ice— Before it was only the Autumn landscape with a thin layer of snow upon it we saw the withered flowers through it —but now we do not think of autumn when we look on this snow That earth is effectually buried— It is mid winter. Within a few days the cold has set in stronger than ever though the days are much longer now. Now I travel across the fields on the crust which has frozen since the Jan. thaw —& I can cross the river in most places. It is easier to get about the country than at any other season— Easier





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

than in summer because the rivers & meadows are frozen –& there is no high grass or other crops to be avoided –easier than in Dec. before the crust was frozen

Sir John Mandeville says –“In fro what partie of the earth that men dwell, outhere aboven or benethen, it seemeth always to hem that dwellen there, that they gon more right than any other folk.”

Again –“And yee shulle undirstonde, that of all theise contrees, and of all theise yles, and of all the dyverse folk, that I have spoken of before, and of dyverse laws and of dyverse beleeves that thei have, yit is there non of hem alle, but that thei have sum resoun within hem and understandinge, but gif it be the fewere.”

I have heard that there is a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge– It is said that Knowledge is power and the like–

Methinks there is equal need of a society for the diffusion of useful Ignorance –for what is most of our boasted so called knowledge but a conceit that we know something which robs us of the advantages of our actual ignorance–

In What consists the superiority of that

{*One leaf missing*}

auctoritatis. Habemus enim hujusmodi senatûs-consultum, veruntamen inclusum in tabulis, tanquam gladium in vaginâ reconditum; quo ex senatûs-consulto, confestim interfectum te esse, O Business, convenit. Vivis; et vivis, non ad deponendam, sed ad confirmandam, audaciam. Cupio, Patres Conscripti, me esse clementem: cupio in tantis rei-privatae periculis, me non dissolutum videri: sed jam me ipse inertiae nequitiaeque condemno.

Castra sunt in Italiâ, contra rem-privatam, in Etruriae faucibus collocata: crescit in dies singulos hostium numerus: eorum autem imperatorem castrorum, ducemque hostium, intra moenia, atque adeò in senatu, videmus, intestinam aliquam quotidie perniciem rei-privatae molientem.”

For a man’s ignorance sometimes is not only useful but beautiful while his knowledge is oftentimes worse than useless beside being ugly.

In reference to important things whose knowledge amounts to more than a consciousness of his ignorance Yet what more refreshing & inspiring knowledge than this?

How often are we wise as serpents without being harmless as doves.

Donne says “Who are a little wise the best fools be

Cudworth says “we have all of us by nature **μαντευμά τι** (as both Plato & Aristotle call it) a certain divination, presage and parturient vaticination in our minds, of some higher good & perfection than either power or knowledge.” – Aristotle himself declares, that there is **λόγου τι κρείττον**, which is **λόγου ἀρχή**, something better than reason & knowledge, which is the principle and original of all.”

Lavater says “Who finds the clearest not clear, thinks the darkest not obscure”

My desire for knowledge is intermittent but my desire to commune with the spirit of the universe –to be intoxicated even with the fumes, call it, of that divine nectar –to bear my head through atmospheres and over heights unknown to my feet –is perennial & constant.

It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our minds’ histories– How little *exercised* we have been in our mind –how few experiences we have had I would fain be assured that I am growing apace & rankly – though

{*Two leaves missing*}

society –to that culture –that interaction of man on man which is a sort of breeding in & in and produces a merely English nobility a puny & effoete nobility, a civilization which has a speedy limit.

The story of **Romulus & Remus** being suckled by a wolf is not a mere fable; the founders of every state which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar source. It is because the children of the empire were not suckled by wolves that they were conquered & displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.

America is the she wolf to day and the children of exhausted Europe exposed on her uninhabited & savage shores are the **Romulus & Remus** who having derived new life & vigor from her breast have founded a new Rome in the west.

It is remarkable how few passages comparatively speaking there are in the best literature of the day which betray any intimacy with nature.

It is apparent enough to me that only one or two of my townsmen or acquaintances (not more than one in many thousand men in deed –) feel or at least obey any strong attraction drawing them toward the forest or to nature, but all almost without exception gravitate exclusively toward men or society. The young men of Concord and in other towns do not walk in the woods but congregate in shops & offices– They suck one another– Their strongest attraction is toward the mill dam.

A thousand assemble about the fountain in the public square –the town pump –be it full or dry clear or turbid,

RALPH CUDWORTH

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

every morning but not –one in a thousand is in the meanwhile drinking at that fountain’s head.  
It is hard for the young aye & the old man in the ousskirts to keep away from the Mill dam a whole day –but he will find some excuse as an ounce of cloves that might be wanted or a new England Farmer still in the office –to tackle up the horse –or even go afoot but he will go at some rate– This is not bad comparatively this is because he cannot do better. In spite of his hoeing & chopping he is unexpressed & undeveloped.  
I do not know where to find in any literature whether ancient or modern –any adequate account of that Nature with which I am acquainted. Mythology comes nearest to it of any.  
The actual life of men is not without a dramatic interest at least to the thinker. It is not altogether prosaic. 70,000 pilgrims proceed annually to Mecca from the various nations of Islám. But this is not so significant as the far simpler & more unpretending pilgrimage to the shrines of some obscure individual which yet makes no bustle in the world  
I believe that adam in paradise was not so favorably situated on the whole as is the backwoodsman in America–  
You all know how miserably the former turned out –or was turned out –but there is some consolation at least in the fact that it yet remains to be seen how the western Adam Adam in the wilderness will turn out –

In Adams fall  
We sinned all.  
In the new Adam’s rise  
We shall all reach the skies.

Infusion of hemlock in our tea, if we must drink tea –not the poison hemlock –but the hemlock spruce I mean –or perchance the Arbor Vitae –the tree of life is what we want.

ARISTOTLE

DIFFERENT  
DRUMMER

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



Pilgrim Costumes  
"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

“WALKING”: The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the world. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every state which has risen to eminence, have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It is because the children of the empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock spruce or arbor-vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the Koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers as long as they are soft. And herein perchance they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughter-house pork to make a man of. Give me a Wildness whose glance no civilization can endure, – as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

### ROMULUS AND REMUS

June 11, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) continued reading in [Charles Darwin](#)'s journal of his voyage around the world aboard HMS *Beagle*:

### VOYAGE OF THE BEAGLE I

### VOYAGE OF THE BEAGLE II

When Darwin left England for his round-the-world voyage in 1831, he carried with him a departure gift: Volume I of [Lyell](#)'s PRINCIPLES, published in its first edition the previous year. Before reaching the Cape Verde Islands, he had already been swept into Lyell's orbit. Thrilled, he preordered copies of Volumes II and III for pickup in ports of call as they were published. So influential was Lyell's thinking during the voyage that Darwin dedicated his JOURNAL OF RESEARCHES to him with this comment: "The chief part of whatever scientific merit this journal and the other works of the author may possess, have been



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

derived from studying the well-known and admirable PRINCIPLES OF GEOLOGY." This dedication may have jumped out at [Thoreau](#) when he read it in 1851, because he, himself, had been smitten by [Lyell](#)'s great book in 1840, eleven years earlier.



June 11, Wednesday: Last night –a beautiful summer night not too warm moon not quite full<sup>13</sup> –after 2 or 3 rainy days. Walked to Fair Haven by RR returning by Potter's pasture & Sudbury Road. I feared at first that there would be too much white light –like the pale remains of day light –and not a yellow gloomy dreamier light –that it would be like a candle light by day but when I got away from the town & deeper into the night, it was better. I hear whipporwills & see a few fire flies in the meadow

I saw by the shadows cast by the inequalities of the clayey sand-bank in the Deep Cut, that it was necessary to see objects by moon light –as well as sunlight –to get a complete notion of them– This bank had looked much more flat by day when the light was stronger, but now the heavy shadows revealed its prominences. The prominences are light made more remarkable by the dark shadows which they cast.

When I rose out of the deep Cut into the old Pigeon place field, I rose into a warmer stratum of air it being lighter. It told of the day, of sunny noon tide hours, an air in which work had been done –which men had breathed. It still remembered the sunny banks –of the laborer wiping his brow –of the bee humming amid flowers –the hum of insects Here is a puff of warmer air which has taken its station on the hills which has come up from the sultry plains of noon

I hear the nighthawks uttering their squeaking notes high in the air now at nine o'clock PM –and occasionally what I do not remember to have heard so late –their booming note. It sounds more as if under a cope than by day –the sound is not so fugacious going off to be lost amid the spheres but is echoed hollowly to earth –making the low roof of heaven vibrate– a sound is more confused & dissipated by day.

The whipporwill suggests how wide asunder the woods & the town– Its note is very rarely heard by those who live on the street, and then it is thought to be of ill omen –only the dwellers on the outskirts of the village –hear it occasionally– It sometimes comes into their yards– But go into the woods in a warm night at this season – & it is the prevailing sound– I hear now 5 or 6 at once– It is no more of ill omen therefore here than the night & the moonlight are. It is a bird not only of the woods but of the night side of the woods. New beings have usurped the air we breathe –rounding nature filling her crevices with sound– To sleep where you may hear the whipporwill in your dreams.

I hear from this upland from which I see Wachusett by day –a wagon crossing one of the bridges– I have no doubt that in some places to-night I could hear every carriage which crossed a bridge over the river within the limits of concord –for in such an hour & atmosphere the sense of hearing is wonderfully assisted & asserts a new dignity –& become the Hearalls of the story– The late traveller cannot drive his horse across the distant bridge but this still & resonant atmosphere tells the tale to my ear. Circumstances are very favorable to the transmission of such a sound– In the first place planks so placed & struck like a bell swung near the earth emit a very resonant & penetrating sound –add that the bell is in this instance hung over water, and that the night air, not only on account of its stillness, but perhaps on account of its density –is more favorable to the transmission of sound. If the whole town were a raised planked floor –what a din there would be!

I hear some whipporwills on hills –others in thick wooded vales –which ring hollow & cavernous –like an apartment or cellar with their note.– as when I hear the working of some artisan from within an apartment.

I now descend round the corner of the grain field –through the pitch-pine wood in to a lower field, more inclosed by woods –& find my self in a colder damp & misty atmosphere, with much dew on the grass– I seem to be nearer to the origin of things– There is something creative & primal in the cool mist –this dewy mist does not fail to suggest music to me –unaccountably –fertility the origin of things– An atmosphere which has forgotten the sun –where the ancient principle of moisture prevails.

The woodland paths are never seen to such advantage as in a moonlight night so embowered –still opening before you almost against expectation as you walk –you are so completely in the woods & yet your feet meet no obstacles. It is as if it were not a path but an open winding passage through the bushes which your feet find. Now I go by the spring and when I have risen to the same level as before find myself in the warm stratum again –The woods are about as destitute of inhabitants at night as the streets in both there will be some night walkers– Their are but few wild creatures to seek their prey. The greater part of its inhabitants have retired to rest.

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13. The moon would be full on the night of the 12th.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Ah that life that I have known! How hard it is to remember what is most memorable! We remember how we itched, not how our hearts beat. I can sometimes recall to mind the quality the immortality of my youthful life –but in memory is the only relation to it.

The very cows have now left their pastures & are driven home to their yards –I meet no creature in the fields. I hear the night singing bird breaking out as in his dreams, made so from the first for some mysterious reason.<sup>14</sup> Our spiritual side takes a more distinct form like our shadow which we see accompanying us

I do not know but I feel less vigor at night –my legs will not carry me so far –as if the night were less favorable to muscular exertion –weakened us somewhat as darkness turns plants pale –but perhaps my experience is to be referred to being already exhausted by the day and I have never tried the experiment fairly. It was so hot summer before last that the Irish laborers on the RR worked by night instead of day for a while –several of them having been killed by the heat & cold water. I do not know but they did as much work as ever by day. Yet methinks nature would not smile on such labors.

Only the Hunter’s & Harvest moons are famous –but I think that each full moon deserves to be & has its own character well marked.– One might be called the midsummer night moon

The wind & water are still awake at night you are sure to hear what wind there is stirring. The wind blows –the river flows without resting– There lies Fair Haven lake undistinguishable from fallen sky.

The pines seem forever foreign; at least to the civilized man –not only their aspect but their scent –& their turpentine.

So still & moderate is the night –no scream is heard whether of fear or joy –no great comedy nor tragedy is being enacted. The chirping of crickets is the most universal if not the loudest sound.

There is no French revolution in Nature.– no excess– She is warmer or colder by a degree or two.

By night no flowers –at least no variety of colors– The pinks are no longer pink –they only shine faintly reflecting more light Instead of flowers under foot stars over head.<sup>15</sup>

My shadow has the distinctness of a 2nd person –a certain black companion bordering on the imp –and I ask “Who is this?” Which I see dodging behind me as I am about to sit down on a rock

No one to my knowledge has observed the minute differences in the seasons– Hardly two nights are alike– The rocks do not feel warm tonight for the air is warmest –nor does the sand particularly. A Book of the seasons –

14. This appears to be Thoreau’s first mention of the mysterious night warbler.

15. William M. White’s version of the journal entry is:

*So still and moderate is the night!  
No scream is heard, whether of fear or joy.  
No great comedy nor tragedy is being enacted.  
The chirping of crickets is the most universal,  
If not the loudest, sound.  
There is no French Revolution in Nature,  
No excess.  
She is warmer or colder by a degree or two.*

*By night no flowers,  
At least no variety of colors.  
The pinks are no longer pink;  
They only shine faintly,  
Reflecting more light.  
Instead of flowers underfoot,  
Stars overhead.*



## RUFFED GROUSE


## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

each page of which should be written in its own season & out of doors or in its own locality wherever it may be— When you get into the road though far from the town & feel the sand under your feet—it is as if you had reached your own gravel-walk—you no longer hear the whipporwill nor regard your shadow—for here you expect a fellow traveller— You catch yourself walking merely The road leads your steps & thoughts alike to the town— You see only the path & your thoughts wander from the objects which are presented to your senses— You are no longer in place.

In [Charles Darwins](#) Voyage of a Naturalist round the World—commenced in 1831— He gave to Ehrenberg some of an impalpably fine dust which filled the air at sea near the Cape de Verd Islands & he found it to consist in great part of “infusoria with siliceous shields, and of the siliceous tissue of plants”—found in this 67 dif organic forms.— The infusoria with 2 exceptions inhabitants of fresh water. Vessels have even run on shore owing to the obscurity. Is seen a thousand miles from Africa— Darwin found particles of stone above a thousandth of an inch square.

Speaking of St. Paul’s Rocks Lat 58’ N Long. 29° 15’ W— “Not a a single plant, not even a lichen, grows on this islet; yet it is inhabited by several insects & spiders. The following list completes, I believe, the terrestrial fauna: a fly (Olfersia) living on the booby, and a tick which must have come here as a parasite on the birds; a small brown moth, belonging to a genus that feeds on feathers; a beetle (Quedius), and a woodlouse from beneath the dung; and lastly numerous spiders, which I suppose prey on these small attendants and scavengers of the waterfowl. The often-repeated description of the stately palm and other noble tropical plants, then birds, and lastly man, taking possession of the coral islets as soon as formed, in the Pacific, is probably not quite correct; I fear it destroys the poetry of this story, that feather & dirt-feeding and parasitic insects and spiders should be the first inhabitants of newly formed oceanic land.”

At Bahia or San Salvador Brazil took shelter under a tree “so thick that it would never have been penetrated by common English rain” but not so there.

of A partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#)  [Bonasa umbellus?](#)] near the mouth of the Plata— “A man on horse back, by riding round & round in a circle, or rather in a spire, so as to approach closer each time, may knock on the head as many as he pleases.”— refers to Hearne’s Journey, p.383 for “In Arctic North America the Indians catch the Varying Hare by walking spirally round & round it, when on its form: the middle of the day is reckoned the best time, when the sun is high, and the shadow of the hunter not very long”

In the same place

“General Rosas is also a perfect horseman—an accomplishment of no small consequence in a country where an assembled army elected its general by the following trial: A troop of unbroken horses being driven into a corral, were let out through a gateway, above which was a cross-bar: it was agreed whoever should drop from the bar on one of these wild animals, as it rushed out, and should be able, without saddle or bridle, not only to ride it, but also to bring it back to the door of the corral, should be their general. The person who succeeded was accordingly elected, and doubtless made a general fit for such an army. This extraordinary feat has also been performed by Rosas.”

Speaks of the Gaucho sharpening his knife on the back of the armadillo before he kills him.

Alcide d’Orbigny—from 1825 to 33 in S. Am. now (1846) publishing the results on a scale which places him 2d to [Humboldt](#) among S. Am. travellers.

Hail in Buenos Ayres as large as small apples—killed 13 deer beside ostriches—which last also it blinded.—&c &c Dr Malcomson told him of hail in India in 1831 which “much injured the cattle” Stones flat one ten inches in circumference. passed through windows making round holes.

A difference in the country about Monte Video & somewhere else attributed to the manuring & grazing of the cattle. refers to Atwater as saying that the same thing is observed in the prairies of N. America “where coarse grass, between five and six feet high, when grazed by cattle, changes into common pasture land” V Atwater’s words in Sill. N. A. Journ. V. 1. p 117

I would like to read Azara’s Voyage Speaks of the fennel & the cardoon (Cynara cardunculus) introduced from Europe, now very common in those parts of S. America. The latter occurs now on both sides the Cordillera, across the Continent. In Banda Oriental alone “very many (probably several hundred) square miles are covered by one mass of these prickly plants, and are impenetrable by man or beast. Over the undulating plains, where these great beds occur, nothing else can now live. — I doubt whether any case is on record of an invasion on so grand a scale of one plant over the aborigines.”

Horses first landed at the La Plata in 1535 Now these, with cattle & sheep have altered the whole aspect of the country vegetation &c.— “The wild pig in some parts probably replaces the peccari; packs of wild dogs may be heard howling on the wooded banks of the less frequented streams; and the common cat, altered into a large and fierce animal, inhabits rocky hills.”

At sea eye being 6 ft above level horizon is  $2\frac{4}{5}$  miles dist. “In like manner, the more level the plain, the more





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

nearly does the horizon approach within these narrow limits; and this, in my opinion, entirely destroys that grandeur which one would have imagined that a vast level plain would have possessed.”

Darwin found a tooth of a *native horse* contemporary with the mastodon –on the Pampas of Buenos Ayres – though he says there is good evidence against any horse living in America at the time of Columbus– He speaks of their remains being common in N America. Owen has found Darwin’s tooth similar to one Lyell brought from the U States –but unlike any other fossil or living & named this American horse *equus curvidens* –from a slight but peculiar curvature in it.

The great table land of Southern Mexico makes the division between N & S America with ref. to the migration of animals

Quotes Capt. Owen’s Surveying voyage for saying that at the town of Benguela on the west coast of Africa in a time of great drought a number of elephants entered in a body to possess themselves of the wells, after a desperate conflict & the loss of one man the inhabitants –3000 –drove them off. During a great drought in India says Dr Malcomson, “a hare drank out of a vessel held by the adjutant of the regiment.”

The Guanacos wild llama –& other animals of this genus –have the habit of dropping their dung from day to day in the same heap– The Peruvian Indians use it for fuel and are thus aided in collecting it.

Rowing up a stream which takes its rise in a mountain you meet at last with pebbles which have been washed down from it when many miles distant. I love to think of this kind of introduction to it.

The only quadruped native to the Falkland Islands is a large wolf-like fox. As far as he is aware, “there is no other instance in any part of the world of so small a mass of broken land, distant from a continent, possessing so large an aboriginal quadruped peculiar to itself.”

In the Falkland Isles where other fuel is scarce they frequently cook their beef with the bones from which the meat has been scraped

Also They have “a green little bush about the size of common heath, which has the useful property of burning while fresh & green.”

Saw a cormorant play with its fishy prey as a cat with a mouse, 8 times let it go & dive after it again.

Seminal propagation produces a more original individual than that by buds layers & grafts.

Some inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego having got some putrid whale’s blubber in time of famine “an old man cut off thin slices and muttering over them, broiled them for a minute, and distributed them to the famished party, who during this time preserved a profound silence.” This was the only evidence of any religious worship among them. It suggests that even the animals may have something divine in them & akin to revelation. Some inspiration, allying them to man as to God.

“Nor is it easy to teach them our superiority except by striking a fatal blow. Like wild beasts they do not appear to compare numbers; for each individual, if attacked, instead of retiring, will endeavor to dash your brains out with a stone, as certainly as a tiger under similar circumstances would tear you.”

“We were well clothed, and though sitting close to the fire, were far from too warm; yet these naked savages, though further off, were observed, to our great surprise, to be streaming with perspiration at undergoing such a roasting.”

Ehrenberg examined some of the white paint with which the Fuegians daub themselves –and found it to be composed of infusoria, including 14 polygastrica, and 4 phytolitharia, inhabitants of fresh water –all old & known forms!!

Again of the Fuegians “Simple circumstances –such as the beauty of scarlet cloth or blue beads, the absence of women, our care in washing ourselves –excited their admiration far more than any grand or complicated object, such as our ship. Bougainville has well remarked concerning these people, that they treat the “chef-d’oeuvres de l’industrie humaine, comme ils traitent les loix de la nature, et ses phénomènes.”

He was informed of a tribe of foot-Indians now changing into horse-Indians –apparently in Patagonia.

“With the exception of a few berries, chiefly of a dwarf arbutus, the natives (i.e. of T. del-Fuego) eat no Vegetable food besides this fungus.” [Cyttaria Darwinii] the “only country where a cryptogamic plant affords a staple article of food.”

No reptiles in T. del Fuego nor in Falkland Islands.

Describes a species of kelp there –*Macrocystis pyrifera*– “I know few things more surprising than to see this plant growing and flourishing amidst those great breakers of the Western Ocean, which no mass of rock, let it be ever so hard, can long resist. – – A few [stems] taken together are sufficiently strong to support the weight of the large loose stones to which, in the inland channels, they grow attached; and yet some of these stones were so heavy that when drawn to the surface, they could scarcely be lifted into a boat by one person.” Capt. Cook thought that some of it grew to the length of 360 ft “The beds of this sea-weed even when not of great breadth,” says D. “make excellent natural floating breakwaters. It is quite curious to see, in an exposed harbor, how soon the waves from the open sea, as they travel through the straggling stems, sink in height, and pass into smooth



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

water.”

Number of living creatures of all orders whose existence seems to depend on the kelp –a volume might be written on them. If a forest were destroyed anywhere so many species would not perish as if this weed were – & with the fish would go many birds & larger marine animals, and hence the Fuegian himself perchance.

Tree-ferns in Van Diemen’s Land (Lat 45°) 6 feet in circ.

Missionaries encountered icebergs in Patagonia in lat. corresponding to the Lake of Geneva, in a season corresponding to June in Europe. In Europe –the most southern glacier which comes down to the sea is on coast of Norway lat 67° 20° or 1230 nearer the pole.

erratic boulders not observed in the inter tropical parts of the world.– due to ice-bergs or glaciers.

Under Soil perpetually frozen in N. A. in 56° at 3 feet in Siberia in 62° at 12 to 15 ft

In an excursion from Valparaiso to the base of the Andes– “We unsaddled our horses near the spring and prepared to pass the night. The evening was fine, and the atmosphere so clear, that the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although no less than 26 geographical miles distant, could be distinguished clearly as little black streaks.”

Anson had been surprised at the distance at which his vessels were discovered from the coast without knowing the reason –the great height of the land and the transparency of the air.

Floating islands from 4 to 6 ft thick in lake Tagua-tagua in central Chile –blown about.



June 13. Walked to Walden last night (moon not quite full) by rail-road & upland wood path, returning by Wayland Road. Last full moon<sup>16</sup> the elms had not leaved out, cast no heavy shadows & their outlines were less striking & rich in the streets at night. (I noticed a night before night before last from Fair Haven how valuable was some water by moonlight like the river & Fair Haven pond though far away –reflecting the light with a faint glimmering sheen, as in the spring of the year The water shines with an inward light like a heaven on earth. The silent depth & serenity & majesty of water –strange that men should distinguish gold & diamonds –when these precious elements are so common. I saw a distant river by moon light making no noise, yet flowing as by day –still to the sea, like melted silver reflecting the moon light –far away it lay encircling the earth How far away it may look in the night and even from a low hill how miles away down in the valley! As far off off as Paradise and the delectable country! There is a certain glory attends on water by night. By it the heavens are related to the earth– Undistinguishable from a sky beneath you–

And I forgot to say that after I reach the road by Potters barns –or further by potters Brook –I saw the moon sudden reflected full from a pool– A puddle from which you may see the moon reflected –& the earth dissolved under your feet.




The magical moon with attendant stars suddenly looking up with mild lustre from a window in the dark earth. I observed also the same night a halo about my shadow in the moon light, which I referred to the accidentally

16. The previous full moon had been on May 13th.

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

lighter color of the surrounding surface, I transferred my shadow to the darkest patches of grass & saw the halo there equally. It serves to make the outlines of the shadow more distinct.) But now for last night –A few fireflies in the meadow– Do they shine though invisibly by day? –is there candle lighted by day?  
 It is not night fall till the whipporwills begin to sing.– As I entered the deep cut I was affected by beholding the first faint reflection of genuine & unmixed moonlight on the eastern sand bank while the horizon yet red with day was tinging the western side– What an interval –between those two lights! The light of the moon in what age of the world does that fall upon the earth? The moon light –was as the earliest & dewy morning light & the daylight tinge reminded me much more of the night.– There were the old & new dynasties opposed contrasted –and an interval between which time could not span.– Then is night when the daylight yields to the night light It suggested an interval a distance not recognized in history. Nations have flourished in that light.  
 When I had climbed the sand bank on the left –I felt the warmer current or stratum of air on my cheek like a blast from a furnace.  
 The white stems of the pines which reflected the weak light –standing thick & close together while their lower branches were gone, reminded me that the pines are only larger grasses which rise to a chaffy head –& we the insects that crawl between them.<sup>17</sup> They are particularly grass-like.  
 How long do the gales retain the heat of the sun! I find them retreated high up the sides of hills, especially on open fields or cleared places. Does perchance any of this pregnant air survive the dews of night?– Can any of it be found remembering the sun of yesterday even in the morning hours. Does perchance some puff some blast survive the night on elevated clearings surrounded by the forest?  
 The bull-frog belongs to summer The different frogs mark the seasons pretty well– The peeping hyla –the dreaming frog & the bull frog –I believe that all may be heard at last occasionally together.  
 I heard partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  **Bonasa umbellus**] drumming to night as late as 9 o'clock– What singularly –space penetrating & filling sound –! why am I never nearer to its source!



We do not commonly live our life out & full –we do not fill all our pores with our blood –we do not inspire & expire fully & entirely enough so that the wave the comber of each inspiration shall break upon our extremest shores –rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us –& the sound of the surf come back to us. Might not a bellows assist us to breathe. That our breathing should create a wind in a calm day. We do not live but a quarter part of our life –why do we not let on the flood –raise the gates –& set all our wheels in motion– He that hath ears to hear let him hear. Employ your senses.  
 The newspapers tell us of news not to be named even with that in its own kind which an observing man can pick up in a solitary walk.– as if it gained some importance & dignity by its publicness. Do we need to be advertised each day that such is still the routine of life?<sup>18</sup> The tree-toad's too is a summer sound.  
 I hear just as the night sets in faint notes from time to time from some sparrow? falling asleep. A vesper hymn–  
 And later in the woods the chuckling rattling sound of some unseen bird on the near trees.  
 The Night hawk booms wide awake.  
 By moonlight we see not distinctly even the surface of the earth –but our daylight experience supplies us with confidence.  
 As I approached the pond down hubbard's path (after coming out of the woods into a warmer air) I saw the

17. William M. White's version of the journal entry is:

*The white stems of the pines,  
 Which reflected the weak light, standing thick and close together  
 While their lower branches were gone,  
 Reminded me that the pines are only larger grasses  
 Which rise to a chaffy head,  
 And we the insects that crawl between them.*



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

shimmering of the moon on its surface –and in the near now flooded cove the water-bugs darting circling about made streaks or curves of light. The moon’s inverted pyramid of shimmering light commenced about 20 rods off –like so much micaceous sand– But I was startled to see midway in the dark water a bright flame like more than phosphorescent light crowning the crests of the wavelets which at first I mistook for fire flies & and thought even of cucullos [the *cucuyo*, a West Indian firefly]– It had the appearance of a pure smokeless flame <sup>1/2</sup> dozen inches long issuing from the water & bending flickeringly along its surface– I thought of St Elmo’s lights & the like –but coming near to the shore of the pond itself –these flames increased & I saw that it was so many broken reflections of the moon’s disk, though one would have said they were of an intenser light than the moon herself –from contrast with the surrounding water they were– Standing up close to the shore & nearer the rippled surface I saw the reflections of the moon sliding down the watery concave like so many lustrous burnished coins poured from a bag –with inexhaustible lavishness –& the lambent flames on the surface were much multiplied seeming to slide along a few inches with each wave before they were extinguished –& I saw how farther & farther off they gradually merged in the general sheen which in fact was made up of a myriad little mirrors reflecting the disk of the moon –with equal brightness to an eye rightly placed. The pyramid or sheaf of light which we see springing from near where we stand only –in fact is the outline of that portion of the shimmering surface which an eye takes in –to myriad eyes suitably placed, the whole surface of the pond would be seen to shimmer, or rather it would be seen as the waves turned up their mirrors to be covered with those bright flame like reflections of the moon’s disk like a myriad candles every where issuing from the waves –i.e. if there were as many eyes as angles presented by the waves –and these reflections are dispersed in all directions into the atmosphere flooding it with light– No wonder that water reveals itself so far by night –even

18. Later [Thoreau](#) would use this in his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” as:

[Paragraph 75] The news-papers tell us news not to be named even with that of its own kind, which an observing man can pick up on a solitary walk. As if it gained any importance and dignity by its publicness! Or do we need to be advertised each day that such is the routine of man’s life?

We may well note that when a current authority, Professor Thomas C. Leonard, associate dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at UC–Berkeley, went to deliver a paper on “News at the Hearth: A Drama of Reading in Nineteenth-Century America” at a conference on “Iconography and the Culture of the Book” at the American Antiquarian Society, June 14-15, 1991, and desired to quickly characterize [Thoreau](#)’s advice to “the Americans Thoreau worried about” in regard to their democratic (demographic?) practice of the regular perusal of newspapers in order then to pass quickly on to more serious issues, and desired to stand and deliver this cheap characterization and slight treatment in a “humorously” demeaning manner –merely to dismiss Thoreau’s advice as unworthy of serious consideration and as therefore appropriately received by a public that “did not take this advice”– in the opening paragraph of his peroration he chose not the above advice which Thoreau had repeated and published, advice which had in fact been made available to lyceum audiences and reading publics (and certainly not the radically hostile analysis which Thoreau had made on April Fool’s Day of this year of 1851, that “the press is almost without exception corrupt. ... Almost without exception the tone of the press is mercenary & servile ... the **free** men of New England have only to –refrain from purchasing & reading these sheets”), but instead another passage, a passage from the JOURNAL which was of course unavailable, as follows:

‘Do not read the newspapers,’ Henry David Thoreau said, ‘if you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events which make the news transpire – thinner than the paper on which it is printed, – then these things will fill the world for you....’ Circulation figures show that Americans did not take this advice. But what evidence is there for the psychological impact of news in print? One way to study the Americans Thoreau worried about is to look at pictures of people burying their heads in the news.

And, having thus exhausted what Thoreau had to offer, the good journalism professor moved on to the important matter he had at hand, a fascinatingly inconclusive and uninteresting reading of old portraits of people reading newspapers.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

further in many states of the atmosphere than by day. (I thought it first it some unusual phosphorescence. In some positions these flames were star like points brighter than the brightest stars. Suddenly a flame would show itself in a near and dark space precisely like some inflammable gass on the surface. As if an inflammable gass made its way up from the bottom.

I heard my old musical –simple-noted owl. The sound of the *dreaming* frogs prevails over the others. Occasionally a bull-frog near me made a obscene noise a sound like an eructation near me. I think they must be imbodied eructations. They suggest flatulency.

The pond is higher than ever –so as to hinder fishermen –& I could hardly get to the true shore here on account of the bushes

I pushed out in a boat a little & heard the chopping of the waves under its bow. And on the bottom I saw the moving reflections of the shining waves –faint streaks of light revealing the shadows of the waves or the opaqueness of the water–

As I climbed the hill again toward my old beanfield –I listened to the ancient familiar immortal dear cricket sound under all others –hearing at first some distinct chirps –but when these ceased –I was aware of the general earth song which my hearing had not heard amid which these were only taller flowers in a bed –and I wondered if behind or beneath this there was not some other chant yet more universal. Why do we not hear when this begins in the spring? & when it ceases in the fall! –or is it too gradual.

After I have got into the road I have no thought to record –all the way home– The walk is comparatively barren. The leafy elm sprays seem to droop more by night!?



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992**

wanted meaningful prose. He went to Thoreau's journal as to a medicine cabinet and opened the second volume at random.

**As I climbed the hill again toward my old bean-field, I listened to the ancient, familiar, immortal, dear cricket sound under all others, hearing at first some distinct chirps; but when these ceased I was aware of the general earth-song, and I wondered if behind or beneath this there was not some other chant yet more universal.**

Ah, that was speech. that was English speech.

Mary was not at home to complain to. Warmed by the tonic of Thoreau's language, Homer got back in his car and drove to the parking lot at Walden Pond. Striding across the road into the woods, he found his way to the place that had once been the beanfield. It was covered now by the successors of the trees Thoreau had planted when he left the pond.

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**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**





RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

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Homer leaned against one of them and listened. Above him he heard the creaking of the trunk, the wind in the leaves making a sound like the sea. There was no birdsong, no thrilling unfamiliar note that might be a wood thrush. But the crickets were making their midsummer chant, their strong mutual pulse, all in the same rhythm. It was older than he was, older than Thoreau, older than Walden Pond, older perhaps than the great chunk of ice that had hollowed out the basin and filled it with water. In the broad sweep of geologic time, the small human turbulences afflicting these few square miles of Massachusetts were nothing. Someday all the people shouting so angrily at each other in the woods around the pond would be gone. But the crickets would still be there, singing their earth-song, telling of antediluvian and everlasting things, praising the brightness of the moon, the light of the stars, the survival of insects.

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Viking Penguin Penguin Books USA Inc.

June 22, Sunday: Fire destroyed part of San Francisco, California.



EDMUND HOSMER

June 22, Sunday. Is the shrub with yellow blossoms which I found last week near the Lincoln road while surveying for E. Hosmer and thought to be *Xylosteum ciliatum*, or fly honeysuckle, the same with the yellow diervilla which I find in Laurel Glen to-day?

The birch is the surveyor's tree. It makes the best stakes to look at through the sights of a compass, except when there is snow on the ground. Their white bark was not made in vain. In surveying wood-lots I have frequent occasion to say this is what they were made for.

I see that Dugan has trimmed off and peeled the limbs of the willows on the Turnpike to sell at the Acton powder-mill. I believe they get eight dollars a cord for this wood.

I. Hapgood of Acton got me last Friday to compare the level of his cellar-bottom with his garden, for, as he says, when Robbins R Wetherbee keep the water of Nashoba Brook back so as to flood his garden, it comes into his cellar. I found that part of the garden five inches lower than the cellar-bottom. Men are affected in various ways by the actions of others. If a man far away builds a dam, I have water in my cellar. He said that the water was sometimes a foot deep in the garden.

We are enabled to criticise others only when we are different from & in a given particular superior to them ourselves. By our aloofness from men and their affairs we are enabled to overlook & criticise them. There are but few men who stand on the hills by the road-side. I am sane only when I have risen above my common sense – When I do not take the foolish view of things which is commonly taken. When I do not live for the low ends for which men commonly live. Wisdom is not common. To what purpose have I senses if I am thus absorbed in affairs

My pulse must beat with nature After a hard day's work without a thought turning my very brain in to a mere tool, only in the quiet of evening do I so far recover my senses as to hear the cricket which in fact has been

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

chirping all day. In my better hours I am conscious of the influx of a serene & unquestionable wisdom which partly unfits and if I yielded to it more rememberingly would wholly unfit me for what is called the active business of life –for that furnishes nothing on which the eye of reason can rest. What is that other kind of life to which I am thus continually allured? –which alone I love? Is it a life for this world? Can a man feed and clothe himself gloriously who keeps only the truth steadily before him? who calls in no evil to his aid? Are there duties which necessarily interfere with the serene perception of truth? Are our serene moments mere foretastes of heaven joys gratuitously vouchsafed to us as a consolation –or simply a transient realization of what might be the whole tenor of our lives?

To be calm to be serene –there is the calmness of the lake when there is not a breath of wind –there is the calmness of a stagnant ditch. So is it with us. Sometimes we are clarified & calmed healthily as we never were before in our lives –not by an opiate –but by some unconscious obedience to the all-just laws –so that we become like a still lake of purest crystal and without an effort our depths are revealed to ourselves All the world goes by us & is reflected in our deeps. Such clarity! obtained by such pure means! by simple living –by honesty of purpose –we live & rejoice. I awoke into a music which no one about me heard –whom shall I thank for it? The luxury of wisdom! the luxury of virtue! are there any intemperate in these things? I feel my maker blessing me. To the sane man the world is a musical instrument– The very touch affords an exquisite pleasure. As I walk the railroad causeway, I notice that the fields and meadows have acquired various tinges as the season advances, the sun gradually using all his paints. There is the rosaceous evening red tinge of red clover, -like an evening sky gone down upon the grass, - the whiteweed tinge, the white clover tinge, which reminds me how sweet it smells. The tall buttercup stars the meadow on another side, telling of the wealth of dairies. The blue-eyed grass, so beautiful near at hand, imparts a kind of slate or clay blue tinge to the meads.

It is hot noon. The white pines are covered with froth at the base of the new shoots, as I noticed the pitch pines were a week ago; as if they perspired. I am threading an open pitch and white pine wood, easily traversed, where the pine-needles redden all the ground, which is as smooth as a carpet. Still the blackberries love to creep over this floor, for it is not many years since this was a blackberry-field. And I hear around me, but never in sight, the many wood thrushes whetting their steel-like notes. Such keen singers! It takes a fiery heat, many dry pine leaves added to the furnace of the sun, to temper their strains! Always they are either rising or falling to a new strain. After what a moderate pause they deliver themselves again! saying ever a new thing, avoiding repetition, methinks answering one another. While most other birds take their siesta, the wood thrush discharges his song. It is delivered like a bolas, or a piece of jingling steel.

The domestic ox has his horns tipped with brass. This and his shoes are the badges of servitude which he wears; as if he would soon get to jacket and trousers. I am singularly affected when I look over a herd of reclining oxen in their pasture, and find that every one has these brazen balls on his horns. They are partly humanized so. It is not pure brute; there is art added. Where are these balls sold? Who is their maker? The bull has a ring in his nose. The *Lysimachia quadrifolia* exhibits its small yellow blossoms now in the wood-path. Butter-and-eggs has blossomed. The *Uvularia vulgaris*, or bladderwort, a yellow pea-like flower, has blossomed in stagnant pools.



June 30, Monday: Haying has commenced. I see the farmers in distant fields cocking their hay –now at six o'clock. The day has been so oppressively warm that some workmen have laid by at noon –and the haymakers are mowing now in the early twilight.

The blue flag iris versicolor enlivens the meadow– The lark sings at sundown off in the meadow. It is a note which belongs to a new England summer evening. Though so late I hear the summer hum of a bee in the grass –as I am on my way to the river behind Hubbards to bathe. After hoeing in a dusty garden all this warm afternoon –so warm that the baker says he never knew the like & expects to find his horses dead in the stable when he gets home –it is very grateful to wend ones way at evening to some pure & cool stream & bathe therein. The cranberry is now in blossom. Their fresh shoots have run a foot or two over the surface.

I have noticed an abundance of poison sumack this season It is now in blossom In some instance it has the size & form of a healthy peach tree.

The cuckoo is faintly heard from a neighboring grove. Now that it is beginning to be dark, as I am crossing a pasture I hear a happy cricket-like –shrill little lay –from a sparrow either in the grass or else on that distant tree –as if it were the vibrations of a watch spring –its vespers. The tree primrose which was so abundant in one field last Saturday is now all gone.

The cattle on Bear Garden Hill<sup>19</sup> seen through the twilight look monstrously large. I find abounding in the meadows the adder's tongue *Arethusa* & occasionally with it the *Cymbidium tuberosum* of the same tint. The obtuse *Galium Hypericum perforatum* is a delicate vine-like plant with a minute white blossom in the same





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

places. The St John's wort has blossomed. The *Oenothera pumila* or Dwarf tree primrose a neat yellow flower abounds in the meadows. which the careless would mistake at a distance for buttercups. The white white buds of the clethra (alder leaved) rise above their recent shoots— The narrow leaved cotton grass spots the meadow with white seeming like loose down, its stems are so slight.— The carrot growing wild which I observed by the rail road is now blossoming with its dishing blossom— I found by the rail-road <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> mile from the road some common Garden catch-fly the pink flower growing wild. Angelica is now in blossom —with its large umbels. Swamp rose —fugacious petalled. The Prinos or winter-berry budded with white clustered berry-like flower-buds is a pretty contrast to itself in the winter —waxlike. While bathing I plucked the common floating plant like a small yellow lily —the Yellow-Water-Ranunculus —*R. multifidus*. What I suppose is the Aster Miser —Small flowered Aster a small many-headed white weed has now for a week been in bloom —a humble weed, but one of the earliest of the asters. The umbelled Thesium, a simple white flower on the edge of the woods. *Erysimum officinale*, Hedge mustard with its yellow flowers.

I first observed about 10 days ago that the fresh shoots of the fir balsam —*abies balsamifera* —found under the tree wilted, or plucked & kept in the pocket or in the house a few days —emit the fragrance of strawberries, only it is somewhat more aromatic & spicy. It was to me a very remarkable fragrance to be emitted by a pine. A very rich delicious aromatic —spicy —fragrance which, if the fresh & living shoots emitted they would be still more to be sought after.

Saw a brood of young partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] yesterday a little larger than robins

July 7, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went with Sexton Anthony Wright to view the universe through Perez Blood's [telescope](#). Just for the fun of it, I will illustrate this with a depiction, prepared in this very year by H. Dassel, which is not of Thoreau peering through Blood's telescope but of the astronomer [Maria Mitchell](#), peering presumably through her father's telescope on the roof of his bank at the comet she had discovered (**see following screen**).



July 7, Monday: The intimations of the night are divine methinks. men might meet in the morning & report the news of the night.— What divine suggestions have been made to them I find that I carry with me into the day often some such hint derived from the gods. Such impulses to purity —to heroism —to literary effort even as are never day-born.

One of those morning's which usher in no day —but rather an endless morning —a protracted auroral season —for clouds prolong the twilight the livelong day—

And now that there is an interregnum in the blossoming of the flowers so is there in the singing of the birds—

The golden robin is rarely heard —& the bobolink &c.

I rejoice when in a dream I have loved virtue & nobleness.

Where is Grecian History? It is when in the morning I recall the intimations of the night.

The moon is now more than half full.<sup>20</sup> When I come through the village at 10 o'clock this cold night —cold as in May —the heavy shadows of the elms covering the ground with their rich tracery impress me as if men had got so much more than they had bargained for —not only trees to stand in the air, but to checquer the ground with their shadows— At night they lie along the earth. They tower —they arch —they droop over the streets like chandeliers of darkness. In my walk the other afternoon I saw the sun shining into the depths of a thick pine wood, checkering the ground like moonlight —and illuminating the lichen-covered bark of a large white-pine, from which it was reflected Through the surrounding thicket as from another sun—; This was so deep in the woods that you would have said no sun could penetrate thither.

I have been tonight with Anthony Wright to look through Perez Bloods Telescope a 2nd time.<sup>21</sup> A dozen of his Bloods neighbors were swept along in the stream of our curiosity. One who lived half a mile this side said that Blood had been down that way within a day or two with his terrestrial or day glass looking into the eastern horizon the hills of Billerica Burlington —and Woburn— I was amused to see what sort of respect this man with a telescope had obtained from his neighbors —something akin to that which savages award to civilized men —

19. In recent years Bear Garden Hill has been proposed for a condo complex, to accompany the office development that had been proposed for Brister's Hill (but which has since been defeated).

20. The moon would have been half full on the 4th.

21. I don't know when the first time was.



HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

### TYCHO BRAHE

though in this case the interval between the parties was very slight. Mr Blood with his scull cap on his short figure—his north European figure made me think of Tycho Brahe— He did not invite us into his house this cool evening—men nor women— Nor did he ever before to my knowledge

I am still contented to see the stars with my naked eye Mr Wright asked him what his instrument cost He answered – “Well, that is something I dont like to tell. (stuttering or hesitating in his speech a little, as usual) It is a very proper question however” – “Yes,” said I, “and you think that you have given a very proper answer.”

Returning my companion Wright the sexton told me how dusty he found it digging a grave that afternoon for one who had been a pupil of mine—for two feet he said, notwithstanding the rain, he found the soil as dry as ashes.

With a certain wariness, but not without a slight shudder at the danger oftentimes, I perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of some trivial affair, as a case at court— And I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish—to permit idle rumors tales incidents even of an insignificant kind—to intrude upon what should be the sacred ground of the thoughts Shall the temple of our thought be a public arena where the most trivial affair of the market & the gossip of the teatable is discussed—a dusty noisy trivial place—or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself—a place consecrated to the service of the gods—a hypaethral temple. I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant that I hesitate to burden my mind with the most insignificant which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is for the most part the news—in newspapers & conversation. It is important to preserve the mind’s chastity in this respect Think of admitting the details of a single case at the criminal court into the mind—to stalk profanely through its very sanctum sanctorum for an hour—aye for many hours—to make a very bar-room of your mind’s inmost apartment—as if for a moment the dust of the street had occupied you—aye the very street itself with all its travel passed through your very mind of minds—your thoughts shrine—with all its filth & bustle [possibly “hustle”]— Would it not be an intellectual suicide? By all manner of boards & traps threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law excluding trespassers from these grounds it behoves us to preserve the purity & sanctity of the mind. It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember. If I am to be a channel or thorough [thoroughfare]—I prefer that it be of the mountain springs—& not the town sewers— The Parnassian streams There is inspiration—the divine gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind—from the Courts of Heaven—there is the profane & stale revelation of the barroom & the police Court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications—only the character of the individual determines to which source chiefly it shall be open & to which closed. I believe that the mind can be profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. They shall be dusty as stones in the street— Our very minds shall be paved and macadamized as it were—its foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over. If we have thus desecrated ourselves the remedy will be by circumspection—& wariness by our aspiration & devotion to consecrate ourselves—to make a fane of the mind. I think that we should treat ourselves as innocent & ingenuous [ingenuous] children whose guardians we are—be careful what objects & what subjects we thrust on its attention<sup>22</sup>

Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness—unless they are in a sense effaced each morning or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh & living truth. Every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear & tear it & to deepen the ruts which as in the streets of Pompeii evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them. Routine—conventionality manners &c &c—how insensibly and undue attention to these dissipates & impoverishes the mind—robs it of its simplicity & strength emasculates it. Knowledge doe[s] not cone [come] to us by details but by lieferungs from the gods. What else is it to wash & purify ourselves? Conventionalities are as bad as impurities. Only thought which is expressed by the mind in repose as it wer[e] lying on its back & contemplating the heaven’s—is adequately & fully expressed— What are side long—transient passing half views? The writer expressing his thought—must be as well seated as the astronomer contemplating the heavens—he must not occupy a constrained position. The facts the experience we are well poised upon—! Which secures our whole attention!<sup>23</sup>

The senses of children are unprofaned their whole body is one sense—they take a physical pleasure in riding on a rail—they love to teter—so does the unviolated—the unsophisticated mind derive an inexpressable pleasure from the simplest exercise of thoughts.

I can express adequately only the thought which I *love* to express.— All the faculties in repose but the one you are using—the whole energy concentrated in that.

Be ever so little distracted—your thoughts so little confused— Your engagements so few—your attention so free your existence so mundane—that in all places & in all hours you can hear the sound of crickets in those seasons when they are to be heard. It is a mark of serenity & health of mind when a person hears this sound much—in

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

streets of cities as well as in fields. Some ears never hear this sound –are called deaf. Is it not because they have so long attended to other sounds?



July 16, Wednesday, 1851:... Set out at 3 Pm for Nine Acre Corner bridge via Hubbards bridge & Conantum –returning via dashing brook –rear of [Bakers](#) & railroad at 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Pm.... Came thro the pine plains behind [James Bakers](#) –where late was open pasture now open pitch pine woods –only here and there the grass has given place to a carpet of pine needles– These are among our pleasantest woods –open –level –with blackberry vines interspersed & flowers, as ladies slippers earlier –& pinks On the outskirts each tree has room enough & now I hear the wood thrush [[Catharus](#) [mustelina](#)] from the shade who loves these pine woods as

22. [Henry Thoreau](#) would use some of the material from this day in regard to his “we should live in eternity rather than in time” theme, in his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”:

[Paragraph 81] If we have thus desecrated ourselves,—as who has not?—the remedy will be by wariness and circumspection, by devotion and aspiration to reconsecrate ourselves—and make once more a fane of the mind. We should treat our minds—that is, ourselves—as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times.<sup>1</sup> Read the Eternities.<sup>2</sup> Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Knowledge does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven. Yes, every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them—had better let their peddling carts be driven even at the slowest trot or walk—over that bridge of glorious span by which we trust to pass at last from the furthest brink of time to the nearest shore of eternity. Conventionalities are as bad as impurities. By an undue attention to routine, manners, and so forth,<sup>3</sup> the mind is insensibly dissipated and impoverished—robbed of its simplicity and strength and, in short, emasculated.

1. [“The Times” was presumably the London [Times](#).]

2. I [Bradley P. Dean] emend the essay copy-text by omitting ‘Conventionalities are at length as bad as impurities.’, which appears after this sentence in the essay but which appears without the words ‘at length’ as the penultimate sentence of this paragraph in the extant reading-draft manuscript.

3. I [Bradley P. Dean] emend the manuscript copy-text by expanding ‘&c’ to ‘and so forth’.

The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward a snippet from this day’s entry as:

### THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION BY W.H. AUDEN...

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
353	Reason and Thought	We should treat our minds as innocent and ingenious children whose guardians we are — be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

23. [Thoreau](#) would later use this comment pertaining to his “different drummer” theme, in his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT?”:

[Paragraph 79] Not without a slight shudder at the danger, I often perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of some trivial affair,—the news of the street; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish,—to permit idle rumors and incidents of the most insignificant kind to intrude on ground which should be sacred to thought. Shall the mind be a public arena, where the affairs of the street and the gossip of the tea-table chiefly are discussed? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself,—an hypæthral temple, consecrated to the service of the gods?<sup>1</sup> I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my attention with those which are insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news in newspapers and conversations. It is important to preserve the mind’s chastity in this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into our thoughts, to stalk profanely through their very *sanctum sanctorum* for an hour, ay, for many hours! to make a very bar-room of the mind’s inmost apartment, as if for so long the dust of the street had occupied us,—the very street itself, with all its travel, its bustle, and filth had passed through our thoughts’ shrine! Would it not be an intellectual and moral suicide?

[Paragraph 80] By all kinds of traps and sign-boards, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, exclude such trespassers from the only ground which can be sacred to you. It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember! If I am to be a thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain-brooks, the Parnassian streams, and not the town-sewers. There is inspiration, that gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven. There is the profane and stale revelation of the bar-room and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the hearer determines to which it shall be open, and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be permanently profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. Our very intellect shall be macadamized, as it were,—its foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over; and if you would know what will make the most durable pavement, surpassing rolled stones—spruce blocks—and asphaltum—you have only to look into some of our minds which have been subjected to this treatment so long.

1. Compare I Corinthians 3:16.

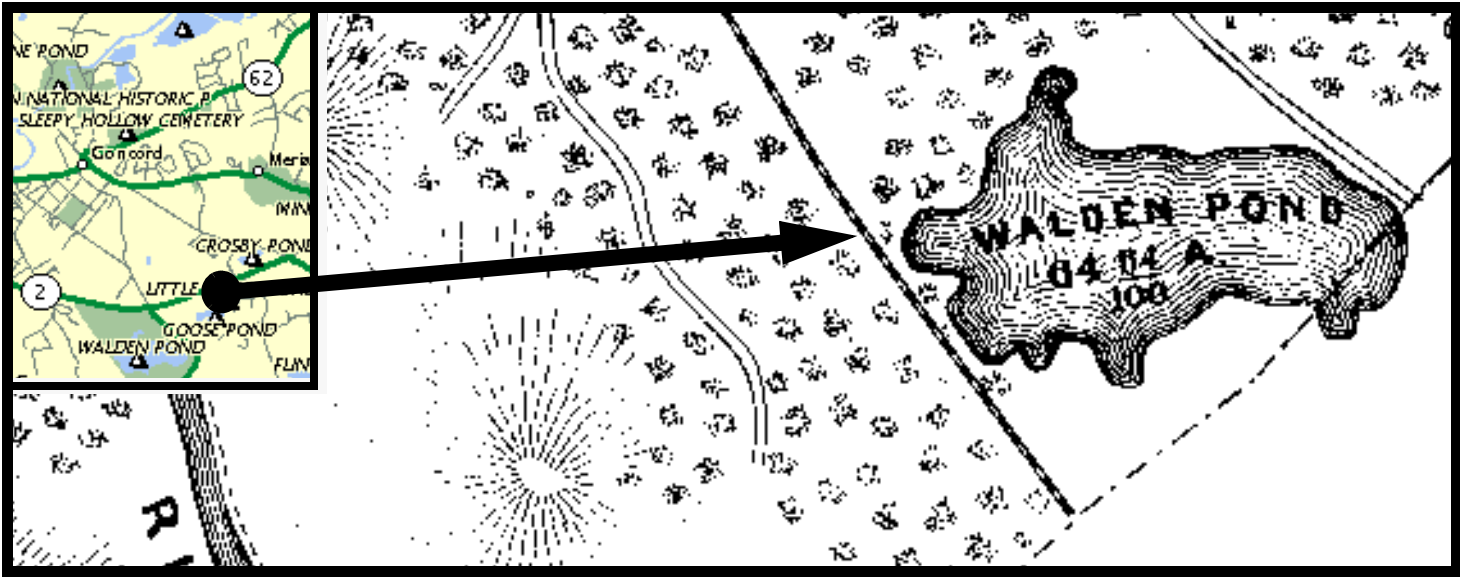
**DIFFERENT  
DRUMMER**

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

well as I.- I pass by walden's scalloped shore.



The epilobium reflects a pink gleam up the vales & down the hills- The chewink [Rufous-Sided Towhee *Pipilo Erythrophthalmus*] jingles on a bushes top-...





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**The maker of me was improving me.**

**When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved.**

**For years I marched to a music**

**in comparison with which**

**the military music of the streets**

**is noise and discord.**

**I was daily intoxicated,**

**and yet no man could call me intemperate.**

**With all your science can you tell**

**how it is,**

**and whence it is,**

**that light comes into the soul?**

**To explore Thoreau's "Distant Drummer" metaphor in the greatest detail, click here:**



July 16, Wednesday: ... The maker of me was improving me. When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved. For years I marched as to a music in comparison with which the military music of the streets is noise & discord. I was daily intoxicated and yet no man could call me intemperate. With all your science can you tell how it is –& whence it is, that light comes into the soul? ...

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



July 16, Wednesday: Methinks my present experience is nothing my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience which I have today comes up to or is comparable with the experiences of my boyhood—

And not only this is true—but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experience of a previous state of existence. “Our life is a forgetting” &c<sup>24</sup>

Formerly methought nature developed as I developed and grew up with me. My life was extacy. In youth before I lost any of my senses—I can remember that I was all alive—and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction, both its weariness & its refreshment were sweet to me. This earth was the most glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains. To have such sweet impressions made on us—such extacies begotten of the breezes. I can remember how I was astonished. I said to myself—I said to others— There comes into my mind or soul an indescribable infinite all absorbing divine heavenly pleasure, a sense of elevation & expansion—and have had nought to do with it. I perceive that I am dealt with by superior powers This is a pleasure, a joy, an existence which I have not procured myself— I speak as a witness on the stand and tell what I have perceived The morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I lead a life aloof from society of men. I wondered if a mortal had ever known what I knew. I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience—but strange to say, I found none. Indeed I was slow to discover that other men had had this experience—for it had been possible to read books & to associate with men on other grounds.

The maker of me was improving me. When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved. For years I marched as to a music in comparison with which the military music of the streets is noise & discord. I was daily intoxicated and yet no man could call me intemperate. With all your science can you tell how it is—and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?

DIFFERENT DRUMMER









Set out at 3 Pm for Nine Acre Corner bridge via Hubbards bridge & Conantum—returning via dashing brook—rear of [Bakers](#) & railroad at 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Pm. The song sparrow [*Melospiza melodia*]—the most familiar & New England bird—is heard in fields and pastures—setting this midsummer day to music—as if it were the music of a mossy rail or fence post, a little stream of song cooling—ripling through the noon—the usually unseen songster

24. [William Wordsworth](#)'s “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” 1.58: “Our birth is but a sleeping and a forgetting.”



## RUFFED GROUSE



## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

—usually unheard like the cricket it is so common— Like the poet’s song unheard by most men whose ears are stopped with business. Though perchance it sang on the fence before the farmer’s house this morning for an hour. There are little strains of poetry in our annuals. Berries are just beginning to ripen —and children are planning expeditions after them— They are important as introducing children to the fields & woods —and as wild fruits of which much account is made. During the berry season the Schools have a vacation and many little fingers are busy picking these small fruits— It is ever a pastime not a drudgery. I remember how glad I was when I was kept from school a half a day to pick huckleberries on a neighboring hill all by myself to make a pudding for the family dinner. Ah, they got nothing but the pudding —but I got invaluable experience beside— A half a day of liberty like that —was like the promise of life eternal. It was emancipation in New England. Oh what a day was there my country-man. I see the yellow butterflies now gathered in fleets in the road —& on the flowers of the milkweed *Asclepias pulchra* by the roadside, a really handsome flower. Also the smaller butterfly with reddish wings —& a larger black or steel blue with wings spotted red on edge and one of equal size reddish copper-colored —now you may see a boy stealing after one hat in hand. The earliest corn begins to tassel out, and my neighbor has put his hand in the hill some days ago and abstracted some new potatoes as big as nuts — then covered up again —now they will need or will get no more weeding. The lark [**Eastern Meadowlark**  *Sturnella magna*] sings in the meadow —the very essence of the afternoon is in his strain. This is a New England sound —but the cricket is heard under all sounds. Still the cars come & go with the regularity of nature —of the sun & moon (If a hen puts her eggs elsewhere than in the barns —in woods or among rocks —she is said to steal her nest!) The twittering of swallows  is in the air reminding me of water— The meadow sweet is now in bloom & the yarrow prevails by all road-sides— I see the hard-hack too, homely but dear plant —just opening its red clustered flowers The small aster too now abounds Aster miser —and the tall butter cup still. After wading through a swamp the other day with my shoes in my hand I wiped my feet with Sassafras leaves which reminded me of some Arabian practices The bruised leaves perfuming the air —and by their softness being adapted to this purpose. The tree primrose or Scabish still is seen over the fence. The red wings [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] & crow blackbirds [**Common Grackle**  *Quiscalus quiscula*] are heard chattering on the trees —& the cowtroopials [**Brown-headed Cowbird**  *Molothrus ater*] are accompanying the cows in the pastures for the sake of the insects they scare up. Oftentimes the thoughtless sportsman has lodged his charge of shot in the cow’s legs or body in his eagerness to obtain the birds. St Johns wort one of the first of yellow flowers begins to shine along the road side —the mullein for some time past. I see a farmer cradling his rye John Potter— Fields are partly mown some English grass on the higher parts of the meadow next to the road. The farmers work comes not all at once. In haying time —there is a cessation from other labors to a considerable extent— Planting is done & hoeing mainly —only some turnip-seed is to be scattered amid the corn. I hear the kingbird [**Eastern Kingbird**  *Tyrannus tyrannus*] twittering or chattering like a stout-chested swallow. The prunella sends back a blue ray from under my feet as I walk —the pale lobelia too. The plaintive spring-restoring peep of a blue-bird [**Eastern Bluebird**  *Sialia sialis*] is occasionally heard. I met loads of hay on the road — which the oxen draw indifferently —swaggering in their gate as if it were not fodder for them. Methinks they should testify sometimes that they are working for themselves. The white-weed is turning black. Grapes are half grown and lead the mind forward to autumn. It is an air this afternoon that makes you indifferent to all things — perfect summer —but with a comfortable breeziness —you know not heat nor cold— What season of the year is this? The balls of the button bush are half formed with its fine glossy red stemmed leaf atoning for its nakedness in the spring.

My eye ranges over green fields of oats —for which there is a demand then somewhere. The wild-rose peeps from amid the alders & other shrubs by the roadside— The elder blow fills the air with its scent. The angelica with its large umbels is gone to seed. On it I find one of those slow-moving green worms with rings spotted black & yellow —like an East Indian production. What if these grew as large as elephants

— The honest & truly fair is more modestly colored

— Notwithstanding the drifting clouds you fear no rain today As you walk you smell some sweet herbage but detect not what it is— Hay is sticking to the willows & the alders on the causeway, & the bridge is sprinkled with it— The hemlock *Cicuta Am.* displays its white umbels now— The yellow lilies reign in the river— The painted tortoises drop off the willow stumps as you go over the bridge— The river is now so low that you can see its bottom shined on by the sun —& travellers stop to look at fishes as they go over —leaning on the rails. The pickerel weed —sends up its heavenly blue. The color of the cows on Fair Haven Hill —how fair a contrast to the hill-side —how striking & wholesome their clean brick red— when were they painted? How carelessly the eye rests on them or passes them by as things of course.

The tansey is budded— The Devils needles seem to rest in air over the water. There is nothing New English about them. Now at 4 Pm I hear the Pewee in the woods [**Wood Pewee**  *Contopus virens*] & the Cuckoo [**Black-billed Cuckoo**  *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*] reminds me of some silence among the birds I have not

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

noticed– The vireo (red-eyed?) [*Vireo olivaceus*] sings like a robin [*Northern Oriole Icterus galbula*] at even incessantly. for I have now turned into Conants woods. The oven bird [*Seiurus Aurocapillus*] helps fill some pauses. The poison sumack shows its green berries now unconscious of guilt. The heart leaved looetrite –*Lysimachia Ciliata* is seen in low open woods– The breeze displays the white under sides of the oak leaves & gives a fresh & flowing look to the woods. The river is a dark blue winding stripe amid the green of the meadow What is the color of the world.– Green mixed with yellowish & reddish for hills & ripe grass –& darker green for trees & forests –blue spotted with dark & white for sky & clouds –& dark blue for water. Beyond the old house I hear the squirrel chirp in the wall like a sparrow so Nature merges her creations into one. I am refreshed by the view of Nobscot and the South-western vales from Conantum seething with the blue element– Here comes a small bird with a ricochet flight & a faint twittering note like a messenger from Elysium. The rush-sparrow [*Field Sparrow Spizella pusilla*] jingles her small change –pure silver, on the counter of the pasture. From far I see the rye stacked up. A few dead trees impart the effect of wildness to the landscape –though it is a feature rare in an old settled country.

Methinks this is the first of dog-days. The air in the distance has a peculiar blue mistiness or furnace-like look –though, as I have said it is not sultry yet– It is not the season for distant views– Mountains are not clearly blue now– The air is the opposite to what it is in october & november. You are not inclined to travel. It is a world of orchards & small fruits now –& you can stay at home if the well has cool water in it. The black thimble berry is an honest homely berry now drying up as usual– I used to have a pleasant time stringing them on herds grass stems tracing the wall sides for them. It is pleasant to walk through these elevated fields –terraced upon the side of the hill so that the eye of the walker looks off into the blue cauldron of the air at his own level.

Here the haymakers have just gone to tea –(at 5 o'clock the farmers hour –before the afternoon is end –while he still thinks much work may still be done before night.– He does not wait till he is strongly reminded of the night– In the distance some burdened fields are black with haycocks. Some thoughtless & cruel sports man has killed 22 young partridges [*Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] not much bigger than robins [*American Robin Turdus migratorius*], against the laws of Massachusetts & humanity. At the Corner bridge the white lilies are budded. Green apples are now so large as to remind me of codling & the autumn again. The season of fruits is arrived. The dog's bane has a pretty delicate bell-like flower.– The jersey tea abounds. I see the marks of the scythes in the fields showing the breadth of each swath the mowers cut. Cool springs are now a desideratum. The geranium still hangs on. Even the creeping vines love the brooks & I see where one slender one has struggled down & dangles into the current which rocks it to & fro.<sup>25</sup> Filberts are formed & you may get the berry stains out of your hands with their husks, if you have any– Night shade is in blossom. Came thro the pine plains behind James Bakers –where late was open pasture now open pitch pine woods –only here and there the grass has given place to a carpet of pine needles– These are among our pleasantest woods –open –level –with blackberry vines interspersed & flowers, as ladies slippers earlier –& pinks On the outskirts each tree has room enough & now I hear the wood thrush [*Catharus mustelina*] from the shade who loves these pine woods as well as I.– I pass by walden's scolloped shore. The epilobium reflects a pink gleam up the vales & down the hills– The chewink [*Rufous-Sided Towhee Pipilo erythrophthalmus*] jingles on a bushes top– Why will the Irishman drink of a puddle by the railroad instead of digging a well –how shiftless –what death in life. He cannot be said to live who does not get pure water. The milkweeds or silkweeds are rich flowers now in blossom– The *Asclepias syriaca* or Common Milk weed –its buds fly open at a touch –but handsomer much is *Asclepias Pulchra* or water silkweed –the thin green bark of this last & indeed of the other is so strong that a man cannot break a small strip of it by fair means. It contains a mass of fine silken fibers arranged side by side like the strings of a fiddle bow & may be bent short without weakening it.

What more glorious condition of being can we imagine than from impure to be becoming pure. It is almost desirable to be impure that we may be the subjects of this improvement. That I am innocent to myself. That I love & reverence my life! That I am better fitted for a lofty society today than I was yesterday to make my life a sacrament– What is nature without this lofty tumbling May I treat myself with more & more respect & tenderness– May I not forget that I am impure & vicious May I not cease to love purity. May I go to my slumbers as expecting to arise to a new & more perfect day.

May I so live and refine my life as fitting myself for a society ever higher than I actually enjoy. May I treat myself tenderly as I would treat the most innocent child whom I love –may I treat children & my friends as my newly discovered self– Let me forever go in search of myself– Never for a moment think that I have found myself. Be as a stranger to myself never a familiar –seeking acquaintance still. May I be to myself as one is to me whom I love –a dear & cherished object– What temple what fane what sacred place can there be but the innermost part of my own being? The possibility of my own improvement, that is to be cherished. As I regard myself so I am. O my dear friends I have not forgotten you I will know you tomorrow. I associate you with my ideal self. I had ceased to have faith in myself. I thought I was grown up & become what I was intended to be.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

But it is earliest spring with me. In relation to virtue & innocence the oldest man is in the beginning spring & vernal season of life. It is the love of virtue makes us young ever— That is the fountain of youth— The very aspiration after the perfect. I love & worship myself with a love which absorbs my love for the world. The lecturer suggested to me that I might become better than I am —was it not a good lecture then? May I dream not that I shunned vice— May I dream that I loved & practiced virtue.<sup>26</sup>



July 19, Saturday: Here I am 34 years old, and yet my life is almost wholly unexpanded. How much is in the germ! There is such an interval between my ideal and the actual in many instances that I may say I am unborn. There is the instinct for society —but no society. Life is not long enough for one success. Within another 34 years that miracle can hardly take place. Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly than those of nature, I am differently timed. I am —contented. This rapid revolution of nature even of nature in me —why should it hurry me. Let a man step to the music which he hears however measured. Is it important that I should mature

### DIFFERENT DRUMMER

as soon as an apple tree? Ye, as soon as an oak?<sup>27</sup> May not my life in nature, in proportion as it is supernatural, be only the spring & infantile portion of my spirit's life shall I turn my spring to summer? May I not sacrifice a hasty & petty completeness here —to entireness there? If my curve is large —why bend it to a smaller circle? My spirits unfolding observes not the pace of nature. The society which I was made for is not here, shall I then substitute for the anticipation of that this poor reality. I would have the unmingled expectation of that than this

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25. William M. White's version is:

*Green apples are now so large  
As to remind me of coddling and the autumn again.  
The season of fruits is arrived.*

*The dog's-bane has a pretty, delicate bell-like flower.  
The Jersey tea abounds.*

*I see the marks of the scythes in the fields,  
Showing the breadth of each swath the mowers cut.*

*Cool springs are now a desideratum.  
The geranium still hangs on.*

*Even the creeping vines love the brooks,  
And I see where one slender one has struggled down  
And dangles into the current,  
Which rocks it to and fro.*

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

reality.

If life is a waiting –so be it. I will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. What were any reality which I can substitute. Shall I with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over myself though when it is done I shall be sure to gaze still on the true ethereal heaven –far above as if the former were not –that still distant sky oer arching that blue expressive eye of heaven. I am enamored of the blue eyed arch of heaven  
I did not **make** this demand for a more thorough sympathy. This is not my idiosyncrasy or disease. He that made the demand will answer the demand.

My blood flows as slowly as the waves of my native Musketaquid –yet they reach the ocean sooner perchance than those of the Nashua.

Already the golden-rod is budded, but I can make no haste for that.



July 19, Saturday: 2 Pm The weather is warm & dry –& many leaves curl. There is a threatening cloud in the SW. The farmers dare not spread their hay. It remains cocked in the fields. As you walk in the woods now a days the flies striking against your hat sound like rain drops. The stump or root fences on the Corner road remind me of fossil remains of mastodons &c exhumed and bleached in sun & rain. To day I met with the first orange flower of autumn– What means this doubly torrid –this Bengal tint– Yellow took sun enough –but this is the fruit of a dogday sun. The year has but just produced it. Here is the Canada thistle in bloom visited by butterflies & bees The butterflies have swarmed within these few days especially about the milkweed’s. The swamp pink still fills the air with its perfume in swamps & by the causeways –though it is far gone. The wild

26. [Thoreau](#) would later adapt this into his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” as:

[Paragraph 97] I would fain hunger and thirst after life forever and rise from the present enjoyment unsatisfied. I feel the necessity of treating myself with more respect than I have done—of washing myself more religiously in the ponds and streams if only for a symbol of an inward cleansing and refreshment—of eating and drinking more abstemiously and with more discrimination of savors—recruiting myself for new and worthier labor.

27. William M. White’s version is:




*Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly  
Than those of nature;  
I am differently timed.  
I am contented.*

*This rapid revolution of nature,  
Even of nature in me,  
Why should it hurry me?*

*Let a man step to the music which he hears,  
However measured.  
Is it important that I should mature  
As soon as an apple tree?  
Aye, as soon as an oak?*

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

rose still scatters its petals over the leaves of neighboring plants. The wild morning glory or bind-weed with its delicate red & white blossoms– I remember it ever as a goblet full of purest morning air & sparkling with dew. showing the dew point –winding round itself for want of other support– It grows by the Hubbard bridge causeway near the Angelica. The cherry birds [Cedar Waxwing  *Bombycilla cedrorum*] are making their seringo sound as they flit past. They soon find out the locality of the cherry trees. And beyond the bridge there is a golden rod partially blossomed. Yesterday it was spring & to-morrow it will be autumn– Where is the summer then? First came the St Johns wort & now the golden rod to admonish us. I hear too a cricket amid these stones under the blackberry vines –singing as in the fall. Ripe blackberries are multiplying. I see the red-spotted berries of the small solomons seal in my path. I notice in the decayed end of an oak post that the silver grain is not decayed –but remains sound in thin flakes alternating with the decayed portions, & giving the whole a honey-combed look.– Such an object supramundane –as even a swallow  may descend to light on –a dry mullein stalk for instance – – I see that hens too follow the cows feeding near the house like the cowtroopial [Brown-headed Cowbird  *Molothrus ater*] –& for the same object. They cannot so well scare up insects for themselves. This is the dog the cowbird uses to start its insect game

I see yellow butterflies in pairs pursuing each other –a rod or two into the air & now as he had bethought himself of the danger of being devoured by a passing birds he descends with a zig zag flight to the earth & the other follows. The black huckleberries are now so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur suspicion of being worm eaten. When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living –some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity –I thought often & seriously of picking huckleberries –that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice. So little capital it required –so little distraction from my wonted thoughts I foolishly thought– While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions I thought of this occupation as most like theirs. ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way which I might carelessly dispose of –so to keep the flocks of king Admetus– My greatest skill has been to want but little. I also dreammed that I might gather the wild herbs –or carry evergreens to such villagers as love to be reminded of the woods & so find my living got. But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles. & though you **trade** in messages from heaven –the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.

The wind rises more & more The river & the pond are blacker than the threatening cloud in the south– The thunder mutters in the distance– The surface of the water is slightly rippled– Where the pads grow is a light green border– The woods roar. Small white clouds are hurrying across the dark blue ground of the storm – which rests on all the woods of the South horizon But still no rain now for some hours as if the clouds were dissipated as fast as they reached this atmosphere.



The barberry's fruit hangs yellowish green– What pretty covers the thick bush makes so large & wide & drooping. The Fringilla juncorum<sup>28</sup> sings still in spite of the coming tempest which perchance only threatens The wood chuck is a good native of the soils. The distant hills side & the grain fields & pastures are spotted yellow or white with his recent burrows –and the small mounds remain for many years Here where the clover has lately been cut, see what a yellow mound is brought to light!

Heavily hangs the Common Yellow lily Liliun Canadense in the meadows– In the thick alder copses by the causeway side I find the Lysimachia hybrida. Here is the Lactuca Sanguinea with its runcinate leaves –tall-stem & pale crimson ray. And that green stemmed one higher than my head resembled the last in its leaves –is perchance the “tall lettuce or Fire weed. Can that fine white flowered meadow plant with the leaf be a Thalictum?

BARBERRY



July 21, Monday: 8 AM The forenoon is fuller of light. The butterflies on the flowers look like other & frequently larger flowers themselves. Now I yearn for one of those old meandering dry uninhabited roads which lead away from towns –which lead us away from temptation, which conduct to the outside of earth –over its uppermost crust –where you may forget in what country you are travelling –where no farmer can complain that you are treading down his grass –no gentleman who has recently constructed a seat in the country that you

28. **Thoreau** could not have intended here the bird then known as *Fringilla* or *F. or linaria* (**Common Redpoll**  *Carduelis flamma*), for this record is for the month of July and that bird winters in Concord and summers in the far north. He must have intended the bird then known as *juncorum* (**Field Sparrow**  *Spizella pusilla*). So, can anyone explain why he wrote *Fringilla juncorum*, other than as a mere slip of the pen?

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

are trespassing –on which you can go off at half cock –and waive adieu to the village –along which you may travel like a pilgrim –going nowhither. Where travellers are not too often to be met. Where my spirit is free – where the walls & fences are not cared for –where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth<sup>29</sup> – which have long reaches –where you can see the approaching traveller half a mile off and be prepared for him –not so luxuriant a soil as to attract men –some root and stump fences which do not need attention– Where travellers have no occasion to stop –but pass along and leave you to your thoughts– Where it makes no odds which way you face whether you are going or coming –whether it is morning or evening –mid noon or mid-night– Where earth is cheap enough by being public. Where you can walk and think with least obstruction – there being nothing to measure progress by. Where you can pace when your breast is full and cherish your moodiness. Where you are not in false relations with men –are not dining nor conversing with them. By which you may go to the uttermost parts of the earth– It is wide enough –wide as the thoughts it allows to visit you. Some-times it is some particular half dozen rods which I wish to find myself pacing over –as where certain airs blow then my life will come to me methinks like a hunter I walk in wait for it. When I am against this bare promontory of a hucklebery hill then forsooth my thoughts will expand. Is it some influence as a vapor which exhales from the ground, or something in the gales which blow there or in all things there brought together agreeably to my spirit? The walls must not be too high imprisoning me –but low with numerous –gaps– The trees must not be too numerous nor the hills too near bounding the view –nor the soil too rich attracting the attention to the earth– It must simply be the way and the life. A way that was never known to be repaired nor to need repair within the memory of the oldest inhabitant–<sup>30</sup> I cannot walk habitually in those ways that are liable to be repaired, for sure it was the devil only that wore them –never by the heel of thinkers (of thought)

29. William M. White's version would be:








*Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering,  
Dry, uninhabited roads,  
Which lead away from towns,  
Which lead us away from temptation,  
Which conduct to the outside of earth,  
Over its uppermost crust;  
Where you may forget in what country you are travelling;  
Where no farmer can complain  
That you are treading down his grass,  
No gentleman  
Who has recently constructed a seat in the country  
That you are trespassing;  
On which you can go off at half-cock  
And wave adieu to the village;  
Along which you may travel like a pilgrim,  
Going nowhither;  
Where travellers are not too often to be met;  
Where my spirit is free;  
Where the walls and fences are not cared for;  
Where your head is more in heaven  
Than your feet are on earth....*





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

were they worn –the zephyrs could repair that damage. The saunterer wears out no road –even though he travel on it –& therefore should pay no highway tax –he may be taxed to construct a higher way than men travel. A way which no geese defile nor hiss along it –but only some times their wild brethren [**Canada Goose**  **Branta canadensis**] fly far overhead –which the king bird [**Eastern Kingbird**  **Tyrannus tyrannus**] & the swallow  twitter over –& the song sparrow [**Melospiza**  **melodia**] sings on its rails. where the small red butterfly is at home on the yarrow –& no boys threaten it with imprisoning hat. There I can walk & stalk & pace & plod– Which no body but Jonas Potter travels beside me –where no cow but his is tempted to linger for the herbage by its side– Where the guide board is fallen & now the hand points to heaven significantly –to a sudbury & Marlborough in the skies. That’s a road I can travel that the particular sudbury I am bound for 6 miles an hour or 2 as you please– And few there be that enter thereon. There I can walk and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell– Where there was nothing ever discovered to detain a traveller but all went through about their business– Where I never passed the time of day with any –indifferent to me were the arbitrary divisions of time– Where Tullus Hostilius might have disappeared –at any rate has never been seen The road to the corner –the ninety & nine acres that you go through to get there I would rather see it again though I saw it this morning, than Gray’s churchyard. The road whence you may hear a stake driver [**American Bittern**  **Botaurus lentiginosus**] –a whipperwill [**Whip-Poor-Will**  **Caprimulgus Vociferus**] –a quail [**Northern Bobwhite**  **Colinus Virginianus**] in a mid summer day –a yes a quail comes nearest to the gum C bird heard there– Where it would not be sport for a sportsman to go.– (and the may weed looks up in my face –not there) the pale lobelia & the Canada Snap Dragon rather. a little hard hack & meadow sweet peeps over the fence –nothing more serious to obstruct the view– And thimble berries are the food of thought –before the droubt along by the walls.

It is they who go to Brighton & to market that wear out the roads –& they should pay all the tax –the deliberate pace of a thinker never made a road the worse for travelling on. There I have freedom in my thought & in my soul am free– Excepting the omnipresent butcher with his calf cart –followed by a distracted & anxious cow– Be it known that in Concord where the first forcible resistance to British aggression was made in the year 1775 they chop up the young calves & give them to the hens to make them lay –it being considered the cheapest & most profitable food for them –& they sell the milk to Boston.

On the promenade deck of the world –an outside passenger– The inattentive ever strange baker –whom no weather detains that does not bake his bread in this hemisphere –and therefore it is dry before it gets here– Ah there is a road where you might advertise to fly –& make no preparations till the time comes where your wings will sprout if anywhere. where your feet are not confined to earth. An airy head makes light walking.

Where I am not confined & balked by the sight of distant farm houses which I have not gone past. In roads the obstructions are not under my feet –I care not for rough ground or wet even –but they are in my vision & in the

30. William M. White’s version would be:

*The walls must not be too high,*

*Imprisoning me,*

*But low, with numerous gaps.*

*The trees must not be too numerous,*

*Nor the hills too near,*

*Bounding the view,*

*Nor the soil too rich,*

*Attracting the attention to the earth.*

*It must simply be the way and the life, —*

*A way that was never known to be repaired,*

*Nor to need repair;*

*Within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.*

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

thoughts or associations which I am compelled to entertain I must be fancy free— I must feel that wet or dry high or low it is the genuine surface of the planet & not a little chip dirt or a compost heap —or made land or redeemed. Where I can sit by the wall side and not be peered at by any old ladies going a shopping —not have to bow to one whom I may have seen in my youth—at least not more than once —I am engaged and cannot be polite.

Did you ever hear of such a thing as a man sitting in the road —& then have four eyes levelled at you. Have we any more right sometimes to look at one than to point a revolver at him —it might go off —& so perchance we might *see* him —which would be equally fatal —if it **should** ever happen —though perhaps it never has.—

A thinker's weight is in his thought not in his tread —when he thinks freely his body weighs nothing. He cannot tread down your grass farmers.

I thought to walk this forenoon instead of this afternoon —for I have not been in the fields & woods much of late except when surveying —but the least affair of that kind is as if you had black veil drawn over your face which shut out nature as that eccentric & melancholy minister whom I have heard of. It may be the fairest day in all the year & you shall not know it —one little chore to do —one little commission to fulfil —one message to carry would spoil heaven itself. Least of all is the lover **engaged!** And all you get is your dollars— To go forth before the heat is intolerable —and see what is the difference between forenoon & afternoon. It seems there is a little more coolness in the air; there is still some dew even on this short grass in the shade of the walls & woods —and a feeling of vigor the walker has. There are few sounds but the slight twittering of swallows █ & the **springy** note of the sparrow █ in the grass or trees —& a lark [**Eastern Meadowlark** █ *Sturnella magna*] in the meadow (now at 8 AM) and the cricket under all to ally the hour to night. Day is in fact about as still as night. draw the veil of night over this landscape and these sounds would not disturb nor be inconsistent for their loudness with the night. It is a difference of white & black. Nature is in a white sleep. It threatens to be a hot day & the haymakers are whetting their scythes in the fields where they have been out since 4 o'clock. When I have seen them in the twilight commencing their labors, I have been impressed as if it were last night. There is something ghastly about such very early labor. I cannot detect the whole & characteristic difference between this and afternoon —though it is positive & decided enough —as my instincts know.

By two o'clock it will be warmer & hazier obscuring the mts, & the leaves will curl —& the dust will rise more readily. Every herb is fresher now —has recovered from yesterdays drought— The cooler air of night still lingers in the fields as by night the warm air of day. The noon is perchance the time to stay in the house.

There is no glory so bright but the veil of business can hide it effectually With most men life is postponed to some trivial business & so therefore is heaven. Men think foolishly they may abuse & mispend life as they please and when they get to heaven turn over a new leaf.

I see the track of a bare human foot in the dusty road, the toes & muscles all faithfully imprinted— Such a sight is so rare that it affects me with surprise as the foot print on the shore of Juan Fernandez did Crusoe— It is equally rare here I am affected as if some Indian or South Sea Islander had been along —some man who had a foot. I am slow to be convinced that any of my neighbors —the judge on the bench —the parson in the pulpit might have made that or some thing like it however irregular. It is pleasant as it is to see the tracks of cows & deer & birds. I am brought so much nearer to the tracker —when again I think of the sole of my own foot —than when I behold that of his shoe merely, or am introduced to him & converse with him in the usual way.

Men are very generally spoiled by being so civil and well disposed. You can have no profitable conversation with them they are so conciliatory —determined to agree with you. They exhibit such long suffering & kindness in a short interview. I would meet with some provoking strangeness. So that we may be guest and host & refresh one another. It is possible for a man wholly to disappear & be merged in his manners. The thousand and one gentlemen whom I meet I meet despairingly & but to part from them for I am not cheered by the hope of any rudeness from them. A cross man a coarse man an eccentric man a silent —a man who does not drill well of him there is some hope. Your gentlemen, they are all alike They utter their opinions as if it was not a man that uttered them. It is “just as you please” —they are indifferent to everything— They will talk with you for nothing. The interesting man will rather avoid —and it is a rare chance if you get so far as talk with him. The laborers whom I know —the loafers —fishers & hunters —I can spin yarns with profitably —for it is hands off —they are they & I am I still —they do not come to me & quarter themselves on me for an day or an hour to be treated politely —they do not cast themselves on me for entertainment —they do not approach me with a flag of truce. They do not go out of themselves to meet me. I am never electrified by my gentleman —he is not an electric eel, but one of the common kind that slip through your hands however hard you clutch them & leave them covered with slime.

He is a man every inch of him —is worth a groom—


To eat berries on the dry pastures of Conantum as if they were the food of thought —dry as itself. Berries are now thick enough to pick. 9 A M on Conantum

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE


## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


A quarter of a mile is distance enough to make the atmosphere look blue now. This is never the case in spring or early summer. It was fit that I should see an Indigo bird [**Indigo Bunting**  *Passerina cyanea*]<sup>31</sup> here concerned about its young –a perfect imbodiment of the darkest blue that ever fills the vallies at this season– The meadow grass reflecting the light has a bluish cast also.


Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth. i.e. Lay up a store of natural influences –sing while you may before the evil days come –he that hath ears let him hear –see –hear –smell –taste –&c while these senses are fresh & pure

There is always a kind of fine AEolian harp music to be heard in the air– I hear now as it were the mellow sound of distant horns in the hollow mansions of the upper air –a sound to make all men divinely insane that hear it – far away over head subsiding into my ear. to ears that are expanded what a harp this world is! The occupied ear thinks that beyond the cricket no sound can be heard –but there is an immortal melody that may be heard morning noon and night by ears that can attend & from time to time this man or that hears it –having ears that were made for music.<sup>32</sup> To hear this the hard hack & the meadow sweet **aspire** They are thus beautifully painted because they are tinged in the lower stratum of that melody.

I eat these berries as simply & naturally as thoughts come to my mind.

Never yet did I chance to sit in a house –except my own house in the woods –and hear a wood thrush [**Catharus**  *mustelina*] sing –would it not be well to sit in such a chamber –within sound of the finest songster of the grove?

The quail [**Northern Bobwhite**  *Colinus Virginianus*] –invisible –whistles –& who attends

10 A M– The white lily has opened how could it stand these heats –it has pantingly opened –and now lies stretched out by its too-long stem on the surface of the shrunken river. The air grows more & more blue.– making pretty effects when one wood is seen from another through a little interval. Some pigeons [American **Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius*] here are resting in the thickest of the white pines during the heat of the day –migrating no doubt. They are unwilling to move for me. Flies buz and rain about my hat –& the

AEOLIAN HARP

31. [Thoreau](#)'s "indigo-bird" of May 4, 1853 was a black-throated blue warbler *Dendroica caerulescens*.

32. William M. White's version would be:

*There is always a kind of fine æolian harp music  
To be heard in the air.  
I hear now, as it were,  
The mellow sound of distant horns  
In the hollow mansions of the upper air,  
A sound to make all men divinely insane that hear it,  
Far away overhead,  
Subsiding into my ear.*

*To ears that are expanded what a harp this world is!  
The occupied ear thinks that beyond the cricket  
No sound can be heard,  
But there is an immortal melody that may be heard  
Morning, noon, and night,  
By ears that can attend,  
And from time to time  
This man or that hears it,  
Having ears that were made for music.*

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

dead twigs & leaves of the White pine which the choppers have left here exhale a dry & almost sickening scent. A cuckoo [**Black-billed Cuckoo** [Coccyzus erythrophthalmus](#)] chuckles half throttled on a neighboring tree – & now flying into the pine scares out a pigeon which flies with its handsome tail spread dashes this side and that between the trees helplessly like a ship carrying too much sail<sup>33</sup> in midst of a small creek some great amiral.– having no room to manoeuvre– A fluttering flight.

The mts can scarcely be seen for the blue haze only Wachusett and the near ones.

The thorny apple bush on Conantum has lately sent up branches from its top resolved to become a tree, & these spreading (and bearing fruit) the whole has the form of a vast hour-glass.– The lower part being the most dense by far you would say the sand had run out.

I now return through Conants leafy woods by the spring –whose floor is sprinkled with sun-light –low trees which yet effectually shade you

The dusty may weed now blooms by the roadside one of the humblest flowers.

The rough hawkweed too by the damp roadside –resembling in its flower the autumnal dandelion– That was probably the verbena hastata or com. blue vervain which I found the other day by Walden Pond The Antirrhinum Canadense Can. snap dragon in the Corner road. And the ragged Orchis on Conantum.

8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> PM

The streets of the village are much more interesting to me at this hour of a summer evening than by day. Neighbors and also farmers come ashopping after their day's haying are chatting in the streets and I hear the sound of many musical instruments and of singing from various houses. For a short hour or two the inhabitants are sensibly employed.

The evening is devoted to poetry such as the villagers can appreciate.

How rare to meet with a farmer who is a man of sentiment Yet there was one Gen. Joshua Buttrick who died the other day –who is said to have lived in his sentiments. He used to say that the smell of burning powder excited him.

It is said that [Mirabeau](#) took to highway robbery “to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society.” He declared that “a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a footpad.” – “honor and religion have never stood in the way of a well considered & a firm resolve. Tell me, Du Saillant, when you lead your regiment into the heat of battle, to conquer a province to which he whom you call your master has no right whatever, do you consider that you are performing a better action than mine, in stopping your friend on the king's highway, and demanding his purse?”

“I obey without reasoning,” replied the count.

“And I reason without obeying, when obedience appears to me to be contrary to reason,” –rejoined [Mirabeau](#).

33. William M. White's version would be:

*Flies buzz and rain about my hat,  
And the dead twigs and leaves of the white pine,  
Which the choppers have left here,  
Exhale a dry and almost sickening scent.*

*A cuckoo chuckles, half throttled,  
On a neighboring tree,  
And now, flying into the pine,  
Scares out a pigeon,  
Which flies with its handsome tail spread,  
Dashes this side and that  
Between the trees helplessly,  
Like a ship carrying too much sail...*



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Harpers New Month. vol 1st p 648 from Cham. Ed.– Journal

This was good & manly as the world goes– And yet it was desperate– A saner man would have found opportunities enough to put himself in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society and so test his resolution in the natural course of events without violating the laws of his own nature. It is not for a man to **put himself** in such an attitude to society –but to **maintain** himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being. which will never be one of opposition to a just government. Cut the leather only where the shoe pinches– Let us not have a rabid virtue that will be revenged on society –that falls on it not like the morning dew but like the fervid noonday sun to wither it.

JONAS POTTER

JOSHUA BUTTRICK

DESPERATION



July 23, Wednesday: I remember the last moon, shining through a creamy atmosphere, with a tear in the eye of Nature and her tresses dishevelled and drooping, sliding up the sky, the glistening air, the leaves shining with dew, pulsating upward; an atmosphere unworn, unprophaned by day. What self-healing in Nature! –swept by the dews.

For some weeks past the roadsides and the dry and trivial fields have been covered with the field trefoil (*Trifolium arvense*), now in bloom.

8A.M. — A comfortable breeze blowing. Methinks I can write better in the afternoon, for the novelty of it, if I should go abroad this morning. My genius makes distinctions which my understanding cannot, and which my senses do not report. If I should reverse the usual, - go forth and saunter in the fields all the forenoon, then sit down in my chamber in the afternoon, which it is so unusual for me to do, -it would be like a new season to me, and the novelty of it [would] inspire me. The wind has fairly blown me outdoors; the elements were so lively and active, and I so sympathized with them, that I could not sit while the wind went by. And I am reminded that we should especially improve the summer to live out-of-doors. When we may so easily, it behooves us to break up this custom of sitting in the house, for it is but a custom, and I am not sure that it has the sanction of common sense. A man no sooner gets up than he sits down again. Fowls leave their perch in the morning, and beasts their lairs, unless they are such as go abroad only by night. The cockerel does not take up a new perch *in the barn*, and he is the embodiment of health and common sense. Is the literary man to live always or chiefly sitting in a chamber through which nature enters by a window only? What is the use of the summer?

You must walk so gently as to hear the finest sounds, the faculties being in repose, Your mind must not perspire.

### DIFFERENT DRUMMER

True, out of doors my thought is commonly drowned, as it were, and shrunken, pressed down by stupendous piles of light ethereal influences, for the pressure of the atmosphere is still fifteen pounds to a square inch. I can do little more than preserve the equilibrium and resist the pressure of the atmosphere. I can only nod like the rye-heads in the breeze. I expand more surely in my chamber, as far as expression goes, as if that pressure were taken off; but here outdoors is the place to store up influences.

The swallow's twitter is the sound of the lapsing waves of the air, or when they break and burst, as his wings represent the ripple. He has more air in his bones than other birds; his feet are defective. The fish of the air. His note is the voice of the air. As fishes may hear the sound of waves lapsing on the surface and see the outlines of the ripples, so we hear the note and see the flight of swallows.

The influences which make for one walk more than another, and one day more than another, are much more ethereal than terrestrial. It is the quality of the air much more than the quality of the ground that concerns the walker, — cheers or depresses him. What he may find in the air, not what he may find on the ground.

On such a road (the Corner) I walk securely, seeing far and wide on both sides, as if I were flanked by light infantry on the hills, to rout the provincials, as the British marched into Concord, while my grenadier thoughts

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

keep the main road. That is, my light-armed and wandering thoughts scour the neighboring fields, and so I know if the coast is clear. With what a breadth of van I advance! I am not bounded by the walls. I think more than the road full. (Going southwesterly.) While I am abroad, the ovipositors plant their seeds in me; I am fly-blown with thought, and go home to hatch and brood over them.

I was too discursive and rambling in my thought for the chamber, and must go where the wind blows on me walking.

A little brook crossing the road (the Corner road), a few inches' depth of transparent water rippling over yellow sand and pebbles, the pure blood of nature. How miraculously crystal-like, how exquisite, fine, and subtle, and liquid this element, which an imperceptible inclination in the channel causes to flow thus surely and swiftly! How obedient to its instinct, to the faintest suggestion of the hills! If inclined but a hair's breadth, it is in a torrent haste to obey. And all the revolutions of the planet - nature is so exquisitely adjusted - and the attraction of the stars do not disturb this equipoise, but the rills still flow the same way, and the water levels are not disturbed.

We are not so much like debauchees as in the afternoon.

The mind is subject to moods, as the shadows of clouds pass over the earth. Pay not too much heed to them. Let not the traveller stop for them. They consist with the fairest weather. By the mood of my mind, I suddenly felt dissuaded from continuing my walk, but I observed at the same instant that the shadow of a cloud was passing over [the] spot on which I stood, though it was of small extent, which, if it had no connection with my mood, at any rate suggested how transient and little to be regarded that mood was. I kept on, and in a moment the sun shone on my walk within and without.

The button-bush in blossom. The tobacco-pipe in damp woods. Certain localities only a few rods square in the fields acid on the hills, sometimes the other side of a wall, attract me as if they had been the scene of pleasure in another state of existence.

But this habit of close observation, — in [Humboldt](#), [Darwin](#), and others. Is it to be kept up long, this science? Do not tread on the heels of your experience. Be impressed without making a minute of it. Poetry puts an interval between the impression and the expression, — waits till the seed germinates naturally.



July 25, Friday: Started for Clark's Island at 7 A.M.

At 9 Am took the Hingham boat and was landed at Hull. There was a pleasure party on board, apparently boys & girls belonging to the South end going to Hingham. There was a large proportion of ill-dressed and ill-mannered boys —of Irish extraction— A sad sight to behold Little boys of 12 years prematurely old sucking cigars I felt that if I were their mothers I should whip them & send them to bed. Such children should be dealt with as for stealing or impurity. The opening of this valve for the safety of the city! Oh what a wretched resource! What right have parents to beget —to bring up & attempt to **educate** children in a city— I thought of infanticide among the orientals with complacency— I seemed to hear infant voices lisp — “give us a fair chance parents.” There is no such squalidness in the country— You would have said that they must all have come from the house of correction and the farm-school —but such a company do the boys in Boston Streets make. The birds have more care for their young —where they place their nests— What are a city's charities —? She could be charitable perchance if she had a resting place without herself. A true culture is more possible to the savage than to the boy of average intellect born of average parents in a great city— I believe that they perish miserably. How can they be kept clean physically or morally? It is folly to attempt to educate children within a city —the first step must be to remove them out of it. It seemed a groping & helpless philanthropy — that I heard of.

I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's Mate to some girls as we passed that spot —how he said “If I am guilty this island will remain, but if I am innocent it will be washed away —& now it is all washed away” this was a simple & strong expression of feeling suitable to the occasion by which he committed the evidence of his innocence to the dumb-isle— Such as the boy could appreciate —a proper sailors legend —and I was reminded that it is the illiterate and unimaginative class that seizes on & transmits the legends in which the more cultivated delight. No fastidious poet dwelling in Boston had tampered with it —no narrow poet —but broad mankind Sailors from all ports sailing by. They sitting on the deck were the literary academy that sat upon its periods.

On the beach at Hull, and afterwards all along the shore to Plymouth —I saw the Datura —the variety (red stemmed) methinks, which some call *Tatula* instead of *Stramonium*— I felt as if I was on the highway of the world at sight of this cosmopolite & veteran traveller— It told of commerce & sailors yarns without end. It grows luxuriantly in sand & gravel. This Capt. Cook among plants— This Norse man or sea pirate —Vikings King of the bays —the beaches. It is not an innocent plant— It suggests commerce with its attendant vices.

Saw a public House where I landed at Hull made like some barns which I have seen of boards with a cleet nailed

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

over the cracks, without clapboards or paint— Evidently very simple & cheap —yet neat & convenient as well as airy. It interested me —as the New House at Long Island did not —as it brought the luxury & comfort of the sea shore within reach of the less wealthy— It was such an exhibition of good sense as I was not prepared for and do not remember to have seen before. Ascended to the top of the hill where is the old French Fort with the well said to be 90 feet deep now covered. I saw some horses standing on the very top of the ramparts the highest part of Hull, where there was hardly room to turn round —for the sake of the breeze. It was excessively warm, and their instincts —or their experience perchance guided them as surely to the summit as it did me. Here is the Telegraph 9 miles from Boston whose state House was just visible —moveable signs on a pole with holes in them for the passage of the wind. A man about the Telegraph Station thought it the highest point in the harbor —said they could tell the kind of vessel 30 miles off —the no at mast head 10 or 12 miles —name on hull 6 or 7 miles. They can see furthest in the fall. There is a mist summer and winter when the contrast bet. the temperature of the sea & the air is greatest. I did not see why this Hill should not be fortified as well as George’s Island, it being higher & also commanding the main channel— However an enemy could go by all the forts in the dark —as Wolfe did at Quebec They are bungling contrivances.

Here the bank is rapidly washing away —on every side in Boston Harbor— The evidences of the wasting away of the islands are so obvious and striking that they appear to be wasting faster than they are— You will sometimes see a springing hill showing by the interrupted arch of its surface against the sky how much space must have occupied where there is now water as at Pt Allerton —what Botanists call premore



Hull looks as if it had been two islands since connected by a beach— I was struck by the gracefully curving & fantastic shore of a small island (Hog I.) inside of Hull — where every thing seemed to be gently lapsing into futurity



as if the inhabitants should bear a ripple for device on their coat of arms



—a wave passing over them with the Datura growing on their shores— The wrecks of isles fancifully arranged into a new shore. To see the sea nibbling thus voraciously at the continents.— A man at the Telegraph told me of a White oak pole 1 1/2 ft in diam. 40 feet high & 4 feet or more in the rock at Minots ledge with 4 guys —which stood only one year — — Stone piled up cob fashion near same place stood 8 years.

Hull pretty good land but bare of trees only a few cherries for the most part & mostly uncultivated being owned by few. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel half a mile from the shore which sounded as if they were in a barn in the country —they being between the sails. It was not a sea sound. It was a purely rural sound. Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. Here were many lobster traps on the shore. The beds of dry seaweed or eel grass on the beach reminds me of narrow shavings On the farther hill in Hull I saw a field full of Canada thistles close up to the fences on all sides while beyond them there was none So much for these fields having been subjected to diff. culture. So a diff. culture in the case of men brings in diff. weeds. Weeds come in with the seeds —though perhaps much more in the manure. Each kind of culture will introduce its own weeds.

I am bothered to walk with those who wish to keep step with me. It is not necessary to keep step with your companion as some endeavor to do.

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

They told me at Hull that they burned the **stem** of the kelp chiefly for potash— Chemistry is not a splitting hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory.

As I walked on the beach (Nantasket) panting with thirst a man pointed to a white spot on the side of a distant hill (Strawberry Hill he called it) which rose from the gravelly beach, and said that there was a pure and cold





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

and unfailling spring –and I could not help admiring that in this town of Hull of which I had heard but now for the first time saw a single spring should appear to me and should be of so much value. I found Hull indeed but there was also a spring on that parched unsheltered shore –the spring, though I did not visit it, made the deepest impression on my mind. Hull the place of the spring & of the well. This is what the traveller would remember. All that he remembered of Rome was a spring on the Capitoline Hill!

{<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> page missing}

rocks and the perfectly clean & rich looking rockweed –greatly enhance the pleasure of bathing here– It is the most perfect sea shore I have seen. The rockweed falls over you like the *tresses* of mermaids –& you see the propriety of that epithet– You cannot swim among these weeds and pull yourself up by them without thinking of mermen & mermaids. I found the

{<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> page missing}

water & fresh if you taste high enough up are all convenient to bathe your extremities in.– The barnacles on the rocks which make a whitish strip a few feet in width just above the weeds remind me of some vegetable growth which I have seen –surrounded by a circle of Calyx-like or petal-like shells like some buds or seed vessels. They too clinging to the rocks like the weeds. Lying along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat.

I saw in Cohasset –separated from the sea only by a narrow beach a very large & handsome but shallow lake, of at least 400 acres –with five rockly islets in it –which the sea had tossed over the beach in the great storm in the spring and after the alewives had passed in to it –stopped up its outlet and now the alewives were dying by thousands –& the inhabitants apprehended a pestilence as the water evaporated. The water was very foul.

The rockweed is considered the best for manure. I saw them drying the Irish moss in quantities at Jerusalem village in Cohasset– It is said to be used for sizing calico. Finding myself on the edge of a thunder storm I stopped a few moments at the Rock House in Cohasset close to the shore. There was scarcely rain enough to wet one & no wind. I was therefore surprised to hear afterward through a young man who had just returned from Liverpool that there was a severe squawl at Quarantine ground only 7 or 8 miles north-west of me such as he had not experienced for 3 years –which sunke several boats & caused some vessels to drag their anchors & come near going ashore.– Proving that the gust which struck the water there must have been of very limited breadth for I was or might have been overlooking the spot & felt no wind. This Rocky shore is called Pleasant cove on large maps –on the map of Cohasset alone the name seems to be confined to the cove where I first saw the wreck of the St John alone.

Brush island opposite this with a hut on it –not permanently inhabited– It takes but little soil to tempt men to inhabit such places. I saw here the Am. Holly *Ilex Opaca* which is not found further north than Mass. but S & west– The yellow gerardia in the woods.

**CAPE COD:** I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's mate to some girls as we passed that spot. That was the name of a sailor hung there, he said. – "If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent, it will be washed away," and now it is all washed away!



August 8, Friday: 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> PM To Conantum– The moon has not yet quite filled her horns–<sup>34</sup> I perceive

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34. It was half full on the night of the 3rd and would be full on the night of the 10th.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

why we so often remark a dark cloud in the west at and after sunset— It is because it is almost directly between us and the sun & hence we see the dark side and moreover it is much darker than it other-wise would be because of the little light reflected from the earth at that hour. The same cloud at mid day & over head might not attract attention. There is a pure amber sky beneath the present bank —thus framed off from the rest of the heavens — which with the outlines of small dead elms seen against it —I hardly know far or near —make picture enough. Men will travel far to see less interesting sights than this. Turning away from the sun we get this enchanting view as when a man looks at the landscape with inverted head. Under shadow of the dark cloud which I have described the cricket begins his strain —his ubiquitous strain. Is there a fall-cricket distinct from the species we hear in spring & summer?

I smell the cornfield over the brook a dozen rods off —& it reminds me of the green corn feasts of the Indians. The evening train comes rolling in —but none of the passengers jumping out in such haste attend to the beautiful fresh picture which nature has unrolled in the west —& surmounted with that dark frame. The circular platter of the carrots blossom is now perfect.

Might not this be called the invalide's moon on account of the warmth of the nights? The principal employments of the farmers now seems to be getting their meadow hay. & cradling some oats &c.

The light from the western sky is stronger still than that of the moon —and when I hold up my hand the west side is lighted while the side toward the moon is comparatively dark.— — But now that I have put this dark wood (Hubbards's) between me and the west —I see the moon light plainly on my paper— I am even startled by it— One star too, is it Venus?, I see in the west Starlight —! that would be a good way to mark the hour if we were precise. Hubbards brook— How much the beauty of the moon is enhanced by being seen shining between two trees —or even by the neighborhood of clouds! I hear the clock striking eight faintly. I smell the late shorn meadows

VENUS

One will lose no music by not attending the oratorios & operas. The really inspiring melodies are cheap & universal —& are as audible to the poor man's son as to the rich mans. Listening to the harmonies of the universe is not allied to dissipation. My neighbors have gone to the vestry to hear "Ned Kendal" the bugler tonight, but I am come forth to the hills to hear my bugler in the horizon— I can forego the seeming advantages of cities without misgiving. No heavenly strain is lost to the ear that is fitted to hear it for want of money — or opportunity. I am convinced that for instrumental music All Vienna cannot serve me more than the Italian boy who seeks my door with his organ.

And now I strike the road at the causeway— It is hard & I hear the sound of my steps a sound which should never be heard —for it draws down my thoughts. It is more like the treadmill exercise. The fireflies are not so numerous as they have been. There is no dew as yet. The planks & railing of Hubbards bridge are removed. I walk over on the string pieces resting in the middle until the moon comes out of a cloud that I may see my path —for between the next piers the string pieces also are removed & there is only a rather narrow plank — let down 3 or 4 feet.— I essay to cross it —but it springs a little & I mistrust myself —whether I shall not plunge into the river. Some demonic genius seems to be warning me. Attempt not the passage —you will surely be drowned— It is very real that I am thus affected— Yet I am fully aware of the absurdity of minding such suggestions— I put out my foot but I am checked as if that power had laid a hand on my breast & chilled me back —never the less I cross —stooping at first —& gain the other side.— (I make the most of it —on account of the admonition —but it was nothing to remark on— I returned the same way 2 hours later & made nothing of it) It is easy to see how by yielding to such feelings as this men would recreate all reestablish all the superstitions of antiquity. It is best that reason should govern us and not these blind intimations —in which we exalt our fears into a genius.

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

On Conantum I sit awhile in the shade of the woods & look out on the moonlit fields— White rocks are more remarkable than by day.

The air is warmer than the rocks now. It is perfectly warm & I am tempted to stay out all night & observe each phenomenon of the night until day dawns. But if I should do so, I should not wonder if the town were raised to hunt me up. Sitting on the door step of Conant-house —at 9 o'clock I hear a pear drop —how few of all the apples that fall do we hear fall.

I could lie out here on this pinnacle rock all night without cold— I hear a horse sneeze? from time to time in his pasture— He sees me & knows me to be a man —though I do not see him.

To lie here on your back with nothing between your eye & the stars —nothing but space —they your nearest

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

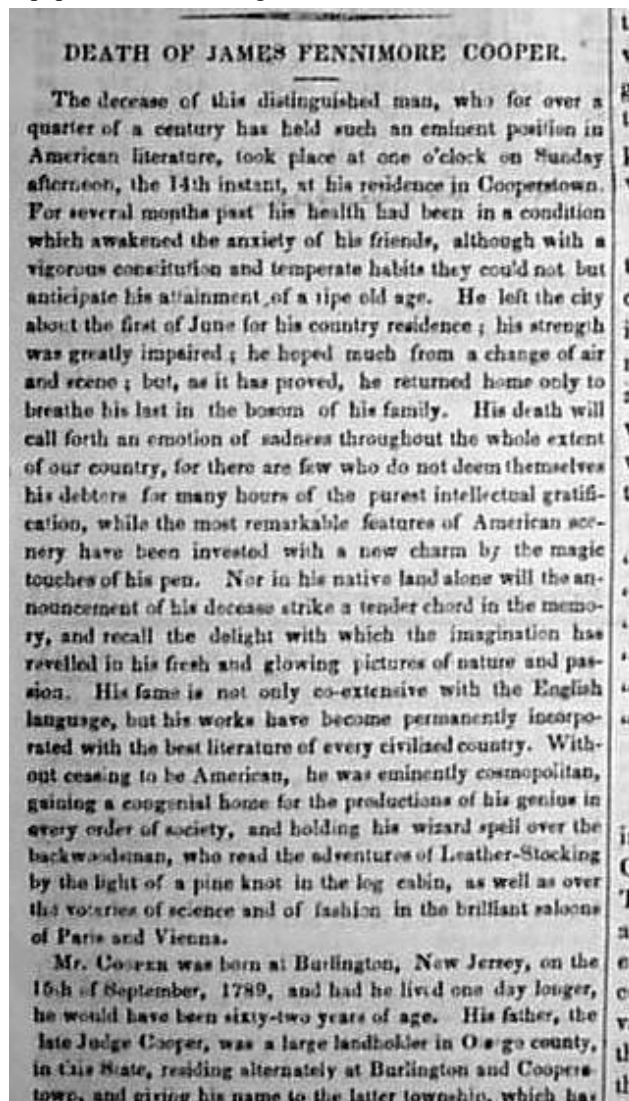


# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

neighbors on that side –be they strange or be they tame –be they other worlds or merely ornaments to this–  
 Who could ever go to sleep under these circumstances. I hear the 9 o'clock bell ringing in Bedford –  
 an unexpectedly musical sound that of a bell in the horizon always is– Pleasantly sounds the voice of one  
 village to another. It is sweet as it is rare. Since I sat here a bright star has gone behind the stem of a tree –proving  
 that my machine is moving– I hear a solitary whipperwill [Whip-Poor-Will █ *Caprimulgus Vociferus*] –& a  
 bull frog on the river fewer sounds than in spring. The grey cliffs across the river are plain to be seen– And now  
 the star appears on the other side of the tree –& I must go– Still no dew up here I see 3 scythes hanging on an  
 apple tree– There is the wild apple tree where hangs the forgotten scythe.– the rock where the shoe was left.  
 The woods & the separate trees cast longer shadows than by day –for the moon goes lower in her course at this  
 season. Some dew at last in the meadow. As I recross the string pieces of the bridge –I see the water bugs  
 swimming briskly in the moonlight. I scented the Roman Wormwood in the Potatoe fields.

September 23, Tuesday: Newspapers were recording the demise of famous author [James Fenimore Cooper](#):





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



September 23, Tuesday: Notwithstanding the fog – the fences this morning are covered with so thick a frost that you can write your name anywhere with your nail.

The partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] & the rabbit, they still are sure to thrive, like true natives of the soil whatever revolutions occur. If the forest is cut off many bushes spring up which afford them concealment, and they become more numerous than ever.

The sumacs are among the reddest leaves at present. The telegraph-harp sounds strongly today in the midst of the rain. I put my ear to the trees and I hear it working terribly within & anon it swells into a clear tone, which seems to concentrate in the core of the tree – for all the sound seems to proceed from the wood. It is as if you had entered some world famous cathedral resounding to some vast organ– The fibres of all things have their tension and are strained like the strings of a lyre. I feel the very ground tremble under my feet as I stand near the post

AEOLIAN HARP

This wire vibrates with great power as if it would strain & rend the wood. What an awful and fate-ful music it must be to the worms in the wood – no better vermifuge were needed. No danger that worms will attack this wood – such vibrating music would thrill them to death. I scare up large flocks of sparrows in the garden–



October 15, Wednesday: 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> AM up the river in a boat to Pelham’s Pond with W.E.C.

(But first a neighbor sent in a girl to inquire if I knew where worm-seed grew otherwise called “Jerusalem oak”– (so said the recipe which she brought cut out of a newspaper) for her mistress’ hen had the “gapes”– But I answered that this was a southern plant & knew not where it was to be had. Referred her to the poultry book.– Also the next proprietor commenced stoning & settling down the stone for a new well–an operation which I wished to witness–purely beautiful–simple & necessary. The stones laid on a wheel–and continually added to above as it is settled down by digging under the wheel.– Also Godwin with a partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus**] & a stout mess of large pickerel–applied to me to dispose of a mud turtle which he had found moving the mud in a ditch. Some men will be in the way to see such movements.)

The muskrat houses appear now for the most part to be finished– Some it is true are still rising– They line the river all the way. Some are as big as small hay cocks– The river is still quite low–though a foot or more higher than when I was last on it– There is quite a wind & the sky is full of flitting clouds–so that sky & water are quite unlike that warm bright transparent day when I last sailed on the river–when the surface was of such oily smoothness– You could not now study the river bottom for the black waves & the streaks of foam. When the sun shines brightest today–its pyramidal shaped sheen (when for a short time we are looking up stream–for we row) is dazzling & blinding– It is pleasant to hear the sound of the waves & feel the surging of the boat–an inspiring sound as if you were bound on adventures. It is delightful to be tossed about in such a harmless storm.– & see the waves look so angry & black. We see objects on shore, trees &c, much better from the boat– from a low point of View–it brings them against the sky–into a novel point of view at least– The other wise low on the meadows as well as the hills is conspicuous. I perceive that the bullrushes are nibbled along the shore as if they had been cut by a scythe–yet in such positions as no mower could of reached–even outside the flags. Probably the muskrat was the mower. In this cool sunlight Fair Haven Hill shows to advantage. Every rock & shrub–& protuberance has justice done it–the sun shining at angle on the hill & giving each a shadow. The hills have a hard & distinct outline & I see into their very texture. On Fair Haven I see the sun-lit light green grass in the hollows where snow makes water sometimes–and on the russet slopes. Cut three white pine boughs opposite Fair Haven and set them up in the bow of our boat for a sail– It was pleasant hear the water begin to ripple under the prow telling of our easy progress. we thus without a tack made the S side of Fair haven– then threw our sails over board–and the moment after mistook them for green bushes or weeds which had sprung from the bottom unusually far from shore.– Then to hear the wind sough in your sail–that is to be a sailor & hear a land sound. The grayish whitish mikania all fuzzy–covers the endless button bushes which are now bare of leaves. Observed the verification of the scripture saying “as the dog returns to his vomit?”? Our black pup sole passenger in the stern, perhaps made sea-sick–vomited then cleaned the boat again most faithfully–and with a bright eye–licking his chops & looking round for more. We comment on the boats of different patterns–dories? punts–bread troughs–flat irons &c &c which we pass–the privailing our genuine dead-river boats–not to be matched by Boston carpenters– One farmer blacksmith whome we know whose boat we pass in Sudbury–has got a horse-shoe nailed about the sculling hole;–keeps off the witches too?–. The water carriages of various patterns & in various conditions–some for pleasure against the gentlemen’s seat?–some for ducking–small & portable–some for honest fishing broad & leaky but not cranky–some with spearing fixtures–some stout & squareendsish for hay boats– One canal boat or mudscow in the weeds not worth getting down the stream. like some vast pike that could swallow all the rest.– proper craft for our river– In some places in

ELLERY CHANNING


DOG

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the meadows opposite Bound Rock the river seemed to have come to an end it was so narrow suddenly. After getting in sight of Sherman's bridge—counted 19 birches on the right hand shore in one whirl. Now commenced the remarkable meandering of the river—so that we seemed for some to be now running up—then running down parallel with a long low hill—tacking over the meadow in spite of ourselves. Landed at Shermans bridge. An apple tree made scrubby by being browsed by cows.— Through what early hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit—no wonder it is provoked to grow thorns at last to defend itself from such foes. The pup nibbles clams, or plays with a bone no matter how dry— Thus the dog can be taken on a river Voyage—but the cat cannot. she is too set in her ways. Now again for the great meadows. What meandering—the Serpentine our river should be called—what makes the river love to delay here? Here come to study the law of meandering. We see the vast meadow studded with haycocks—we suspect that we have got to visit them all—it proves even so—now we run down one hay-cock—now another.— The distance gained is frequently not more than a third the distance gone Between Sherman's Br. & Causeway Br is about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  mi in a straight line but we judged that we went more than 3 miles. Here the "pipes" (at first) line the shore—& muskrat houses still. A duck (a loon?) sails within gun-shot—unwilling to fly— Also a stake driver ardea minor rises with prominent breast or throat bone—as if badly loaded his ship—now no button bushes line the stream—the changeable? stream no rocks exist—the shores are lined with first in the water still green polygonums then wide fields of dead pontideria then great bulrushes—then various reeds sedges or tall grasses—also dead *Thalictrum?* or is it *cicuta?* Just this side the Causeway bridges a field like a tall corn-field of tall rustling reeds? 10 feet high with broadish leaves & large now seedy tufts—standing amid the button bushes & great bulrushes. I remember to have seen none elsewhere in this vicinity unless at Fresh Pond & are they not straighter? Also just beyond the bridges very tall flags from 6 to 8 feet high leaves like the cat-tail but no tail what are they? We pass under 2 bridges above the causeway bridge. After passing under the first one of **these two** at the mouth of Larnum Brook—which is fed from Blandfords Pond—comes from Marlboro—thro Mill-vil.—& has a branch Hop Brook from S of Nobscot—we see Nobscot very handsome in a purplish atmosphere in the west over a **very** deep meadow which makes far up— A good way to skate to Nobscot or within a mile or two.— To see a distant hill from the surface of water over a low & very broad meadow—much better than to see it from another hill. This perhaps the most novel & so memorable prospect we got— Walked across half a mile to Pelham's Pond. whose waves were dashing quite grandly. A house near with two grand elms in front— I have seen other elms in Wayland. This pond a good point to skate to in Winter—when it is easily accessible—now we should have to draw our boat.— On the return as in going we expended nearly as much time & labor in counteracting the boat's tendency to whirl round—it is so miserably built. Now & then aye—aye—almost an everlasting **now**—it will take the bits in its mouth and go round in spite of us though we row on one side only—for the wind fills the after part of the boat which is nearly out of water—& we therefore get along best & fastest when the wind is strong & dead ahead—that's the kind of wind we advertise to race with (or in) To row a boat thus all the day with an hour's intermission—making fishes of ourselves as it were—putting on these long fins—realizing the finny life—surely oars & paddles are but the fins which a man may use. The very pads stand perpendicular (on their edges) before this wind which appears to have worked more to the north—showing their red under sides. The muskrats have exposed the clam shells to us in heaps all along the shore— else most not know that a clam existed. If it were not for muskrats how little would the fisherman see or know of fresh water clam shells or clams! In the Great meadows again the loon? rises—and again alights—& a heron? too flies sluggishly away with vast wings—& small ducks which seem to have no tails—but their wings set quite aft— The crows [**American Crow**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] ashore are making an ado perchance about some carrion. We taste some swamp-white oak acorns at the south end of Bound rock meadow— The sun sets when we are off Israel Rices— A few golden coppery clouds—intensely glowing like fishes in some molten metal of the sky— —& then the small scattered clouds grow blue-black above—or one half—& reddish or pink the other half—& after a short twilight the night sets in. The reflections of the stars in the water are dim & elongated like the zodiacal light straight down into the depths, but no mist rises tonight— We think it is pleasantest to be on the water at this hour. We row across Fair Haven in the thickening twilight & far below it steadily & without speaking.— As the night draws on her veil the shores retreat—we only keep in the middle of this low stream of light—we know not whether we float in the air or in the lower regions. We seem to recede from the trees on shore—or the island very slowly—& yet a few reaches make all our voyage— Nature has divided it agreeably into reaches— It is pleasant not to get home till after dark—to steer by the lights of the villagers— The lamps in the houses twinkle now like stars—they shine doubly bright. Rowed about 24 miles going & coming In a straight line it would be  $15\frac{1}{2}$

DOG

CAT

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


November 18, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) continued the surveying of the Ministerial Lot southwest of Concord.




[Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “The energetic subjectivity, which has faith in itself, which does not fear to be something particular and definite without any consciousness or shame of its subjective illusion, is unknown to me. I am, so far as the intellectual order is concerned, essentially objective, and my distinctive speciality, is to be able to place myself in all points of view, to see through all eyes, to emancipate myself, that is to say, from the individual prison. Hence aptitude for theory and irresolution in practice; hence critical talent and difficulty in spontaneous production. Hence, also, a continuous uncertainty of conviction and opinion, so long as my aptitude remained mere instinct; but now that it is conscious and possesses itself, it is able to conclude and affirm in its turn, so that, after having brought disquiet, it now brings peace. It says: “There is no repose for the mind except in the absolute; for feeling, except in the infinite; for the soul, except in the divine.” Nothing finite is true, is interesting, or worthy to fix my attention. All that is particular is exclusive, and all that is exclusive, repels me. There is nothing non-exclusive but the All; my end is communion with Being through the whole of Being. Then, in the light of the absolute, every idea becomes worth studying; in that of the infinite, every existence worth respecting; in that of the divine, every creature worth loving.”

King Ernst August II of Hanover died in Herrenhausen and was succeeded by his son Georg V.

The [Daily Alta California](#) described the manner in which natives were currently harvesting huge salmon migrating up from the ocean to their spawning ground, at Marysville, California in the Sacramento Valley where the Yuba River and Feather River converge: “We witnessed a new and exciting kind of sport yesterday morning. Salmon of huge dimensions, and in great numbers, accompanied by thousands of the smaller fry, were seen struggling over the shoals in the river opposite our city. Thither the Indians promptly repaired with their spears, where they at once commenced an indiscriminate slaughter. They were captured in large numbers and in the following manner. A small barbed spear is attached to a straight pole some twelve or fifteen feet in length. On the fish being wounded, its struggles immediately detach the spear from the pole, but they are made fast together by a strong cord, some eighteen inches in length, by the aid of which they are safely towed to the shore. The taking and securing was performed by the Indians with great skill and dexterity, and excited the curiosity of hundreds who were watching their operations from the river bank.”



November 18, Tuesday: Surveying these days the ministerial-lot. Now at Sundown I hear the hooting of an owl [**Great Horned Owl**  *Bubo virginianus*]— hōō hoō hōo—hoorer—hōo. It sounds like the hooting of an idiot or a maniac broke loose. This is faintly answered in a different strain apparently from a greater distance—almost as if it were the echo— i.e. so far as the **succession** is concerned.

This is my music each evening. I heard it last evening. The men who help me call it the “hooting owl” and think it is the cat-owl. It is a sound admirably suited the swamp & to the twilight woods – suggesting a vast undeveloped nature which men have not recognized nor satisfied. I rejoice that there are owls. They represent the stark twilight unsatisfied thoughts I have. Let owls do the idiotic & maniacal hooting for men. This sound faintly suggests the infinite roominess of nature—that there is a world in which owls live— Yet how few are seen even by the hunters! The sun has shone for a day over this savage swamp where the single spruce stands covered with *esnea?* moss – which a Concord merchant mortgaged once to the trustees of the ministerial fund & lost – but now for a different race of creatures a new day dawns over this wilderness – which one would have thought was sufficiently dismal before. Here hawks  also circle by day & chickadees [**Black-capped Chickadee**  *Parus atricapillus*] are heard—and rabbits & partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] abound.


The chopper who works in the woods all day for many weeks or months at a time becomes intimately acquainted with them in his way. He is more open in some respects to the impressions they are fitted to make than the naturalist who goes to see them. He is not liable to exaggerate insignificant features. He really forgets himself—forgets to observe— and at night he **dreams** of the swamp its phenomena & events. Not so the naturalist; enough of his unconscious life does not pass there.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

A man can hardly be said to be **there** if he **knows** that he is there – or to go there, if he knows Where he is going. The man who is bent upon his work is frequently in the best attitude to observe what is irrelevant to his work. (Mem. Wordsworth's obs. on relaxed attention<sup>35</sup>) You must be conversant with things for a long time to know much about them –like the moss which has hung from the spruce– and as the partridge & the rabbit are acquainted with the thickets & at length have acquired the color of the places they frequent. If the man of science can put all his knowledge into propositions – the wood man has a great deal of incommunicable knowledge Dea. Brown told me me today of a tall raw-boned fellow by the name of Hosmer who used to help draw the sein behind the Jones' House – who once when he had hauled it without getting a single shad – held up a little perch in sport above his face –to show what he had got– At that moment the perch wiggled and dropped right down his throat head foremost –and nearly suffocated him–& it was only after considerable time, during which the man suffered much that he was extracted or forced down.– He was in a worse predicament than a fish hawk [Osprey  *Pandion haliaetus*] would have been. In the woods S of the swamp are many great holes made by digging for foxes



December 21, Sunday: My difficulties with my friends are such as no frankness will settle There is no precept in the New Testament that will assist me. My nature it may is secret– Others can confess & explain. I can not. It is not that I am too proud, but that is not what is wanted. Friendship is the unspeakable joy & blessing that results to two or more individuals who from constitution sympathise– And natures are liable to no mistakes but will know each other through thick & thin– Between two by nature alike & fitted to sympathize there is no veil & there can be no obstacle. Who are the estranged? Two friends explaining. I feel sometimes as if I could say to my friends–My friends I am aware how I have outraged you how I have seemingly preferred hate to love–seemingly treated others kindly & you unkindly–sedulously concealed my love–& sooner or later expressed all and more than all my hate– I can imagine how I might utter something like this in some moment never to be realized– But let me say frankly that at the same time I feel it may be with too little regret– That I am under an awful necessity to be what I am. If the truth were known, which I do not know, I have no concern with those friends whom I misunderstand or who misunderstand me. The fates only are unkind that keep us asunder–but my friend is ever kind. I am of the nature of Stone. It takes the summer's sun to warm it. My acquaintances sometimes imply that I am too cold–but each thing is warm enough for its kind– Is the stone too cold which absorbs the heat of the summer sun and does not part with it during the night? Crystals though they be of ice are not too cold to melt–but it was in melting that they were formed. Cold! I am most sensible of warmth in winter days. It is not the warmth of fire that you would have–but everything is warm & cold according to its nature. It is not that I am too cold–but that our warmth & coldness are not of the same nature– hence when I am absolutely warmest, I may be coldest to you. Crystal does not complain of crystal anymore than the dove of its mate. You who complain that I am cold–find Nature cold– To me she is warm. My heat is latent to you. Fire itself is cold to whatever is not of a nature to be warmed by it. A cool wind is warmer to a feverish man than the blast of a furnace. That I am cold means that I am of another nature. The dogwood & its berries in the **swamp** by the R.R. just above the red house–pendant on long stems which hang short down as if broken–betwixt yellowish? & greenish? white ovoid pearly? or waxen? berries– What is the color of them? Ah give me to walk in the dogwood swamp–with its few coarse branches– Beautiful as satan. The Prinos or Black Alder berries appear to have been consumed–only the skins left for the most part sticking to the twigs–so that I thought there were fewer than usual. Is it that our woods have had to entertain arctic visitors in unusual numbers? Who have exhausted their stores– Sunlight on pine needles is an event of a winter day. Whoever saw a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] soar over the fields– To every creature its own nature. They are very wild–but are they scarce? or can you exterminate them for that? As I stand by the edge of the swamp (Ministerial) a heavy winged hawk  flies home to it at sundown just over my head in silence I cross some mink or muskrat's devious path in the snow–with mincing feet and trailing body. Tonight–as so many nights within the year–the clouds arrange themselves in the East at sunset in long

35. This citation refers to [Thomas De Quincey](#)'s report of [William Wordsworth](#)'s explanation of a psychological state conducive to imagination, which is in Thoreau's journal entry for January 3, 1843.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

converging bars—according to the simple tactics of the sky— It is the melon rind jig— It would serve for a permanent description of the sunset— Such is the morning & such the evening.— Converging bars inclose the day at each end as within a melon rind & the morning & evening are one day.

Long after the sun has set & downy clouds have turned darked—& the shades of night have taken possession of the east—some rosy clouds will be seen in the upper sky over the portals of the darkening west. How swiftly the earth appears to revolve at sunset—which at midday appears to rest on its axle.

December 23, Tuesday: The Savannah Republican and the Memphis Enquirer reported the flogging of a man named Atkins at Vicksburg who had been “tampering with negroes” by forging passes, for \$10 each, which hopefully might help them escape to a free state:

**LYNCHED.**—A man named Atkins was detected at Vicksburg a few days ago, tampering with negroes, offering to sell them passes, for \$10 each, which he assured them would guarantee their safe escape to a free State. He was punished with between 300 and 400 lashes and turned loose. There is reason to believe that there are some rascals of the same stripe with Atkins prowling about Memphis. Our police should be on the alert, and if any of them should be caught, they may be assured of a still more condign punishment than even that which Atkins received at Vicksburg.—*Memphis Enquirer.*




December 23, Tuesday: It would give me such joy to know that a friend had come to see me and yet that pleasure I seldom if ever experience.

It is a record of the mellow & ripe moments that I would keep.

I would not preserve the husk of life – but the kernel.

When the cup of life is full and flowing over – preserve some drops as a specimen-sample. When the intellect enlightens the heart & the heart warms the intellect.

Thoughts will sometimes possess our heads when we are up and about our business which are the exact counterpart of the bad dreams which we sometimes have by night. And I think that the intellect is equally inert in both cases. Very frequently, no doubt – the thoughts men have are the consequence of something which they have eaten or done. Our waking **moods** and **humors** are our dreams but whenever we are truly awake & serene – and healthy in all our senses we have memorable visions. Who that takes up a book wishes for the report of the clogged bowels – or the impure blood?

Yesterday afternoon I walked to the Stone bridge over the Assabet and thence down the river on the ice to the leaning hemlocks – and then crossed the other branch to the house— Do I not see two kinds of black alder – one blotched the other lighter colored – the former with many small berries crowded – the latter larger & single? Scared up partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] into the tops of the hemlocks where they thought to conceal themselves—

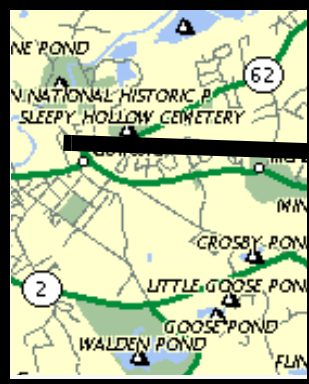
Observed where a woodchopper had come to the river & cut a hole for water some days before. The river frozen unexpectedly even – but few open places – had gone down since it froze – & the ice was accordingly bulged up over the rocks in its channel with many fine cracks in all directions. It was a good opportunity to examine the fluvial trees. I was struck by the amount of small interlaced roots – making almost a solid mass – of some



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

red? oaks – on the bank which the water had undermined – opposite Sam. Barrets. Observed by a wall beneath



Nawshawtuct where many rabbits appeared to have played and nearly half a pint of dung was dropped in one pile on the snow.

This morning when I woke I found it snowing – the snow fine & driving almost horizontally as if it had set in for a long storm – but a little after noon it ceased snowing & began to clear up – & I set forth for a walk. The snow which we have had for the last week or 10 days has been remarkably light & dry. It is pleasant walking in the woods now when the sun is just coming out & shining on the woods freshly covered with snow – At a distance the oak woods look very venerable – a fine hale wintry aspect things wear – and the pines all snowed up even suggest comfort. Where boughs cross each other much snow is caught – which now in all woods is gradually tumbling down – By half past 3 the sun is fairly out. I go to the cliffs. There is a narrow ridge of snow a white line on the storm side of the stem of every exposed tree. I see that there is to be a fine clear sunset. & make myself a seat in the snow on the cliff to witness it. Already a few clouds are glowing like a golden sierra just above the horizon – From a low arch the clear sky has rapidly spread eastward over the whole heavens – and the sun shines serenely – and the air is still – and the spotless snow covers the fields. The snow storm is over – the clouds have departed – the sun shines serenely – the air is still – a pure & trackless white napkin covers the ground – and a fair evening is coming to conclude all – Gradually the sun sinks – the air grows more dusky & I perceive that if it were not for the light reflected from the snow it would be quite dark – The wood chopper has started for home. I can no longer distinguish the color of the red oak leaves against the snow – but they appear black. The partridges [Ruffed Grouse █ *Bonasa umbellus*] have come forth to bud on the apple trees. Now the sun has quite disappeared – but the after-glow as I may call it – apparently the reflection from the cloud beyond which the sun went down from the thick atmosphere of the horizon – is unusually bright & lasting – Long broken clouds in the horizon in the dun atmosphere (as if the fires of day were still smoking there) hang with red & golden edging like the saddle cloths of the steeds of the sun. Now all the clouds grow black – & I give up to night – But unexpectedly half an hour later when I look out having got home I find that [the evening star](#) is shining brightly & beneath all the west horizon is glowing red – that dun atmosphere instead of clouds reflecting the sun – and I detect just above the horizon the narrowest imaginable white sickle of the new moon.<sup>36</sup>

VENUS



ALPHABETICAL BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

December 24, Wednesday: The Library of Congress was almost totally destroyed in an accidental fire which destroyed a significant portion of the nation's capital city. More than 6 books out of every 10 were lost at this point (more than 35,000 volumes). In addition, many paintings, portraits, and busts of the famous and eponymous were lost, such as the portraits of John Adams, George Washington, James Monroe, and Thomas Jefferson by Gilbert Stuart which had been loaned to the federal government by Mr. Phelps of Boston.<sup>37</sup>



December 24, Wednesday: It spits snow this afternoon. Saw a flock of snowbirds on the Walden road— I see them so commonly when it is beginning to snow that I am inclined to regard them as a sign of a snowstorm— The snow bunting *Emberiza nivalis* methinks it is—so white & arctic. Not the slate colored [Dark-eyed Junco ■ *Junco hyemalis*]. Saw also some Pine gross-beaks [Pine Grosbeak ■ *Pinicola enucleator*]—magnificent winter birds—among the weeds & on the apple trees—like large Cat birds [Gray Catbird ■ *Dumetella carolinensis*] at a distance—but nearer at hand some of them when they flit by are seen to have gorgeous heads breasts & rumps? with red or crimson reflections—more beautiful than a steady bright red would be. The note I heard a rather faint & innocent whistle of two bars.

Now & long since the birds nests have been full of snow.

I had looked in vain into the west for nearly half an hour to see a red cloud blushing in the sky— The few clouds were dark—and I had given up all to night but when I had got home & chanced to look out the window from the upper—I perceived that all the west horizon was glowing with a rosy border, and that dun atmosphere had been the cloud this time which made the days adieus. But half an hour before that dun atmosphere hung over all the western woods & hills—precisely as if the fires of the day had just been put out in the west and the burnt territory was sending out volumes of dun & lurid smoke to heaven As if Phaeton had again driven the chariot of the sun so near as to set fire to earth.

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36. December 22nd and 23rd had been the nights of no moon, so this would be the barest sliver.

37. The marble bust of General Lafayette which was destroyed in this fire has since been replaced by one by P.J. David d'Angers which had been crafted in 1830.

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1852

January 27, Tuesday: Mehmed Emin Rauf Pasha replaced Mustafa Resid Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix wrote in his journal that “The way in which the work has been planned, and certain exaggerated forms, show that Rubens was working like a craftsman practising the trade he knew and not for ever trying to improve upon it. The flow of his thought was uninterrupted because he was dealing with something that he understood. He clothed his thoughts in images that were readily accessible to him, translating the sublime ideas that came to him in such a variety into forms which superficial people call monotonous, not to mention their other complaints. But a profound thinker who has delved deeply into the secrets of art is not disturbed by such ‘monotony,’ for a continual return to the same forms show the imprint of a great master; it is also the instinctive action of a wise and practised hand. It is this which gives the impression that compositions were produced smoothly and easily, a feel that adds greatly to the power of the work.”



January 27, Tuesday: The peculiarity of a work of genius is the absence of the speaker from his speech – He is but the medium. You behold a perfect work, but you do not behold the worker. I read its page but it is as free from any man that can be – remembered as an impassable desert. I think that the one word which will explain the Shakspeare miracle – is unconsciousness. If he had known his own comparative eminence – he would not have failed to publish it incessantly though Bacon did not. There probably has been no more conscious age than the present. Mill Road S of Ministerial Swamp 3 P.m. As I stand under the hill beyond J. Hosmer’s – and look over the plains westward toward Acton – & see the farm houses nearly half a mile apart – few & solitary – in these great fields between these stretching woods – out of the world – where the children have to go far to school – the still stagnant – hearteating – life-everlasting & gone-to-seed country – so far from the post Office where the weekly paper comes – Wherein the new-married wife cannot live for loneliness – And the young man has to depend upon his horse – – See young J Hosmer’s House whither he returns with his wife in despair – after living in the City. I standing in Tarbells’ road which he alone cannot break out. The world in winter for most walkers reduced to a sled track winding far through the drifts All springs ceiled up & no digressions Where the old man thinks he may possibly afford to rust it out not having long to live – but the young man pines to get nearer the P.O. & the Lyceum. Is restless – & resolves to go to California, because the Depot is a mile off. – Where rabbits & partridges [Ruffed Grouse ■ *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] multiply & muskrats are more numerous than ever. – And none of the farmer’s sons are willing to be farmers – And the apple trees are decayed – & the




cellar holes are more numerous than the houses – And the old maids – wish to sell out & move into the village – & have waited 20 years in vain for this purpose – & never finished but one room in the house – Lands of which the Indian was long since dispossessed – and now the farms are run out – & what were forests are grain fields – & what were grain-fields – pastures –<sup>38</sup> Dwellings which only those Arnolds those *Coueurs de bois*



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the baker & the butcher visit – to which at least the latter penetrates for the annual calf – & as he returns the cow lows after – Whither the villager never penetrates but in huckleberry time perchance – & if he does not who does? Where the owls [Great Horned Owl  *Bubo virginianus*] are a regular serenade. – I say standing there & seeing these things, I cannot realize that this is that hopeful young America which is famous throughout the world – for its activity & enterprise – & this is the most thickly settled & Yankee part of it. What must be the condition of the *old* world! The *sphagnum* must by this time have concealed it from the eye.

In new countries men are scattered broad cast – They do not wait for roads to place their houses on, but roads seek out the houses & each man is a prince in his principality & depends on himself – Perchance when the virgin soil is exhausted a reaction takes place & men concentrate in villages again – become social & commerical – & leave the steady & moderate few to work the country's mines.

The snow has been slowly melting without rain or mist the last 2 or 3 days – It has settled very much though the eaves have not been heard to run by me. In going across lots I walk in the woods where the snow is not so deep – part having been caught on the trees & dissipated in the air – and a part melted by the warmth of the wood & the reflection.

The poison sumac with its stems hanging down on every side is a very agreeable object now seen against the snow

I do not know but thoughts written down thus in a journal might be printed in the same form with greater advantage – than if the related ones were brought together into separate essays. They are now allied to life – & are seen by the reader not to be far fetched – It is more simple – less artful – I feel that in the other case I should have no proper frame for my sketches. Mere facts & names & dates communicate more than we suspect – Whether the flower looks better in the nosegay – than in the meadow where it grew – & we had to wet our feet to get it! Is the scholastic air any advantage?



"Mere facts & names & dates communicate more than we suspect –"

– [Henry Thoreau, January 27, 1852](#)



38. William M. White's version of the journal entry is:

*... Where rabbits and partridges multiply,  
And muskrats are more numerous than ever,  
And none of the farmer's sons are willing to be farmers,  
And the apple trees are decayed,  
And the cellar-holes are more numerous than the houses,  
And the rails are covered with lichens,  
And the old maids wish to sell out  
And move into the village,  
And have waited twenty years in vain for this purpose  
And never finished but one room in the house,  
Never plastered nor painted, inside or out,  
Lands which the Indian was long since dispossessed [of],  
And now the farms are run out,  
And what were forests are grain-fields,  
What were grain-fields, pastures....*

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

February 18, Wednesday: [Caleb G. Forshey](#) reported in the [Boston Medical Surgical Journal](#) that “When death results from a cause, which can readily be removed, after death re-animation may be effected, and the machinery of life set in motion, by artificially inflating of the lungs.”


Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed that on this day, a couple of months after Harvard Library had acquired a secondhand 1st edition copy of [Luke Howard](#)'s ESSAY ON THE MODIFICATIONS OF CLOUDS, [Thoreau](#) wrote suggestively that “One discovery in Meteorology, one significant observation is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds.” Would that be an indication that he had just been reading this meteorological essay?



February 18, Wednesday: When Eystein the Bad ravaged the land of Drontheim “He then offered the people either his slave Thorer Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Sauer, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with 3 men’s wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him in their hands when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. -- It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him to pieces.” Now I think if he had spoken two words & barked only one –he would have been wiser still –and never fallen into the clutches of the wolves. By some traits in the saga concerning King Hakon the Good –I am reminded of the concessions which some politicians & religionists, who are all things to all men– make. Hakon was unpopular on account of his attempts to spread Christianity – and to conciliate his subjects he drank out of the horn which had been blessed in Odin’s name at a festival of sacrifice, but as he drank he made the sign of the cross over it. & one of his earls told the people that he was making the sign of Thor’s hammer over it. “On this” it is said “there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bonders pressed the king strongly to eat of horse-flesh; [this was an evidence of paganism] and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came & made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse-flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the throne; but neither party was satisfied with this” On another day the Earl “brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse-liver, and emptied all the goblets the bonders filled for him”; This Hakon had a daughter **Thora**. Thorer Klakke was one “who had been long on viking expeditions”. Thorer Hiort “was quicker on foot than any man.”

I have a common place book for facts and another for poetry – but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind – for the most interesting & beautiful facts are so much the more poetry and that is their success. They are **translated** from earth to heaven– I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital & significant – perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind – I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

Pm to Fair Haven Hill: One discovery in Meteorology, one significant observation is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds. Yet I look up into the heavens so fancy free, I am almost glad not to know any law for the winds.

I find the partridges [[Ruffed Grouse](#)  [Bonasa umbellus](#)] among the fallen pine tops on Fair Haven these afternoons an hour before sundown ready to commence budding in the neighboring orchard.

The mosses on the rocks look green when the snow has melted– This must be one of the spring signs – when spring comes

It is impossible for the same person to see things from the poet’s point of view and that of the man of science. The poets second love may be science –not his first.– when use has worn off the bloom. I realize that men may






## RUFFED GROUSE



## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

be born to a condition of mind at which others arrive in middle age by the decay of their poetic faculties.

I have my doubts about Brad's hypothesis. What's wrong with it is that he hadn't thought to look it up in the encyclopedias current at the time at which Thoreau was writing. At this point all of Howard's cloud terminology was already totally available as encyclopedia information! If Thoreau had needed a source for this cloud terminology, he could at any time simply look up the article "Clouds" in Volume 8 of Abraham Rees's THE CYCLOPÆDIA; OR, UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY OF ARTS, SCIENCES, AND LITERATURE, a widely available source. At that point, for 45 years nobody had needed to have recourse to any specially printed and catalogued scientific monograph!



April 22. It still rains. The water is over the road at Flints Bridge—and, as I am told, has been for some time over the J. Miles road in the corner—and near the further stone Bridge. So that there is now only the Boston road open—unless we regard the Walden road as coming from wayland and not from Lee's bridge. At 9 Am it was 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches higher than the E end of the Eastern truss horizontal part on the S side of the stone Bridge. Up to the top of the lowest stone step on the N side E end of RR bridge. Mr Stacy thinks it was higher 30 years ago when a man horse & sleigh were washed off the Red Bridge road & lodged against a tree in the meadow. And Sam. Barrett thinks it was about 1 foot higher some 35 years ago.— Water a foot deep on Woods Bridge road. Abel Hunt saw a flock of geese [**Canada Goose**  *Branta canadensis*] this morning. This flood tempts men to build boats I saw two on the stocks this morning. It is pleasant work to see progressing.

P.M. — up river—on E side: It takes this day to clear up gradually—successive sun-showers still make it foul. But the sun feels very warm after the storm. This makes 5 stormy days. Sunday—M—T. W. Thursday. The water slightly agitated looks bright when the sun-shines. Saw 4 hawks  soaring high in the heavens over the swamp bridge brook— At first saw 3, said to myself there must be 4 & found the fourth. Glad are they no doubt to be out after being confined by the storm. I hear bees (?) humming near the brook, which reminded me of the telegraph harp.— I love to see the dull gravity even stolidity of the farmer opposed to the fluency of the lawyer or official person. The farmer sits silent not making any pretensions nor feeling any responsibility even to apprehend the other—while the judge or Governor talks glibly and with official despatch all lost on the farmer who minds it not but looks out for the main chance with his great inexpressive face & his 2 small eyes looking the first in the face & rolling a quid in the back part of his mouth. The lawyer is wise in deeds but the farmer who buys land puts the pertinent questions respecting the title. I observe the *Parmelia saxatilis* in many places now turned a pinkish red. The Yellow lily leaves appear no more advanced than when I first observed them. A strange dog accompanied us today—a hunting dog—gyrating about us at a great distance—beating every bush & barking at the birds. with great speed—gyrating his tail too all the while. I thought of what Gilpin says, that he sailed & steered by means of his tail— Sat under Potter's oak, the ground thickly strewn with broken acorn shells & cups & twigs—the short close nibble sward of last year. Our dog sends off a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] with a whir far across the open field & the river like a winged bullet—

**DOG**

From Cliffs see much snow on the mts. The Pine on Lee's shore of the Pond seen against the light water this cloudy weather—from part way down the cliff is an agreeable object to me. When **the** outline & texture of white pine is thus seen against the water or the sky it is an affecting sight. The shadow of the cliff on Conantum in the semi-sunshine with indistinct edge & a reddish tinge from bushes here & there!

I want things to be incredible—too good to appear true. C. says “after you have been to the P.O. once you are dammed.”— but I answer that it depends somewhat on whether you get a letter or not. If you would be wise learn science & then forget it.<sup>39</sup>

A boat on the river—on the white surface looks black—and the boatman like Charon. I see swarms of gnats in the air. What is that grass with a yellow blossom which I find now on the cliff—? *Carex marginata* (?) Early Sedge—the earliest grass that flowers. It is the contrast between sunshine & storm that is most pleasing— the gleams of sunshine in the midst of the storm are the most memorable. Saw that winkle-like fungus *fresh & green* covering an oak stump today with concentric marks—spirally arranged sometimes in a circle. very handsome I love this apparent exuberance of nature.

The maples in the side swamp near well meadow are arranged nearly in a circle in the water. This strange dog has good habits for a companion he keeps so distant— He never trusts himself near us though he accompanies

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

us for miles. On the most retired the wildest & craggiest hill side you will find some old road by which the teamster carted off the wood– It is pleasant some times looking 30 or 40 rods into an open wood where the trunks of the trees are plainly seen & patches of soft light on the ground. The hylas peep now in full chorus, but are silent on my side of the pond. The water at 6 Pm is 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches higher than in the morning, *i.e.* 7 inches above the iron truss. The strain of the Red wing [Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*] on the willow spray over the water to-night is liquid bubbling–watery–almost like a tinkling fountain in perfect harmony with the meadow– It oozes, trickles, tinkles, bubbles from his throat. *bob-y-lee-e-e* & then its shrill fine whistle.

The villagers walk the streets & talk of the great rise of waters.

At 10 Pm the northern lights are flashing – like some grain sown broadcast in the sky. I hear the hylas peep on the meadow as I stand at the door.

The early sedge (?) grows on the side of the Cliffs in little tufts with small yellow blossoms – *i.e.* with yellow anthers low in the grass.

Mr Holbrook tells me he heard & saw martins [Purple Martin *Progne subis*] yesterday.

AURORA

April 27, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) found that Corner Road was under some 18-20 inches of water, and wound up walking to Conantum in a roundabout manner, along the railroad.



April 27, Tuesday: Heard the Field or Rush sparrow this morning – *F. junco*.– Geo. Minott’s huckleberry bird [Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla*]– It sits on a birch & sings at short intervals apparently answered from a distance– It is clear & sonorous heard afar. But I found it quite impossible to tell from which side it came.– sounding like *phe-phé phé*– – *phér-phér-tw-tw-t-t-t*.– The first 3 slow & loud – the next two syllables quicker–& the last part quicker & quicker becoming a clear sonorous trill or rattle like a spoon in a saucer. Heard also a chipping sparrow *F. Socialis* [Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*] It has rained a little in the night The landscape is still dark & wet– The hills look very dark – but I notice that some houses–one yellow one especially–look much better in this light.

GEORGE MINOTT

The amens of the balm of Gilead are just beginning to appear (are they the male or female?) [This is altered in pencil to read, “they are female.”] with the large leaf bud in the center – the leaves in the last are larger & more developed than those of any tree which I have noticed this season– The bud is filled with “a fragrant, viscid, balsam” which is yellowish & difficult to wash from the fingers. It is an agreeable fragrance at this season. A nearer approach to leaves than in any tree?

Is that a golden willow by the stone-bridge – with bright yellow twigs (the most W on the S) and reddish tipped catkins <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch long just appearing before leaves – (male or female?)

The balsam of the Balm of Gilead buds appears to protect the early expanding leaves from the wet.

Should I not have mentioned the Butcher Bird [Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor*] –the Downy woodpecker [Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*] or Sap Sucker [Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*] & the White-breasted Nuthatch [White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*] among the winter birds? Also the quail [Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*] & partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus*] &c.



39. Bradley P. Dean says that [Henry Thoreau](#) combined this with a reference to MARK 8:36 in the construction of his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” paragraph number 73:

[Paragraph 73] When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. I rarely meet a man who can tell me any news which he has not read in a newspaper, and for the most part the only difference between me and my fellow is that he has seen the paper and I have not. But the London Times is not one of the Muses. When a man’s inward life fails he begins to go more constantly to the post office, and despatches couriers to the other side of the globe; and so again he gains the whole world and loses his

BRAD DEAN’S COMMENTARY

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Pm to Conantum *via* RR Bridge The Corner road still impassable to foot travellers water 18 or 20 inches deep must have been 2 feet deeper. Observed the spotted tortoise in the water of the meadow on J. Hosmers land. by river side. Bright yellow spots on both shell & head, yet not regularly disposed, but as if when they were finished in other respects – the maker had sprinkled them with a brush. This fact that the yellow spots are common to the shell & the head – affected me considerably as evincing the action of an artist from without. spotted with reference to my eyes. One, I suppose the male, was larger than the other with a depressed & lighter colored sternum.

That smallest willow sage-like – & another reddish osier like – are just beginning to show their catkins in rather dry places– I see another similar to last with female catkins already in bloom.– also another low & yellowish with <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inch elliptical catkins showing red anthers within the down– *Bæomyces roseus* does not show in dry weather. The *viola pedata* is advancing.

What is that weed the underside of whose radical leaves is now a claret color?



by a sandy path side. [*Aster undulatus*?] At the spring by the Corner road–the grass is now of I must call a fiery green. it is an eye salve a collyrium to behold it. Here where the snow cannot lie long on the ground vegetation has made great progress. The common angelica is a foot high–the skunk cabbage leaves 5 inches broad–the wood anemone is budded & a thimble berry or rose leaved out. And several smaller green weeds there are. It is not only warmer for the water–but it is sheltered from the wind. Saw what I take to be the barn-swallow. Some of the mosses bear now a green fruit. On Conantum Cliffs whose seams dip to the N W at an ang of 50° (?) & run N E & S W I find today for the first time the early saxifrage saxifraga vernalis in blossom–growing high and dry in the narrow seams–where there is no soil for it but a little green moss.– following thus early after the bare rock–it is one of the first flowers not only in the spring of the year but in the spring of the world.– It can take advantage of a perpendicular cliff where the snow cannot lie & fronting the S.

In exactly the same places grows the columbine now well budded & 7 or 8 inches high– The higher up the rock & the more sheltered & sunny the location the earlier they are. Also the first plantain leaved everlasting (*Gray's Antennaria plantaginifolia* is in blossom in a sheltered place in the grass at the top of the rock. The thimble-berry & the sweet briar are partly leaved out in the crevices of the rock–& the latter emits its fragrance. The half open buds of the saxifrage showing the white of the petals in a corymb or cyme on a short stem surrounded by its new leaves mingled with the purplish tips of the calyx leaves is handsomer than when it is fully expanded. This is a place to look for early blossoms of the saxifrage – columbine – & plantain leaved everlasting–the 1st 2 especially– The crevices of the rock (cliff) make natural hot houses for them – affording dryness warmth & shelter. It is astonishing how soon & unexpectedly flowers appear– When the fields are scarcely tinged with green. Yesterday for instance you observed only the radical leaves of some plants, today you pluck a flower See the 1st Downy Woodpecker or sap-sucker tapping an elm he taps very rapidly, then turns his head as if listening to hear the worm – plainly is not now making a hole. Do we see him in the winter?– What is that alarmed loud short whistling note that I hear – a wood pecker? Found the 1st *Gnaphalium purpureum* purplish cudweed on Conantum by the edge of a rock Its humble woolly purplish white flower close to the ground amid its greenish leaves downy & white on the under side is the more interesting for appearing at this time. especially if it is seen with the dew on it – though it bears transportation A little purplish button–the larger central shoot or bud being surrounded by 5 others smaller



Its leaves have not 3 nerves. The hickory buds show a little yellow–the black birch buds & the bass wood look fresh. There are large clouds–& extensive shadows on land & the broad water–& a cheerful bright light on the russet grass (I am still on Conantum) which all together make our landscape appear larger featured than usual.– Goose berry bushes in the garden have leaved out partly. ... {*One page blank at end of the journal volume*}

May 1, Saturday: Per Chambers's Edinburgh Journal of this date (No. 435, Volume 17, New Series):

### The Gold-Fever in Australia.

The discovery of gold in the new continent has thrown the country





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

into a state which well merits examination. The same circumstance in California was no interruption to progress of any kind. It merely peopled a desert, and opened a trade where there was none before; while in Australia it finds an established form of civilisation, and a commerce flowing in recognised channels. It is an interesting task, therefore, to trace the nature of the influence exercised in the latter country over old pursuits by the new direction of industry; and it is with some curiosity we open a mercantile circular, dated Sydney, 1st November 1851. This, we admit, is a somewhat forbidding document to mere literary readers; but we shall divest its contents of their technical form, and endeavour, by their aid, to arrive at some general idea of the real state and prospects of the colony.

Up to the middle of last May, the colonial heart beat high with hope. Trade was good; the pastoral interests were flourishing; the country properties, as a matter of course, were improving; and the introduction of the alpaca, the extended culture of the vine, and the growth of cotton, appeared to present new and rich sources of wealth. At that moment came the discovery of the Gold Fields; and a shock was communicated to the whole industrial system, which to some people seemed to threaten almost annihilation. The idea was, that gold-digging would swallow up all other pursuits, and the flocks perish in the wilderness from the want of shepherds. Nor was this altogether without foundation; for the stockholders have actually been considerable sufferers: all the industrial projects mentioned have been stopped short; and the gold-diggings still continue to attract to themselves, as if by a spell, the labour of the country. The panic, however, has now subsided. It is seen that the result is not so bad as was anticipated, and hopes are entertained that the evil will go no further. A stream of population, it is thought, will be directed to Australia from abroad, and the labour not demanded by gold may suffice for other pursuits. Up to the date of the circular, the value of gold shipped for England from New South Wales had been L. 217,000, and it was supposed that about L. 130,000 more remained at Sydney and in the hands of the miners: 10,000 persons were actually engaged in mining, and 5000 more concerned otherwise in the business; and as the result of the exertions of that multitude, the amount of gold fixed arbitrarily for exportation during the next twelve months, is L. 2,000,000.

But, on the other hand, in the Sydney district alone, the trade in wool has already fallen off to the extent of several thousand bales – a deficiency, however, not as yet attributed to the diminished number of the sheep. It is supposed that the high rates of labour will operate chiefly in disinclining the farmers to extend their operations; and if this at the same time affords them leisure and motive to attend better to the state of their clips, it will ultimately have an effect rather beneficial than otherwise. Australian wool has hitherto been attainable by foreigners only in the English market; but it is a favourable





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

symptom that two cargoes left Sydney last year direct for Hamburg. To shew the falling off in trade during the gold year, it may be mentioned that the exports of wool in the two previous years were about 52,000 bales; and in 1850-1, about 48,000. There was likewise a deficiency of about 6000 casks of tallow, and 3000 hides.

It is interesting to notice, that preserved meats are sent from New South Wales to the neighbouring colonies and to England in considerable quantities. Timber for shipbuilding is rising in estimation in the English market. Australian wines are said to be fully equal to Rhenish; and a Vineyard Association has been formed for the purpose of improvement. Wool, however, is at present the great staple; and the Circular seems to derive some consolation from the idea, that if the crop should continue deficient, prices in England will probably be maintained. "To anticipate the future prices for our staples," it says, "in a market open to so many influences as that of Great Britain, is almost impossible; but it may be well to point out the causes which are likely to affect their value – we allude more especially to wool. We have stated that the production thereof, in New South Wales, is likely to be checked by the attraction of the gold-diggings; and still further, by the gradual abandonment of indifferent or limited runs, which formerly supported a large number of sheep, but which will not pay to work at present prices of wool and labour. Therefore, if we bear in mind that Australia has furnished half of the entire quantity of the wools imported into Great Britain, and that the English buyers have hitherto been purchasing in anticipation of a large annual increase from hence, which for the present, at any rate, will not be forthcoming, we think we need be under no apprehension of lower prices than the present."

It will be remarked, that this somewhat unfavourable report is made at the end of the first six months of the gold-fever. That kind of gold-seeking, however, which unsettles the habits of a population, and represses the other pursuits of industry, is not likely to endure very long in any country. It must give way in time to scientific mining, which is as legitimate a business as any other, and which, by the wealth it circulates, will tempt men into new avenues of industry, and recruit, to any extent that may be desirable, the supply of labour. Hitherto that supply has come in inadequate quantities, or from polluted sources; but we have now precisely what the colony wanted – a stream of voluntary emigration, which, in the process of time, when skilled labour only can be employed, will flood the diggings, and its superfluous portions find their level in the other employments afforded by the country. That this will take place without the inconvenience of a transition period, is not to be expected; but, upon the whole, we look upon the present depression of the legitimate trade of the colony as merely a temporary evil, arising out of circumstances that are destined to work well for its eventual prosperity.

The same process, it should be observed, has already been gone



## RUFFED GROUSE



## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

through in California. The lawless adventurers who rushed to the gold-fields from all parts of the world subsided gradually into order from mere motives of self-preservation; and as the precious metal disappeared from the surface, multitudes were driven by necessity or policy into employments more remunerative than digging. The large mining population -the producers of gold- became the consumers of goods; markets of all kinds were opened for their supply; emporia of trade rose along the coast; and a country that so recently was almost a desert, now promises to become one of the great marts of the commerce of the world. If this has been the case in California, the process will be much easier in Australia, where the rudiments of various businesses already exist, and where the staple articles of produce are such as can hardly be pushed to a superfluous extent. The true calamity, however, under which the fixed colonists, the producers of the staples, suppose themselves to suffer, is the change occasioned in the price of labour by the golden prospects of the diggings. On this question there is always considered to be two antagonistical interests - that of the employers, and that of the employed; the former contending for the minimum, and the latter for the maximum rate. But this is a fallacy. The interest of the two is identical; and for these obvious reasons, that if wages be too high, the capitalist must cease to produce and to employ; and if too low, the working population must sink to the position of unskilled labourers at home, and eventually bring about that very state of society from which emigration is sought as an escape. In supposing their interests to be antagonistical, the one party reasons as badly as the other; but, somehow, there always attaches to the bad reasoning of the employed a stigma of criminality, from which that of the other is free. This is unjust enough in England, but in Australia it is ridiculous. A capitalist goes out, provided with a sum so small as to be altogether useless at home as a means of permanent support, but which, in the colony, he expects, with proper management, to place him for the rest of his life in a position of almost fabulous prosperity. These cheering views, however, he confines to his own class. The measure of his happiness will not be full unless he can find cheap labour, as well as magnificent returns. For this desideratum he will make any sacrifice. He will take your paupers, your felons - your rattlesnakes; anything in the shape of a drudge, who will toil for mere subsistence, and without one of the social compensations which render toil in England almost endurable. We are never sorry to hear of the high price of labour in countries where the employers live in ease and independence; and we join heartily in the counsel to the higher class of workingmen in this country given by Mr Burton in his *Emigrants Manual* - "never to confound a large labour-market with good sources of employment." It does not appear to us to be one of the least of the benefits that will accrue after convalescence from the gold-fever in Australia, the higher value the employed will set upon their labour. We cannot reason from the English standard, which








has not been deliberately fixed, but forced upon us by competition, excessive population, public burdens, and the necessities of social position. In a new country, however, where all these circumstances are absent, and whither employers and employed resort alike for the purpose of bettering their condition, we should like to see traditions cast aside, and the fabric of society erected on a new basis.



May 1: 5AM — To Cliffs.

A smart frost in the night, the plowed ground and platforms white with it. I hear the little forked-tail chipping sparrow (*Fringilla socialis*) [**Chipping Sparrow**  *Spizella passerina*] shaking out his rapid *tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi*, a little jingle, from the oak behind the Depot. I hear the note of the shy Savannah sparrow (*F. Savanna*) [**Passerculus**  *sandwichensis*],<sup>40</sup> that plump bird with a dark-streaked breast that runs and hides in the grass, whose note sound so like a cricket's in the grass. (I used to hear it when I walked by moonlight last summer.) I hear it now from deep in the sod, —for there is hardly grass yet. The bird keeps so low you do not see it. You do not suspect how many there are till at length their heads appear. The word *seringo* reminds me of its note, —as if it were produced by some kind of fine metallic spring. It is an earth-sound. It is a moist, lowering morning for the mayers. The sun now shines under a cloud in the horizon, and his still yellow light falls on the western fields, as sometimes on the eastern after a shower in a summer afternoon. **Nuttall** says the note of the chipping sparrow is “given from time to time in the night like the reverie of a dream.” Have I not heard it when spearing? Is not that the tree sparrow which I have heard in the fall (in company with the *F. hyemalis*), which also clucks like a hen? **Nuttall** says they sing *s'weedit s'weedit weet*. I hear a lark in the meadow.

Hayden is sowing his oats. There is not much rye sown in the spring. There is the old picture in the fables, the sower stepping over plowed ground and the yellowish grain in a regularly formed shower in the air. I do not hear the peep of the frogs at this time. Found the first violet, which would open to-day, — either *V. sagittata* var. *ovata*, or *V. cucullata*, for the leaves are not toothed at hale nor arrow-shaped as in the first, yet they are hairy and I should say petiole-margined. Still, lilac the latter, they are rolled in at base and the scape is four-angled (?). I found this violet under a bank by a pool-side. I think it *cucullata*. The woods have a damp smell this morning. I hear a robin amid them, yet there are fewer singers to be heard than on a very pleasant morning some weeks ago. The low early blueberry, June berry, is now well budded. The grass ground, low ground at least, wears a good green tinge now. There are no leaves on the woods. The river is high over the meadows. There is a thin gauze-like veil over the village (I am on Fair Haven Hill), probably formed of the smokes. As yet we have had no morning fogs to my knowledge.

I hear the first towhee finch [**Rufous-Sided Towhee**  *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*]. He says *to-wee, to-wee*, and another, much farther off than I supposed when I went in search of him, says *whip your ch-r-r-r-r-r-r-r* with a metallic ring! I hear the first catbird [**Gray Catbird**  *Dumetella carolinensis*] also, mewing, and the wood thrush [**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*], which still thrills me,— a sound to be heard in a new country, —from one side of a clearing. I think I heard an oven-bird [**Seiurus**  *Aurocapillus*] just now, —*wicher wicher wicher wich*. I am on the Cliff. It is about six. The flicker [**Yellow-shafted Flicker**  *Colaptes auratus*] cackles. I hear a woodpecker tapping. The tinkle of the huckleberry-bird [**Field Sparrow**  *Spizella pusilla*] comes up from the shrub oak plain. He commonly lives away from the habitations of men, in retired bushy fields and sprout-lands. A partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus*] bursts away from under the rock below me on quivering wings, like some moths I have seen. We have, then, flowers, and the song of birds before the woods leave out, —like poetry. When leaving the woods I heard the hooting of an owl,  which sounded very much like a clown [??] calling to his team. Saw two large woodpeckers on an oak. I am tempted to say that they were other and larger than the flicker, but I have been deceived in him before. ...

40. Probably have seen it before, — seringo.

**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

May 7, Friday: [Lajos Kossuth](#) was visiting [Concord](#) with great fanfare a whole lot of advance publicity and [Henry Thoreau](#), very pointedly, with no fanfare or advance publicity at all, absented himself from Concord to the woods — where he heard the first drumming of the ruffed grouse.



[John Shepard Keyes](#) would report:

As selectman I had to welcome Kossuth on his visit to Concord on a pleasant day in May 52 His visit was put off by some engagement and came on us with short notice at last. But we were equal to the emergency. He was met in a carriage at the line and escorted by the artillery he came to my house where he rested and wrote out or arranged his speech. The artillery formed a guard of honor about the yard to keep off too ardent admirers and after a substantial lunch at which he eat buttered radishes he went to the Town Hall and was welcomed by Mr Emerson.

**J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

On a plain block of granite at Greenwood Cemetery is now inscribed:

**[ISAAC T. HOPPER,](#)**  
**BORN, DECEMBER 3D, 1771,**  
**ENDED HIS PILGRIMAGE, MAY 7TH, 1852.**

“Thou henceforth shalt have a good man’s calm,  
 A great man’s happiness; thy zeal shall find  
 Repose at length, firm Friend of human kind.”



May 7, Friday: 4:30 A.M. – To Cliffs.

Has been a dew, which wets the feet, and I see a very thin fog over the low ground, the first fog, which must be owing to the warm weather. Heard a robin singing powerfully an hour ago, and song sparrows, and the cocks. No peeping frogs in the morning, or rarely. The toads sing (?), but not as at evening. I walk half a mile (to Hubbard’s Pool in the road), before I reach those

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**KOSSUTH**  
AT  
**CONCORD!**

**Friday, May 7th, at 2 o'clock, P. M.**

The Committee of Arrangements give notice that **Gov. KOSSUTH** will visit the **BATTLE GROUND**, at **Concord**, on **Friday next, May 7th at 2 o'clock, P. M.** He will arrive at noon, and after partaking of a Colation, and visiting the old North Bridge, will proceed to the

**TOWN HALL,**  
where the Reception will take place, at 3 o'clock, P. M., and he will be addressed by  
**R. W. EMERSON,**  
on behalf of the citizens.

**Holders of Hungarian Bonds will be admitted to the Town Hall by Tickets furnished with the Bonds, at the rate of one ticket for each dollar invested. The Hall will be open at 1 o'clock, and will afford the only opportunity to hear Kossuth during the day. Bonds with Tickets can be obtained of A. STACY, at the Post Office, at HOLBROOK'S HOTEL, and at the HALL.**

The children of the town, forming by Schools with their teachers, will meet in front of the Unitarian Church, at half-past one o'clock, to form a Procession, under charge of a Marshal. Citizens of neighboring towns, and their Schools are invited to be present and join in welcoming the illustrious exile.

IN BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE,  
**JOHN S. KEYES, Chairman.**

**JOHN H. CHERRY, SECRETARY.**

Printed at the Press of Concord, Mass.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I heard, — only two or three. The sound is uttered so low and over water; still it is wonderful that it should be heard so far. The traveller rarely perceives when he comes near the source of it, nor when he is farthest away from it. Like the will-o'-the-wisp, it will lead one a long chase over the fields and meadows to find one. They dream more or less at all hours now. I see the relation to the frogs in the throat of many a man. The full throat has relation to the distended paunch.

I would fain see the sun as a moon, more weird. The sun now rises in a rosaceous amber. Methinks the birds sing more some mornings than others, when I cannot see the reason. I smell the damp path, and derive vigor from the earthy scent between Potter's and Hayden's. Beginning, I may say, with robins [**American Robin** [█](#) *Turdus migratorius*], song sparrows [**Melospiza** [█](#) *melodia*], chip-birds, bluebirds [**Eastern Bluebird** [█](#) *Sialia sialis*], etc., I walked through larks [**Eastern Meadowlark** [█](#) *Sturnella magna*], pewees [**Wood Pewee** [█](#) *Contopus virens*], pigeon woodpeckers [**Yellow-shafted Flicker** [█](#) *Colaptes auratus*], chickadee [**Black-capped Chickadee** [█](#) *Parus atricapillus*] *tull-a-lulls*, to towhees, huckleberry-birds, wood thrushes [**Catharus** [█](#) *mustelina*], brown thrasher [**Brown Thrasher** [█](#) *Toxostroma rufum*], jay [**Blue Jay** [█](#) *Cyanocitta cristata*], catbird [**Gray Catbird** [█](#) *Dumetella carolinensis*], etc., etc. Entered a cool stratum of air beyond Hayden's after the warmth of yesterday. The *Viola pedata* still in bud only, and the other (*q.v.*) Hear the first partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** [█](#) *Bonasa umbellus* (*Partridge*)] drum. The first oven-bird [**Seiurus** [█](#) *Aurocapillus*]. A wood thrush which I thought a dozen rods off was only two or three, to my surprise, and betrayed himself by moving, like a large sparrow with ruffled feathers, and quirking his tail like a pewee, on a low branch. [The 1906 journal editor notes here that probably the bird was a hermit thrush, this motion of the tail being almost a proof positive, adding that probably, too, all the "wood thrushes" seen by Thoreau in April (see *ante*) were hermits.] Blackbirds [**Red-winged Blackbird** [█](#) *Agelaius phoeniceus*] are seen going over the woods with a chattering bound to some meadow.

A rich bluish mist now divides the vales in the eastern horizon mile after mile. (I am ascending Fair Haven.) An oval-leaved pyrola (evergreen) in Brown's pines on Fair Haven.

Cliffs. — This is the gray morning; the sun risen; a very thin mist on the landscape; the falling water smooth. Far below, a screaming jay seen flying, against the bare stems of the pines. The young oaks on the plain, the pines standing here and there, the walls in Conantum pastures seen in the sun, the little groves on the opposite side of the river lit up by it while I am [in] shade, these are memorable and belong to the hour.

Here at this hour the brown thrasher [**Brown Thrasher** [█](#) *Toxostroma rufum*] often drowns the other birds. The towhee [**Rufous-Sided Towhee** [█](#) *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*] has been a main bird for regular morning singing in the woods for a little while. The creeper [**Pine Warbler** [█](#) *Dendroica pinus* or **Brown Creeper** [█](#) *Certhia americana* or **Black-and-white Warbler** [█](#) *Mniotilta varia*] is regularly heard, too. Found the first strawberry blossoms (*Fragaria virginiana*) on Fair Haven. The sedge grass blossom is now quite large and showy on the dry hillside where the wood has recently been cut off.

I think that birds vary their notes considerably with the seasons. When I hear a bird singing, I cannot think of any words that will imitate it. What word can stand in place of a bird's note? You would have to bury (?) it or surround it with a *chevaux de frise* of accents, and exhaust the art of the musical composer besides with your different bars, to represent it, and finally get a bird to sing it, to perform it. It has so little relation to words. The wood thrush [**Catharus** [█](#) *mustelina*] says *ah-tully-tally* for one strain. There appear to be one or more little warblers in the woods this morning which are new to the season, about which I am in doubt, myrtle-birds [**Yellow-rumped Warbler** [█](#) *Dendroica coronata*] among them. For now, before the leaves, they begin to people the trees in this warm weather. The first wave of summer from the south. The purple finch (sober-colored) [**Purple Finch** [█](#) *Carpodacus purpureus*] is a rich singer. As I said the other day, something like the warbling vireo [**Warbling Vireo** [█](#) *Vireo gilvus*], only louder, clearer, mellower, and more various. Bank swallows at Hayden's.

I fear that the dream of the toads will not sound so musical now that I know whence it proceeds. But I will not fear to *know*. They will awaken new and more glorious music for me as I advance, still farther in the horizon, not to be traced to toads and frogs in slimy pools.

P.M. — To Nawshawtuct.

The vireo [█](#) comes with warm weather, midwife to the leaves of the elm.... The first small pewee [**Wood Pewee** [█](#) *Contopus virens*] sings now *che-vet*, or rather chirrup *chevet*, *tche-vet* — a rather delicate bird with a large head and two white wing bars. The first summer yellowbirds [**Yellow Warbler** [█](#) *Dendroica petechia*] on the willow causeway. The birds I have lately mentioned come not singly, as the earliest, but all at once, i.e. many yellowbirds all over town. Now I remember the yellowbird comes when the willows begin to leave out. (And the small pewee [**Wood Pewee** [█](#) *Contopus virens*] on the willows also.) So yellow. They bring summer with them and the sun, *tche-tche-tche-tcha-tcha-tchar*. Also they haunt the oaks, white and swamp white, where

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

are not leaves. On the hill I sit in the shadow of the locust trunks and branches, for want of other shade. Thus is a mistake in Nature, to make shade necessary before she has expanded the leaves.

The catnep is now up, with a lustrous purple tinge to the under side of its leaves. (Why should so many leaves be so painted on the under side, concealed from men's eye—only not from the insects—as much as the sculptures on the tops of columns?) There is something in its fragrance as soothing as balm to a sick man. It advances me ever to the autumn and beyond it. [How full of reminiscence is any fragrance! If it were not for virtuous, brave, generous actions, could there be any sweet fragrance?

“Only the actions of the just

Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.”

Now you may say the trees generally are *beginning* to leave out, excepting the oaks, celtis, late water willow, etc., etc. But only the willows and the balm-of-gileads make any show in our landscape yet, — of native or wild trees, — the latter where they grow in clumps. Its catkins are five inches long.

Top of hill. —The haze is remarkably thick to-day as if all the distant western woods were on fire. (The wind west and what coolness in it most grateful.) The haze makes the western view, quite rich, so many edges of woodland ridges where you see the pine tops against, the white mist of the vale beyond. I count five or six such ridges rising partly above the mist, but successively more indistinct, the first only a quarter of a mile off. Of course there are no mountains. It belongs to this warm weather. The lower part of the sky is white, like a fog; only in the zenith do I see any blue. It makes the outlines of the blue water on the meadow eastward agreeably indistinct, being more nearly the color of the water itself than the land. A maple swamp in bloom, westward from this hill, is a rich sight, even like a rosy orchard in bloom. The dust flies.

I am not sure whether my first violet was the *cucullata* or *ovata*, [“I am not sure whether” and “*cucullata* or” have been crossed out in pencil] or the same with that minute one which I found prepared to blossom by the Spring Path this morning. A fern, one of the osmundas, beyond the celtis, one foot high, covered with reddish wool, unfolding its blossom (?) as it rises. The wool used for birds' nests. Might be used for other purposes? It is such weather as in summer we expect a thunder-shower after.

Is this smoke-like haze produced by the warm west wind meeting the still cool earth? Or is it smoke? The ground under the walnuts is richly strewn with nutshells, broken and gnawed by squirrels, like an unswept dining-hall in early times. That little early violet close to the ground in dry fields and hillsides, which only children's eyes detect, with buds showing purple but lying so low, as if stooping to rise, or rather its stems actually bent to hide its head amid the leaves, quite unpretending. The gnaphalium, though without scent, is now a pure, dry, enduring flower and bears inspection. The first peewee [Spotted Sandpiper] *Actitis macularia*; myrtle birds [Yellow-rumped Warbler] *Dendroica coronata* numerous. The catbird [Gray Catbird] *Dumetella carolinensis* does not make the corn-planting sounds. The toads dream loudly these first warm days. A yellow-throated green frog in the river, by the hemlocks, — bright silk-green the fore part of the body, tiger-striped legs. The eyes of toads and frogs are remarkably bright and handsome, — oval pupils (?) or blacks and golden or coppery irides. The hop-hornbeam is almost in bloom. The red-wing's [Agelaius] *phoeniceus* shoulder, seen in a favorable light, throws all epaulets into the shade. It is General Abercrombie, methinks, when they wheel partly with the red to me. The crow blackbirds [Common Grackle] *Quiscalus quiscula* make a noise like crows [American Crow] *Corvus Brachyrhynchos*, and also a singular and rarely heard scream or screech. They fly with lark-like wings. We require just so much acid as the cranberries afford in the spring. The first bumblebee, that prince of hummers, — *bombyle*, [sic], looking now over the ground as if he could find something. He follows after flowers. To have your existence depend on flowers, like the bees and hummingbirds! The willow twigs now may make wreaths so pretty and graceful with their expanding leaves. They afford the only chaplets yet, fit to crown the fairest. The horse-chestnuts in the yards have opened their parasol-like leaves to-day, reminding me of tropical palms; and the rock maples' large buds are almost open. Such a haze as this makes a dark night.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

[Kossuth](#), who had arrived in New-York in the previous December and would tour the US for two more months pressing the flesh and accepting donations for his “Independent Hungarian Government” ragged band of revolutionaries on the make, was of course making this pilgrimage to [Concord](#) because it was the symbolic bloody birth ground of US political independence from the British empire. [Waldo Emerson](#) delivered his appropriate “Address to Kossuth” –which has been aptly characterized by Larry J. Reynolds as “complimentary, vacuous, and vague”<sup>41</sup>– and invited the hero to enter the Emerson home. According to pages 145 and 158-9 of Reynolds’s influence study *EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE* (New Haven CT: Yale UP, 1988),

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41. [Emerson](#) commented that [Kossuth](#) had gotten his “story told in every palace, and log hut, and prairie camp throughout the continent.” Refer to “Address to Kossuth,” in [EMERSON’S COMPLETE WORKS](#), ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (Boston MA: Houghton, Mifflin, 1929), 3:401. Also refer to Donald S. Spencer’s *LOUIS KOSSUTH AND YOUNG AMERICA: A STUDY OF SECTIONALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY, 1848-1852* (Columbia MO: U of Missouri P, 1977).







## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

here is how Kossuth's trip had gone:

When Kossuth began his famous tour of the United States, which lasted from December 1851  to July 1852,  Whitman saw him. During his visit to Brooklyn, Kossuth was escorted to the armory and to Plymouth Church by a troop of horse guards, and there he spoke to large crowds. In the opinion of Joseph Jay Rubin, "Whitman gave his sympathy ... to the living symbol of freedom, crushed by emperors and czars, when Kossuth came to America that December in search of means to reverse the calamity in Hungary." In his notebook, Walt Whitman merely recorded that "I saw him make his entree in N Y latter part of 1851 riding up Broadway." Rubin is probably right, though, for indeed Kossuth as symbol would have stimulated Whitman's growing sympathy for revolutionary heroes and martyrs.... Sympathy for intervention on behalf of republicanism in Europe was greatest in the frontier states, where the expansionist spirit flourished, and there—in Ohio, Indiana, Missouri—Kossuth was warmly received. In Springfield IL, Abraham Lincoln, although against intervention, drafted resolutions expressing sympathy for Kossuth, "the most worthy and distinguished representative of the cause of civil and religious liberty on the continent of Europe," and in Columbus OH, a 15-year-old William Dean Howells listened with rapt attention as Kossuth spoke on the steps of the statehouse. At age eighty, Howells recalled, "I hung on the words of the picturesque black-bearded, black-haired, black-eyed man, in the braided coat of the Magyars, and the hat with an ostrich plume up the side which set a fashion among us, and I believed with all my soul that in a certain event we might find the despotisms of the Old World banded against us, and 'would yet see Cossacks,' as I thrilled to hear Kossuth say." Howells, like so many of his countrymen, bought himself a Kossuth hat, complete with the ostrich plume, to demonstrate his sympathy. Meanwhile, Kossuth marches, Kossuth dances, Kossuth oysters, Kossuth restaurants, Kossuth buttons, flags, and photographs became signs of the times. As Donald S. Spencer has found, even a manufacturer of rat poison capitalized on the revolutionary's popularity:

**Kossuth's coming, so they say;  
He's a lion in his way  
And made tyranny his prey;  
But for bugs and such as they  
Our old Lyon is O.K.  
Rats and mice, too, he can slay.**

After making his way through the Midwest and the South (where he was coolly received), Kossuth visited a number of cities and towns in New England, where the people were eager to see him. The major writers in the region of course noticed his presence.

Annoyed at having been in general, and especially in this cradle of revolutionary spirit, shunted aside with mere words when he had come to fetch big bucks for a new military campaign, the Hungarian hero responded to the American sage that "the doors and shutters of oppression" were not to be opened by mere "example" or by mere "moral influence" but "must be opened by bayonets." [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), as ever too easily impressed by political rhetoric, commented to Emerson that he had "said the only word that has yet been worthily spoken to Kossuth." [Thoreau](#) confided to his journal merely "P.M.—Kossuth here." (He then wrote that "The best men that I know ... flatter and study effect, only more finely than the rest.... I accuse my finest

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

acquaintances of an immense frivolity.”) Within precisely this timeframe, Hawthorne found himself reflecting upon the sort of purpose which was represented by such a purposive, argumentative, self-legitimizing confidence artist of revolution as Kossuth, and upon how an excess of this ingredient might warp a person’s soul, and how a deficit of it, as represented for instance in himself, and in his persona Miles Coverdale, could do harm to a person’s soul, and found him modifying the conclusion of his all-but-completed “Hollingsworth” manuscript accordingly:

As Hollingsworth once told me, I lack a purpose. How strange! He was ruined, morally, by an overplus of the very same ingredient, the want of which, I occasionally suspect, has rendered my own life all an emptiness. I by no means wish to die. Yet, were there any cause, in this whole chaos of human struggle, worth a sane man’s dying for, and which my death would benefit, then –provided, however, the effort did not involve an unreasonable amount of trouble– methinks I might be bold to offer up my life. If Kossuth, for example, would pitch the battle-field of Hungarian rights within an easy ride of my abode, and choose a mild, sunny morning, after breakfast, for the conflict, Miles Coverdale would gladly be his man, for one brave rush upon the levelled bayonets. Farther than that, I should be loth to pledge myself.



June 9. The buck-bean in Hubbard’s meadow just going out of blossom. The yellow water ranunculus is an important flower in the river now, rising above the white lily pads, whose flower does not yet appear. I perceive that their petals, washed ashore, line the sand conspicuously. The green-briar in flower. For a week past we have had *washing* days. The grass waving, and trees having leaved out, their boughs wave and feel the effect of the breeze. Thus new life and motion is imparted to the trees. The season of waving boughs; and the lighter under sides of the new leaves are exposed. This is the first half of June. Already the grass is not so fresh and liquid-velvety a green, having much of it blossom[ed] and some even gone to seed, and it is mixed with reddish ferns and other plants, but the general leafiness, shadiness, and waving of grass and boughs in the breeze characterize [lie season. The wind is not quite agreeable, because it prevents your hearing the birds sing. Meanwhile the crickets are strengthening their quire. The weather is very clear, and the sky bright. The river shines like silver. Methinks this is a traveller’s month. The locust in bloom. The waving, undulating rye. The deciduous trees have filled up the intervals between the evergreens, and the woods are bosky now. Is that the *Thalictrum Cornuti* that shows green stamens, at the Corner Spring? Gathered strawberries on Fair Haven. Rather acid yet.

The priests of the Germans and Britons were druids. They had their sacred oaken groves. Such were their steeple houses. Nature was to some extent a fane to them. There was fine religion in that form of worship, and Stonehenge remains as evidence of some vigor in the worshippers, as the Pyramids, perchance, of the vigor of the Egyptians, derived from the slime of the Nile. Evelyn says of the oak, which he calls “these robust sons of the earth,” “It is reported that the very shade of this tree is so wholesome, that the sleeping, or lying under it, becomes a present remedy to paralytics, and recovers those whom the mistaken malign influence of the Walnut-tree has smitten.” Which we may take for a metaphorical expression of the invigorating influence of rude, wild, robust nature, compared with the effeminating luxury of civilized life. Evelyn has collected the fine exaggerations of antiquity respecting the virtues and habits of trees and added some himself. He says, “I am told that those small young acorns which we find in the stock-doves’ craws are a delicious fare, as well as those



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

incomparable salads, young herbs taken out of the maws of partridges at a certain season of the year, which gives them a preparation far exceeding all the art of cookery." If the oft-repeated glorification of the forest from age to age smacks of religion, is even druidical, Evelyn is as good as several old druids, and his "Silva" is a new kind of prayer-book, a glorifying of the trees and enjoying them forever, which was the chief end of his life.

A child loves to strike on a tin pan or other ringing vessel with a stick, because, its ears being fresh, sound, attentive, and percipient, it detects the finest music in the sound, at which all nature assists. Is not the very cope of the heavens the sounding-board of the infant drummer? So clear and unprejudiced ears hear the sweetest and most soul-stirring melody in tinkling cowbells and the like (dogs baying the moon), not to be referred to association, but intrinsic in the sound itself; those cheap and simple sounds which men despise because their ears are dull and debauched. Ah, that I were so much a child that I could unfailingly draw music from a quart pot! Its little ears tingle with the melody. To it there is music in sound alone.

Evelyn speaks of "mel-dews" attracting bees. Can mildews be corrupted from this? Says that the alder, laid under water, "will harden like a very stone," and speaks of their being used "for the draining of grounds by placing them... in the trenches," which I have just seen done here under Clamshell Hill.

Evelyn's love of his subject teaches him to use many expressive words, some imported from the Latin, which I wonder how we can do without. He says of the "osiers or aquatic salix," "It likewise yields more limber and flexible twigs for baskets, flaskets, hampers, cages, lattices, cradles,... the bodies of coaches and waggons,... for chairs, hurdles, stays, bands," etc.: "likewise for fish-weirs, and to support the banks of impetuous rivers: In fine, for all wicker and *twiggy* works;

'Viminibus Salices' — Virg."

Many of his words show a poetic genius.

The above-mentioned is the reason that children are fond of and make what grown people call a *noise*, because of the music which their young ears detect in it.

Peaches are the principal crop in Lincoln, and cherries a very important one; yet Evelyn says, "We may read that the peach was at first accounted so tender and delicate a tree, as that it was believed to thrive only in Persia; and even in the days of Galen, it grew no nearer than Egypt, of all the Roman Provinces, but was not seen in the city till about thirty years before Pliny's time;" but now it is the principal crop cultivated in Lincoln in New England, and it is also cultivated extensively in the West and on lands not half a dozen years vacated by the Indians. Also, "It was 680 years after the foundation of Rome, ere Italy had tasted a cherry of their own, which being then brought thither out of Pontus, did after 120 years, travel *ad ultimos Britannos*," and I may add *Lincolnos*. As Evelyn says, "Methinks this should be a wonderful incitement."

Evelyn well says "a *sobbing* rain."

Trees live so long that Evelyn in Milton's day tells anecdotes of old trees, and recent writers tell the same or similar anecdotes of the same trees still standing. They have stood to have the stories repeated and enlarged concerning them. He tells of "*Neustadt an der grossen Linden*, or Neustadt by the great Lime-tree." After quoting at length some of the inscriptions on the stone columns placed under this famous tree by noble persons, proving its age, he adds, "Together with several more too tedious to recite; and even these might have [been] spared the reader, but that I found the instance so particular and solemn."

What means that custom of parents planting a tree: or a forest at the birth of an heir, to be an inheritance or a dowry, but a sort of re-grafting the man on the vegetable? If a forest were planted at the birth of every man, nations would not be likely to become effete. It has ever been regarded as a crime, even among warriors, to cut down a nation's woods.

He, Evelyn, speaks of pines "pearling out into gums." Things raised in a garden he calls "*hortular furniture*." He talks of modifying the air as well as the soil, about plants, "and make the remedy as well regional as topical." This suggests the propriety of Shakespeare's expression the "*region* cloud," region meaning then oftener upper regions relatively to the earth. He speaks of a "dewie sperge or brush," to be used instead of a watering-pot, which "gluts" the earth. He calls the kitchen-garden the "olitory garden." In a dedication of his "*Kalendarium Hortense*" to Cowley, he inserts two or three good sentences or quotations, viz.: "As the philosopher in Seneca desired only bread and herbs to dispute felicity with Jupiter;" so of Cowley's simple retired life. "Who would not, like you, *cacher sa vie*?" "Delivered from the gilded impertinences of life."



June 27: It is somewhat hazy yet I can just distinguish Monadnoc. It is a good way to describe the density of a haze to say how distant a mountain can be distinguished through it or how near a hill is obscured

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


by it.

Saw a very large white ash tree 3 1/2 feet in diameter in front of the house which White formerly owned under this hill — which was struck by lightning the 22nd ult about 4 Pm. The lightning apparently struck the top of the tree & scorched the bark & leaves for 10 or 15 feet downward — then began to strip off the bark & enter the wood, making a ragged narrow furrow or crack — till reaching one of the upper limbs it apparently divided — descending on both sides & entering deeper & deeper into the wood. At the first general branching it had got full possession of the tree in its center — and tossed off the main limbs butt foremost making holes in the ground where they struck — & so it went down in the midst of the trunk to the earth where it apparently exploded, rending the trunk into six segments, whose tops 10 or 20 feet long were rayed out on every side at an angle of about 30\_ from a perpendicular — leaving the ground bare directly under where the tree had stood, though they were still fastened to the earth by their roots. The lightning appeared to have gone off through the roots, furrowing them as the branches, and through the earth, making a furrow like a plough 4 or 5 rods in one direction & in another passing through the cellar of the neighboring house, about 30 feet distant — scorching the tin milk pans & throwing dirt into the milk & coming out the back side of the house — in a furrow — splitting some planks there — The main body of the tree was completely stripped of bark — which was cast in every direction 2 hundred feet and large pieces of the inside of the tree 15 feet long were were hurled with tremendous force in various directions — one into the side of shed smashing it — another burying itself in a woodpile— The heart of the tree lay by itself — Probably a piece as large as man's leg could not have been sawed out of the trunk which would not have had a crack in it — & much of it was very finely splintered.

The windows in the house were broken & the inhabitants knocked down by the concussion.

All this was accomplished in an instant by a kind of fire out of the heavens called lightning or a thunderbolt, accompanied by a crashing sound. For what purpose? The ancients called it Joves bolt — with which he punished the guilty — & we moderns understand it no better. There was displayed a Titanic force — some of that force which made and can unmake the world. The brute forces are not yet wholly tamed. Is this of the character of a wild beast — or is it guided by intelligence and mercy? If we trust our natural impressions it is a manifestation of brutish force — or vengeance more or less tempered with justice. Yet it is our own consciousness of sin probably which suggests the idea of vengeance — and to a righteous-man it would be mere sublime without being awful. This is one of those instances in which a man — hesitates to refer his safety to his prudence — as the putting up of a lightning rod. There is no lightning rod by which the sinner can finally avert the avenging Nemesis. Though I should put up a rod if its utility were satisfactorily demonstrated to me — yet, so mixed are we, I should feel myself safe or in danger quite independently of the senseless rod— Yet there is a degree of faith & righteousness in putting up a rod, as well as trusting without one — though the latter which is the rarest I feel to be most effectual rod of the two. It only suggests that impunity in respect to all forms of death or disease — whether sickness or casualty — is only to be attained by moral integrity. It is the faith with which we take medicine that cures us. Otherwise we may be cured into greater disease. In a violent tempest, we both fear & trust. We are ashamed of our fear for we know that a righteous man would not suspect danger — nor incur any. Where-ever a man feels fear, there is an avenger — The savage's & the civilized man's instincts are right. Science affirms too much. Science assumes to show why the lightning strikes a tree — but it does not show us the moral why, any better than our instincts did. It is full of presumption. Why should trees be struck? It is not enough to say because they are in the way. Science answers non scio — I am ignorant. All the phenomena of nature need be seen from the point of view of wonder & awe — like lightning — & on the other hand the lightning itself needs to be regarded with serenity as the most familiar & innocent phenomena.

There runs through the righteous man's moral spine — a rod with burnished points to heaven which conducts safely away in to the earth the flashing wrath of Nemesis — so that it merely clarifies the air. This moment the confidence of the righteous man erects a sure conductor within him — the next perchance — a timid steeple diverts the fluid to his vitals. If a mortal be struck with a thunder bolt coelo sereno, it is naturally felt to be more awful & vengeful. Men are probably nearer to the essential truth in their superstitions than in their science. Some places are thought to be particularly exposed to lightning — some oaks on hill tops for instance.

I meet the partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] with her brood in the woods, a perfect little hen. She spreads her tail into a fan and beats the ground with her wings fearlessly within a few feet of me, to attract my attention while her young disperse; but they keep up a faint, wiry kind of peep, which betrays them, while she mews and squeaks as if giving them directions.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

October 15, Friday: Marietta Alboni gave a recital in Manhattan.

One day in mid-October, perhaps this day and perhaps not, [Ellery Channing](#) threw a fit at his dinner table and declared that from that time forward he would be taking his meals in the kitchen.



His wife [Ellen Fuller Channing](#) would seek advice from her relatives, such as legal advice from her brother Richard Fuller, and from Ellery’s own relatives, such as spiritual advice from the Reverend [William Henry Channing](#), and also from the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) and [Mrs. Higginson](#). She would be barricading the door to her bedroom.



Oct. 15. 9 A.M. — The first snow is falling (after not very cool weather), in large flakes, filling the air and obscuring the distant woods and houses, as if the inhabitants above were emptying their pillow-cases. Like a mist it divides the uneven landscape at a little distance into ridges and vales. The ground begins to whiten, and our thoughts begin to prepare for winter. Whiteweed. The Canada snapdragon is one of the latest flowers noticed, a few buds being still left to blossom at the tops of its spike or raceme. The snow lasted but half an hour. Ice a week or two ago.

P. M. — Walden.

The water of Walden is a light green next the shore, apparently because of the light rays reflected from the sandy bottom mingling with the rays which the water reflects. Just this portion it is which in the spring, being warmed by the heat reflected from the bottom and transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen pond. The water appears blue when the surface is much disturbed, also in a single cake of ice; that is, perhaps, when enough light is mixed with it.

The flight of a partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)], leaving her lair (?) on the hillside only a few rods distant, with a gentle whirring sound, is like the blowing of rocks at a great distance.

Perhaps it produces the same kind of undulations in the air.

The rain of the, night and morning, together with the wind, had strewn the ground with chestnuts. The burrs, generally empty, come down with a loud sound, while I am picking the nuts in the woods. I have come out before the rain is fairly over, before there are any fresh tracks oil the Lincoln road by Britton’s shanty, and I find





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the nuts abundant in the road itself.

It is a pleasure to detect them in the woods amid the firm, crispy, crackling chestnut leaves. There is somewhat singularly refreshing in the color of this nut, the chestnut color. No wonder it gives a name to a color. One man tells me he has bought a wood-lot in Hollis to cut, and has let out the picking of the chestnuts to women at the halves. As the trees will probably be cut for them, they will make rapid work of it.

flow Father Le Jeune pestered the poor Indians with his God at every turn (they must have thought it his one idea), only getting their attention when they required some external aid to save them from starving! Then, indeed, they were good Christians.

1853



March 22: 6 A.M. –To Cliffs. There is a white frost on the ground. One robin really sings on the elms. Even the cockerel crows with new lustiness. Already I hear from the railroad the plaintive strain of a lark or two. They sit now conspicuous on the bare russet ground. The tinkling bubbles of the song sparrow are wafted from distant fence-posts, –little rills of song that begin to flow and tinkle as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The blackbird tries to sing, as it were with a bone in his throat, or to whistle and sing at once. Whither so fast, the restless creature, –*chuck chuck*, at every rod, and now and then *whistle-ter-ee?* The *chill-lill* of the blue snow-birds is heard again. A partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] goes off on Fair Haven Hillside with a sudden whir like the wad of a six-pounder, keeping just level with the tops of the sprouts. These birds and quails go off like a report...  
The tapping of the woodpecker, *rat-tat-tat*, knocking at the door of some sluggish grub to tell him that the spring has arrived, and his fate, this is one of the season sounds, calling the roll of birds and insects, the reveille. The Cliff woods are comparatively silent. Not yet the woodland birds, except, perhaps, the woodpecker, so far as it migrates; only the orchard and river birds have arrived.



March 22: A description of animals, too, from a dead specimen only, as if, in a work on man, you were to describe a dead man only, omitting his manners and customs, his institutions and divine faculties, from want of opportunity to observe them, suggesting, perchance, that the colors of the eye are said to be much more brilliant in the living specimen, and that some cannibal, your neighbor, who has tried him on the table, has found him to be sweet and nutritious, good on the gridiron. Having had no opportunity to observe his habits, because you do not live in the country. Only dindons and dandies. Nothing is known of his habits. Food seeds of wheat, beef, pork, and potatoes.

April 6, Wednesday: Catholic rioters attacked a Protestant church in Cincinnati that was hosting a [nativist](#) rally.




April 6: 6 A.M. –To Cliffs.  
The robin [American Robin *Turdus migratorius*] is the singer at present, such is its power and universality, being found both in garden and wood. Morning and evening it does not fail, perched on some elm or the like, and in rainy days it is one long morning or evening. The song sparrow [Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*] is still more universal but not so powerful. The lark [Lark (Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*)], too, is equally constant, morning and evening, but confined to certain localities, as is the blackbird [Blackbird] to some extent. The bluebird [Bluebird, Eastern *Sialia sialis*], with feebler but not less sweet warbling, helps fill the air, and the phoebe [Bridge-Pewee (Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*)] does her part. The tree sparrow, *F. hyemalis* [Tree Sparrow, American *Spizella arborea*], and fox-colored sparrows [Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* (Fox-colored Sparrow)] make the meadow-sides or gardens where they are flitting vocal, the first with its canary-like twittering, the second with its lively ringing trills or jingle. The third is a very sweet and more powerful singer, which would be memorable if we heard him long enough. The woodpecker's [Woodpecker] tapping, though not musical, suggests pleasant associations in the cool morning, — is inspiring, enlivening.  
I hear no hylas nor croakers in the morning. Is it too cool for them? The gray branches of the oaks, which have lost still more of their leaves, seen against the pines when the sun is rising and falling on them, how rich and interesting!  
From Cliffs see on the still water under the hill, at the outlet of the pond, two ducks [Ducks] sailing, partly white.




## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Hear the faint, swelling, far-off beat of a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)].



### CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO



Saw probably female red-wings [Red-wing (Red-winged Blackbird  *Agelaius phoeniceus*)] (?), grayish or dark ashy-brown, on an oak in the wood., with a male (?) whose red shoulder did not appear.


How many walks along the brooks I take in the string! What shall I call them? Lesser riparial excursions? Prairial? rivular?

When I came out there was not a speck of mist in the sky, but the morning without a cloud is not the fairest. Now, 8.30 A.M., it rains. Such is April.




A male willow, apparently same with that at H.'s Bridge, or No. 2, near end of second tract on west. Another male by ring-post on east side, long cylindrical catkins, now dark with scales, which are generally more rounded than usual and reddish at base and not lanceolate, turning backwards in blossom and exposing their sides or breasts to the sun, from which side burst forth fifty or seventy-five long white stamens like rays, tipped with yellow anthers which at first were reddish above, — spears to be embraced by invisible Arnold Winkelried; — reddish twigs and clear gray beneath. These last colors, especially, distinguish it from Nos. 1 and 2. Also a female, four or five rods north of last, just coming into bloom, with very narrow tapering catkins, lengthening already, some to an inch and a half, ovaries conspicuously stalked; very downy twigs, more reddish and rough than last below. If we consider the eagle  as a large hawk , how he falls in our estimation!

Our new citizen Sam Wheeler has a brave new weathercock all gilt on his new barn. This morning at sunrise it reflected the sun so brightly that I thought it was a house on fire in Acton, though I saw no smoke, but that might well be omitted. The flower-buds of the red maple have very red inner scales, now being more and more exposed, which color the tree-tops a great distance off.

P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

Near Clamshell Hill, I scare up in succession four pairs of good-sized brown or grayish-brown ducks . They go off with a loud squeaking quack. Each pair is by itself. One pair on shore some rods from the water. Is not the object of the quacking to give notice of danger to the rest who cannot see it?

All along under the south side of this hill on the edge of the meadow, the air resounds with the hum of honey-bees, attracted by the flower of the skunk-cabbage. I first heard the fine, peculiarly sharp hum of the honey-bee before I thought of them. Some hummed hollowly within the spathes, perchance to give notice to their fellows that plant was occupied, for they repeatedly looked in, and backed out on finding another. It was surprising to see them, directed by their instincts to these localities, while the earth has still but a wintry aspect so far as vegetation is concerned, buzz around some obscure spathe close to the ground, well knowing what they were about, then alight and enter. As the cabbages were very numerous for thirty or forty rods, there must have been some hundreds of bees there at once, at least. I watched many when they entered and came out, and they all had little yellow pellets of pollen at their thighs. As the skunk-cabbage comes out before the willow, it is probable that the former is the first flower they visit. It is the more surprising, as the flower is for the most part invisible within the spathe. Some of these spathes are now quite large and twisted up like cows' horns, not curved over as usual. Commonly they make a pretty little crypt or shrine for the flower, like the overlapping door of a tent. It must be bee-bread (?), then, they are after. Lucky that this flower does not flavor their honey. I have noticed for a month or more the bare ground sprinkled here and there with several kinds of fungi, now conspicuous, — the starred kind, puffballs, etc. Now it is fair, and the sun shines, though it shines and rains with short intervals to-day. I do not see so much greenness in the grass as I expected, though a considerable change. No doubt the rain exaggerates a little by showing all the greenness there is! The thistle is now ready to wear the rain-drops.

I see, in J.P. Brown's field, by Nut Meadow Brook, where a hen has been devoured by a hawk  probably. The feathers whiten the ground. They cannot carry a large fowl very far from the farmyard, and when driven off are frequently baited and caught in a trap by the remainder of their quarry. The gooseberry has not yet started. I cannot describe the lark's song. I used these syllables in the morning to remember it by — *heetar-su-e-oo*. The willow in Miles's Swamp which resembles No. 2 not fairly in blossom yet. Heard unusual notes from, I think, a chickadee [Chicadee, Black-capped  *Parus atricapillus* Titmouse, Titmiee] in the swamp, elicited, probably, by the love season, - *che che vet*, accent on last syllable, and *vissa viss a viss*, the last sharp and fine. Yet the bird looked more slender than the common titmouse [~~Titmouse, Titmiee~~ (Black-capped Chicadee  *Parus atricapillus*)], with a longer tail, which jerked a little, but it seemed to be the same bird that sang *phebe* and *he-phebe* so sweetly. The woods rang with this. Nuttall says it is the young that *phebe* in winter. I noticed some aspens (*tremuliformis*) of good size there, which have no flowers!

The first lightning I remember this year was in the rain last evening, quite bright; and the thunder following very







## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

low, after. A thunder-shower in Boston yesterday.

One cowslip, though it shows the yellow, is not *fairly* out, but will be by to-morrow. How they improve their time! Not a moment of sunshine lost. One thing I may depend on: there has been no idling with the flowers. They advance as steadily as a clock. Nature loses not a moment. tubes no vacation. These plants, now protected by the water, just peeping forth. I should not be surprised to find that they drew in their head in a frosty night. Returning by Harrington's, saw a pigeon woodpecker [~~Yellow-shafted Flicker~~ **Colaptes auratus** (~~Golden-winged Woodpecker or Pigeon Woodpecker~~)] flash away, showing the rich golden under side of its glancing wings and the large whitish spot on its back, and presently I heard its familiar long-repeated loud note, almost familiar as that of a barn-door fowl, which it somewhat resembles. The robins **■**, too, now toward sunset, perched on the old apple trees in Tarbell's orchard, twirl forth their evening lays unweariedly. Is that a willow, the low bush from the fireplace ravine which from the lichen oak, fifty or sixty rods distant, shows so red in the westerling sunlight? More red, I find, by far than close at hand. To-night for the first time I hear the hylas in full blast.

Is that pretty little reddish-leaved star-shaped plant by the edge of water a different species of hypericum from the *perforatum*?

May 11, Wednesday: [Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “Psychology, poetry, philosophy, history, and science, I have swept rapidly to-day on the wings of the invisible hippogriff through all these spheres of thought. But the general impression has been one of tumult and anguish, temptation and disquiet.

I love to plunge deep into the ocean of life; but it is not without losing sometimes all sense of the axis and the pole, without losing myself and feeling the consciousness of my own nature and vocation growing faint and wavering. The whirlwind of the wandering Jew carries me away, tears me from my little familiar enclosure, and makes me behold all the empires of men. In my voluntary abandonment to the generality, the universal, the infinite, my particular ego evaporates like a drop of water in a furnace; it only condenses itself anew at the return of cold, after enthusiasm has died out and the sense of reality has returned. Alternate expansion and condensation, abandonment and recovery of self, the conquest of the world to be pursued on the one side, the deepening of consciousness on the other — such is the play of the inner life, the march of the microcosmic mind, the marriage of the individual soul with the universal soul, the finite with the infinite, whence springs the intellectual progress of man. Other betrothals unite the soul to God, the religious consciousness with the divine; these belong to the history of the will. And what precedes will is feeling, preceded itself by instinct. Man is only what he becomes — profound truth; but he becomes only what he is, truth still more profound. What am I? Terrible question! Problem of predestination, of birth, of liberty, there lies the abyss. And yet one must plunge into it, and I have done so. The prelude of Bach I heard this evening predisposed me to it; it paints the soul tormented and appealing and finally seizing upon God, and possessing itself of peace and the infinite with an all-prevailing fervor and passion.”



May 11: I hear the distant drumming of a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **■** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)].



### CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

Its beat, however distant and low, falls still with a remarkably forcible, almost painful, impulse on the ear, like veritable little drumsticks on our tympanum, as if it were a throbbing or fluttering in our veins or brows or the chambers of the ear, and belonging to ourselves—as if it were produced by some little insect which had made its way up into the passages of the ear, so penetrating is it. It is as palpable to the ear as the sharpest note of a fife. Of course, that bird can drum with its wings on a log which can go off with such a powerful whir, beating the air. I have seen a thoroughly frightened hen and cockerel fly almost as powerfully, but neither can sustain it long. Beginning slowly and deliberately, the partridge's beat sounds faster and faster from far away under the boughs



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

and through the aisles of the wood until it becomes a regular roll, but is speedily concluded. How many things shall we not see and be and do, when we walk there where the partridge drums!



May 11. P.M. –To Corner Spring *via* Hubbard’s Bathing-Place. I nearly stepped upon a song sparrow [Song Sparrow **Melospiza melodia**] and a striped snake at the same time. The bird fluttered away almost as if detained. I thought it was a case of charming, without doubt, and should think so still if I had not found her nest with five eggs there, which will account for her being so near the snake that was about to devour her.



June 12: I visited my hawk’s nest, and the young hawk [Red-tailed Hawk **Buteo jamaicensis**] was perched now four or five feet above the nest, still in the shade. It will soon fly. Now, then, in secluded pine woods, the young hawks sit high on the edges of their nests or on the twigs near by in the shade, waiting for their pinions to grow, while their parents bring them their prey. Their silence also is remarkable, not to betray themselves, nor will the old bird go to the nest while you are in sight. She pursues me half a mile when I withdraw.



June 12: P.M.–To Bear Hill. Going up Pine Hill, disturbed a partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] and her brood. She ran in dishabile directly to me, within four feet, while her young, not larger than a chicken just hatched, dispersed, flying along a foot or two from the ground, just over the bushes, for a rod or two. The mother kept close at hand to attract my attention, and mewed and clucked and made a noise as when a hawk is in sight. She stepped about and held her head above the bushes and clucked just like a hen. What a remarkable instinct that which keeps the young so silent, and prevents their peeping and betraying themselves! The wild bird will run almost any risk to save her young. The young, I believe, make a fine sound at first in dispersing, something like a cherry-bird.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

September 13, Tuesday-27, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went on his 2d trip to Maine (Moosehead Lake, Chesuncook Lake, and the Penobscot River), by steamer on the outside route to and from Bangor, then by stagecoach to the town of Greenville on the shore of Moosehead Lake, then by steamer across the lake, then by ox cart to the Penobscot River, probably at the end of work on the E draft of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#). He went with his cousin [George Thatcher](#), and had Joseph Aitteon (or Atteon) as guide.



TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

Supplies included a tent, hard-bread, pork, smoked beef, tea, and sugar. When Thoreau reached the mouth of the Ragmuff, a small stream flowing into the Penobscot between Moosehead and Chesuncook, several birds attracted his attention. Purple finches and myrtle warblers can be seen there. Canada jays, now called gray jays, often visit camps for food. Ruffed grouse and spruce grouse may be flushed by hikers. A male spruce grouse (Thoreau's pinnated or black grouse) has been known to become so immobile when approached that you may make five-second exposures. Thoreau's observations about the familiarity between lumbermen and wilderness birds are similar to those made of the birds on the Galápagos Islands, where humans have made a very recent appearance. On those islands visitors have sometimes lifted a hawk from its perch in a tree. Darwin noted that to collect such species as finches, wrens, flycatchers, doves, and carrion buzzards, he did not need a gun but could use a switch or even his hat.



[From CHESUNCOOK] I asked Neptune if they had any of the old breed of dogs yet. He answered, "Yes." "But that," said I, pointing to one that had just come in, "is a Yankee dog." He assented. I said that he did not look like a good one. "O yes!" he said, and he told, with much gusto, how, the year before, he had caught and held by the throat a wolf. A very small black puppy rushed into the room and made at the Governor's feet, as he sat in his stockings with his legs dangling from the bedside. The Governor rubbed his hands and dared him to come on, entering into the sport with spirit. Nothing more that was significant transpired, to my knowledge, during this interview. This was the first time that I ever called on a governor, but, as I did not ask for an office, I can speak of it with the more freedom.

DOG



[From THE MAINE WOODS] While we were trying for trout, Joe, Indian-like, wandered off up the Ragmuff on his own errands, and when we were ready to start was far beyond call. So we were compelled to make a fire and get our dinner here, not to lose time. Some dark reddish birds with grayer females (perhaps purple finches), and myrtle-birds in their summer dress, hopped within six or eight feet of us and our smoke. Perhaps they smelled the frying pork. The latter bird, or both, made the lisping notes which I had heard in the forest. They suggested that the few small birds found in the wilderness are on more familiar terms with the lumbermen and hunter than those of the orchard and clearing with the farmer. I have since found the Canada jay, and partridges, [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] both the black [[Spruce Grouse](#) [Dendragapus canadensis](#) (Black Grouse)] and common, equally tame there, as if they had not yet learned to mistrust man entirely. The chickadee, which is at home alike in the primitive woods and in our wood-



ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

lots, still retains its confidence in the towns to a remarkable degree.... We saw a few wood ducks, sheldrakes, and black ducks, but they were not so numerous there at that season as on our river at home. We scared the same family of wood ducks before us, going and returning. We also heard the note of one fish hawk, somewhat like that of a pigeon woodpecker, and soon after saw him perched near the top of a dead white pine against the island where we had first camped, while a company of peewees were twittering and teetering about over the carcass of a moose on a low sandy spit just beneath. We drove the fish hawk from perch to perch, each time eliciting a scream or whistle, for many miles before us.

THE MAINE WOODS: There was the usual long-handled axe of the primitive woods by the door, three and a half feet long, – for my new black-ash rule was in constant use, – and a large, shaggy dog, whose nose, report said, was full of porcupine quills. I can testify that he looked very sober. This is the usual fortune of pioneer dogs, for they have to face the brunt of the battle for their race, and act the part of Arnold Winkelried without intending it. If he should invite one of his town friends up this way, suggesting moose-meat and unlimited freedom, the latter might pertinently inquire, "What is that sticking in your nose?" When a generation or two have used up all the enemies' darts, their successors lead a comparatively easy life. We owe to our fathers analogous blessings. Many old people receive pensions for no other reason, it seems to me, but as a compensation for having lived a long [Page 690] time ago. No doubt our town dogs still talk, in a snuffling way, about the days that tried dogs' noses. How they got a cat up there I do not know, for they are as shy as my aunt about entering a canoe. I wondered that she did not run up a tree on the way; but perhaps she was bewildered by the very crowd of opportunities.

DOG

CAT

**FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A "HISTORICAL CONTEXT" IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.**

Ruffed Grouse

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



Nov. 8. Mayweed and shepherd's-purse.

10 A.M. — Our first snow, the wind southerly, the air chilly and moist; a very fine snow, looking like a mist toward the woods or horizon, which at 2 o'clock has not whitened the ground. The children greet it with a shout when they come out at recess.

P. M. To riverside as far down as near Peter's, to look at the water-line before the snow covers it. By Merrick's pasture it is mainly a fine, still more or less green, thread-like weed or grass of the river bottom (?), sedges, utricularias (that coarse one especially, whose name I am not sure of, with tassels (?)), (*Utricularia vulgaris*?) yellow water ranunculus, potamogeton's translucent leaves, a few flags and pontederia stems. By Peter's there was much of that coarse triangular cellular stem mentioned yesterday as sparganium (?). I would not have thought it so common. There is not so much meadow grass or hay as I expected, for that has been raked and carried off. The pads, too, have wasted away and the pontederias' leaves, and the stems of the last for the most part still adhere to the bottom.

Three larks [**Eastern Meadowlark** **Sturnella magna**] rise from the sere grass on Minott's Hill before me, the white of their outer tail-feathers very conspicuous, reminding me of arctic snowbirds by their size and form also. The snow begins to whiten the plowed ground now, but it has not overcome the russet of the grass ground. Birds generally wear the russet dress of nature at this season. They have their fall no less than the plants; the bright tints depart from their foliage or feathers, and they flit past like withered leaves in rustling flocks. The sparrow is a withered leaf.

The *Stellaria media* still blooms in Cheney's garden, and the shepherd's[-purse] looks even fresher. This must be near the end of the flower season. Perchance I heard the last cricket of the season yesterday. They chirp here and there at longer and longer intervals, till the snow quenches their song. And the last striped squirrel, too, perchance, yesterday. They, then, do not go into winter quarters till the ground is covered with snow.

The partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (**Partridge**)] go off with a whir, and then sail a long way level and low through the woods with that impetus they have got, displaying their neat forms perfectly.

The yellow larch leaves still hold on, — later than those of any of our pines.

I noticed the other day a great tangled and netted mass of an old white pine root lying upon the surface, nearly a rod across and two feet or more high, too large even to be turned up for a fence. It suggested that the roots of trees would be an interesting study. There are the small thickly interwoven roots of the swamp white oaks on the Assabet.

At evening the snow turned to rain, and the sugaring soon disappeared.



December 1: To Cliffs.

We may infer that every withered culm of grass or sedge, or weed that still stands in the fields, answers some purpose by standing.

Those trees and shrubs which retain their withered leaves through the winter — shrub oaks and young white, red, and black oaks, the lower branches of larger trees of the last-mentioned species, hornbeam, etc., and young hickories — seem to form an intermediate class between deciduous and evergreen trees. They may almost be called the ever-reds. Their leaves, which are falling all winter long, serve as a shelter to rabbits and partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (**Partridge**)] and other winter quadrupeds and birds. Even the little chickadees love to skulk amid them and peep out from behind them. I hear their faint, silvery, lisping notes, like tinkling glass, and occasionally a sprightly *day-day-day*, as they inquisitively hop nearer and nearer to me. They are our most honest and innocent little bird, drawing yet nearer to us as the winter advances, and deserve best of any of the walker.




1854



Jan. 31. P.M. —To Great Meadows and Beck Stow’s.

The wind is more southerly, and now the warmth of the sun prevails, and is felt on the back. The snow softens and melts. It is a beautiful clear and mild winter day. Our washwoman says she is proud of it. Any clear day, methinks, the sun is ready to do his part, and let the wind be right, and it will be warm and pleasant-like, at least now that the sun runs so high a course. But I do not melt; there is no thaw in me; I am bound out still.

I see the tree sparrows, one or two at a time, now and then, all winter, uttering a faint note, with their bright-chestnut crown and spot on breast and barred wings. They represent the sparrows in the winter. Went to the Great Meadows by the Oak Island. The maples along the edge of the meadow, which all winter have been perfectly leafless, have an agreeable mixed, slightly pepper-and-salt look, spotted or barred with white lichens. It is an agreeable maze to the eye, so thick their bare and clean gray limbs.

Many tracks of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] there along the meadowside in the maples, and their droppings where they appear to have spent the night about the roots and between the stems of trees. I think they eat the buds of the azalea. And now, with a mew, preluding a whirl, they go off before me. Coming up, I follow her tracks to where she eased herself for lightness, and immediately after are five or six parallel cuts in the snow, where her wing struck when she lifted herself from the ground, but no trace more.




I pass the woodchoppers, busily felling trees cutting up those which they have felled. One is measuring his lengths with his axe-helve and does not see me.

The pitch pines are yellowish, the white incline to bluish. In the winter, when there are no flowers and leaves are rare, even large buds are interesting and somewhat exciting. I go a-budding like a partridge. I am always attracted at this season by the buds of the swamp-pink, the poplars, and the sweet-gale.

A hundred years ago, as I learned from Ephraim Jones’s ledger, they sold bark in our street. He gives credit for a load. Methinks my genius is coeval with that time. That is no great wildness or *selvaggia* that cannot furnish a load of bark, when the forest has lost its shagginess. This is an attempt to import this wildness into the cities in a thousand shapes. Bark is carried thither by ship and by cartloads. Bark contains the principle of tannin, by which not only the fibre of skins but of men’s thoughts is hardened and consolidated. It was then that a voice was given to the dog, and a manly tone to the human voice. Ah! already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of the village, when you cannot collect a load of bark of good thickness.

[Varro](#) thinks that when man reached the pastoral or second stage and domesticated animals (*pecus*), “*primum non sine causa putant oves assumptas, et propter utilitatem, et propter placiditatem*” (they think not without reason that sheep were first taken, both on account of their usefulness and on account of their gentleness); for, as he says, they furnish milk, cheese, their fleece, and skin. It looks to me as if the sheep had been supplied with a superfluity of clothing that it might share it with man, and, as [Varro](#) suggests, did not this fleece, on account of its value, come to be called golden? was not this the origin of the fable?

We too have our thaws. They come to our January moods, when our ice cracks, and our sluices break loose. Thought that was frozen up under stern experience gushes forth in feeling and expression. There is a freshet which carries away dams of accumulated ice. Our thoughts hide unexpressed, like the buds under their downy or resinous scales; they would hardly keep a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] from starving. If you would know what are my winter thoughts look for them in the partridge’s crop. They are like the laurel buds, - some leaf, some blossom buds,-which, though food for such indigenous creatures, will not expand into leaves and flowers until summer comes.

“*Et primitus oritur herba imbribus primoribus evocata,*” says [Varro](#).




April 25: A.M. — I think I hear near George Heywood’s the *tull-lull* (?). [Yes] Heard and saw my warbler (?) *b*’ of the 23d and 24th on Mr. Emerson’s pines. It is the smallest bird I have seen this year. Sits still












## RUFFED GROUSE



## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

amid the pines not far below the top and sings very sweetly, loud and clear, and seems further off than it is, beginning first with very *fine* wiry notes and then increasing in volume and melody till it ends with *tweeter tweeter tweeter ter twe*. Some of it a martin-like warble. Has sometimes a harsh scolding note. It is all light, perhaps ashy-white, beneath; has a little narrow forked tail; ashy (?) under wings, which are considerably shorter than tail; and light above and below eye; perhaps a whitish bar on wings; olivaceous (?) above. I think it may be the *golden-crested wren*, [**Golden-crowned Kinglet**  *Regulus satrapa*] though I hardly saw the upper parts, or *possibly* the small blue-gray flycatcher. I do not find the male blossoms of the red cedar open yet.

P.M. — To Indian Cedar Hill.

Quite warm and the frogs are snoring on the meadow. I swelter under my greatcoat. The *Populus grandidentata* is fairly begun; say very first the 23d. Many shad-flies in the air and alighting on my clothes. The summer approaches by almost insensibly increasing *lieferungs* of heat, each awakening some new bird or quadruped or reptile. At first we were compelled to take off our mittens, then to unbutton our greatcoat, and now, perhaps, to take it off occasionally (I have not left it at home yet), and wear thin boots. For some time we have done with little fire, nowadays let it go out in the afternoon. (To-day, 26th, I sit without any.) Each creature awaits with confidence its proper degree of heat. I think I saw a pigeon [**American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius* (~~Pigeon~~, ~~Wild~~)] yesterday. G. Minott says that he saw some a week ago.

Saw a ~~golden~~<sup>ruby</sup>-crested wren [~~“golden”~~ crossed out in pencil in favor of “ruby”] [**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**  *Regulus calendula*] in the woods near Goose Pond. (This must be my warblers a and b of April 18th, b' of April 23d and 24th.) It sounded far off and like an imitation of a robin, [**Northern Oriole**  *Icterus galbula* (~~Fiery~~ ~~Hangbird~~ or ~~Hangbird~~ or ~~Gold Robin~~ or ~~Golden Robin~~)] which later I often mistook for him.] — a long strain and often repeated. I was quite near it before I was aware of it, sounding like a faint imitation of a robin. Some chickadees [**Chicadee**, **Black-capped**  *Parus atricapillus* (~~Titmouse~~, ~~Titmice~~)] and yellow redpoll [**Palm Warbler**  *Dendroica palmarum* (~~Yellow Redpoll~~ or *Sylvia petechia*)] were first apparent, then my wren  on the pitch pines and young oaks. He appeared curious to observe me. A very interesting and active little fellow, darting about amid the tree-tops, and his song quite remarkable and rich and loud for his size. Begins with a very fine note, before its pipes are filled, not audible at a little distance, then *woriter weter*, etc., etc., winding up with *teter teter*, all clear and round. [His song is comical and reminds me of the thrasher. **Thrasher**, **Brown**  *Toxostroma rufum* (~~Mavis~~, ~~red~~)] This was at 4 P.M., when most birds do not sing. I saw it yesterday, pluming itself and stretching its little wings. Our smallest bird, methinks, except the hummingbird. [**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**  *Archilochus colubris*] The snuff-colored, white-spotted wren  I saw some time ago was considerably larger.

Just before this saw on the low bushes, — shrub oaks, etc., — by path, a large sparrow with ferruginous-brown and white-barred wings, — the white-throated sparrow, [**White-throated Sparrow**  *Zonotrichia albicollis*] — uttered a faint ringing chirp. The first partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (~~Partridge~~)] drums in one or two places, as if the earth's pulse now beat audibly with the increased flow of life. It slightly flutters all Nature and makes her heart palpitate. Also, as I stand listening for the wren, and sweltering in my greatcoat, I hear the woods filled with the hula of insects, as if my hearing were affected; and thus the summer's quire begins. The silent spaces have begun to be filled with notes of birds and insects and the peep and croak and snore of frogs, even as living green blades are everywhere pushing up amid the sere ones. I heard that same snoring which I hear on the river meadows, on all inland meadow this afternoon, where I think no bullfrogs are. Are they not then the *palustris*, or else the shad frog? There are now many new insects in the air. Black ducks still on Flint's. The fertile fruit-stems of the sensitive fern by the side of the Flint's Pond path, more than a foot high, are a rich ornament to the ground, — brown, four or five inches long, and turned to one side, contrasting with the lighter rachis (?) Saw my thrush of the 18th by the pond. It appears dark-olive, ferruginous on rump and tail, with a dark streak slanting from each check and flesh-colored legs. The red cedar has fairly begun to-day; maybe the first yesterday. Put the red yesterday and the white to-day. As I approach the red cedars now, I perceive a delicious strawberry-like fragrance in the air, like that from the arbor-vita. The creeping juniper apparently open, but not yet open. Though I see some amber on the sweet-fern, I am in doubt whether to say to-day or to-morrow. The wild red cherry (if that is one near Everett's), privet, and buckthorn are *beginning* to leaf out. The abele will probably blossom to-morrow.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


July 6, Thursday: The “Republican Party” was founded (continuous with but substantially different from today’s “Republican Party” in the same manner in which the prehistoric *moeritherium* is continuous with but substantially different from today’s African and Indian elephants :-).

Lloyd Tabb Hubard was born.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Beck Stow’s Swamp.



July 6. P.M. — To Beck Stow’s.

*Euphorbia maculata*, good while. *Polygonum aviculare*, a day or two. Now a great show of elder blossoms. *Polygala sanguinea*, apparently a, day or more. *Galium asprellum* in shade; probably earlier in sun. Partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] a third grown.

Veery still sings and toad rings.

On the hot sand of the new road at Beck Stove's, headed toward the water a rod or more off, what is probably *Cistudo Blandingii*; had *some* green conferva (?) on its shell and body. Length of upper shell, 6½ inches; breadth behind, 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>; tail beyond shell, 2¼. Did not see it shut its box; kept running out its long neck four inches or more; could bend it directly back to the posterior margin of the second [?] dorsal plate. Ran out its head further and oftener than usual. The spots pale-yellow or buff. Upper half of head and neck blackish, the former quite smooth for 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches and finely sprinkled with yellowish spots, the latter warty. The snout lighter, with five perpendicular black marks. Eyes large (?), irides dull green-golden. Under *jaw and throat clear chrome-yellow*. Under parts of neck and roots of fore legs duller yellow: inner parts behind duller yellow still. Fore legs with black scales, more or less yellow spotted above; at root and beneath pale-yellow and yellowish. Hind legs uniformly black above and but little lighter beneath. Tail black all round. No red or orange about the animal. No hook or notch to jaw.

Plantain, some days, and gnaphalium, apparently two or three days.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1855

January 26, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford, Massachusetts](#).

BROOKLAWN, N. BEDFORD,  
26 Jan., 1855.

DEAR SIR,— I fully intended to have gone to Boston yesterday; but not being very well, deferred it until to-day, and now we are visited by a severe snowstorm, so that I fear the railway track may be obstructed. I shall not, therefore, be able to reach Concord this time. My only fear is that you may have gone to Boston in expectation of meeting me there; but as I have not heard from you to this effect I have no very strong reason to think so, and hope that you have not.

I should like very much to see Concord and its environs with the Laird of Walden, and hope at no very distant time to do so, should it meet his pleasure. I hope also to see your lordship again here, and to visit with you some of our rural retreats.

Yours,  
D. RICKETSON.  
H.D. Thoreau, Esq.,  
Concord, Mass.

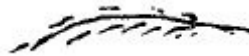


January 26. A fine snow falling, spoiling all prospect of skating on this broad ice. Is not good skating the surest sign of snow or foul weather?

To continue the 26th: —

P. M. — To Walden.

A thick, driving snow, something like, but less than, that of the 19th. There is a strong easterly wind and the snow is very damp. In the deepest hollows on the Brister Hill path it has already lodged handsomely. Suppose you descend into the deepest circular one, far beneath the sweep of the blustering wind, where the flakes at last drop gently to their resting-places, There is a level, white circular floor, indicating ice beneath, and, all around, the white pines, under an accumulating snowy burthen, are hung with drooping; white wreaths or fans of snow. The snow on pitch pines takes the forms of large balls, on white pines often of great rolling-pins. Already the trees are bending in all directions into the paths and hollows as here.



The birches here are bowed inward to the open circle of the pond-hole, their tops apparently buried in the old snow. Nothing can be prettier than the snow on the leafless shrub oaks, the twigs are so small and numerous, little snowy arms crossing each other at every imaginable angle, like a whirligig. It is surprising what a burden of snow already rests on little bare twigs hardly bigger than a knitting-needle, both as they stand perpendicularly and horizontally. The great damp flakes come and soon bridge across the interval, even two inches over, between the forks of such twigs where they are horizontal, one sticking to another. It rests on such horizontal twigs commonly in the form of a prism resting on one corner

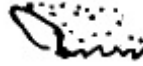


ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

(vertical section where no wind). And in many places, where the wind is felt, the little walls of snow are built out at an angle with the perpendicular, in the direction whence the snow comes:



(a vertical section or end). Damp as it is, it [is], it is like swan's-down, as if it lay as light as well as thick. As it is with these shrub oaks, so with the largest trees in the stiller parts of the woods, and even the lowest (lead limbs of the white pines are not prevented by the upper from bearing their part of the burden.

I am afraid I have not described vividly enough the aspect of that lodging Snow of the 19th and to-day partly. Imagine the innumerable twigs and boughs of the forest (as you stand in its still midst), crossing each other at every conceivable angle on (very sick from the ground to thirty feet in height, with each its zigzag wall of snow four or five inches high, so innumerable at different distances one behind another that they completely close up the view like a loose-woven downy screen, into which, however, stooping and winding, you ceaselessly advance. The wintriest scene, -which perhaps can only be seen in perfection while the snow is yet falling, before wind and thaw begin. Else you miss, you lose, the delicate touch of the master. A coarse woof and warp of snowy batting, leaving no space for a bird to perch.

I see where a partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] has waddled through the snow still falling, making a continuous track. I look in the direction to which it points, and see the bird just skimming over the bushes fifteen rods off.

The plumes of pitch pines are first filled up solid, then they begin to make great snowy *casse-têtes*, or pestles. In the fields the air is thick with driving snow. You can only see a dozen rods into its woof and warp. It fills either this ear or that and your eyes with hard, cutting, blinding scales if you face it. It is forming shelly drifts behind the walls, and stretches in folds across the roads; but in deep, withdrawn hollows in the woods the flakes at last come gently and deviously down, lodging on every twig and leaf, and forming deep and downy and level beds between and on the ice of the pools. The lowermost twigs support not less snow but more.

In many places where you knew there was a thrifty young wood, there appears to be none, for all is bent down and almost completely buried in the snow, and you are stepping over them. The pitch pines are most round-headed, and the young white oaks are most leaved at top, and hence suffer most.

What changes in the aspect of the earth! one day russet hills, and muddy ice, and yellow and greenish pools in the fields; the next all painted white, the fields and woods and roofs laid on thick. The great sloshy pools in the fields, freezing as they dried away, look like bread that has spewed in the baking, the fungi of a night, an acre in extent; but trust not your feet on it, for the under side is not done; there the principle of water still prevails. Methinks that after any great storm in winter, whether of snow or rain, the equilibrium of the air is again disturbed and there comes a high wind shaking down the snow and drying up the water.



January 31, Wednesday: On a clear, cold, beautiful day, [Henry Thoreau](#) took a day-long [skating](#) trip:



A clear, cold, beautiful day. Fine skating. As I skated near the shore under Lee's Cliff [on the Sudbury River and on Fair Haven Bay, Gleason K6], I saw what I took to be some scraggs or knotty stubs of a dead limb lying on the bank beneath a white oak, close by me. Yet while I looked directly at them I could not but admire their close resemblance of partridges [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)]. I had come along with a rapid whirl and suddenly halted right against them, only two rods distant, and, as my eyes watered a little from skating against the wind, I was not convinced that they were birds till I had pulled out my glass, and deliberately examined them. They sat and stood, three of them, perfectly still with their heads erect, some darker feathers like ears, methinks, increasing their resemblance to scraggs [*sic*], as where a small limb is broken off. I was much surprised at the remarkable stillness they preserved, instinctively relying on the resemblance to the ground for their protection, *i.e.* withered grass, dry oak leaves, dead scraggs, and broken twigs. I thought at first that it was a dead oak limb with a few stub ends or scraggs [*sic*] sticking up, and for some time after I had noted the resemblance to birds, standing only two rods off, I could not be sure of their character on account of their perfect motionlessness, and it was not till I brought my glass to bear on them and saw their eyes distinctly, steadily glaring on me, their necks and every muscle tense with anxiety, that I was convinced. At length, on some signal which I did not perceive, they went off with a whirl, as if shot, over the bushes.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Waldo Emerson had scheduled Charles H. Goddard of Cincinnati to lecture before the Concord Lyceum on this evening, and Goddard at some point had apparently needed to reschedule so Emerson had scheduled Thoreau to lecture in his place. Later, however, things had changed again and Goddard showed up to lecture on this evening — so after all Thoreau didn't need to.

February 12, Monday: The cold spell that had set in on February 4th finally ended in a thaw. In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Walden Pond.



February 12. All trees covered this morning with a hoar frost, very handsome looking toward the sun, — the ghosts of trees. Is not this what was so blue in the atmosphere yesterday afternoon?

P. M. — To Walden

A very pleasant and warm afternoon. There is a softening of the air and snow. The eaves run fast on the south side of houses, and, as usual in this state of the air, the cawing of crows at a distance and the crowing of cocks fall on the air with a peculiar softness and sweetness; they come distinct and echoing musically through the pure air. What are those crows about, which I see from the railroad causeway in the middle of a field where no grass appears to rise above the snow, — apparently feeding? I observe no mousetracks in the fields and meadows. The snow is so light and deep that they have run wholly underneath, and I see in the fields here and there a little hole in the crust where they have come to the surface. In Trillium Woods I see, as usual, where a squirrel has scratched along from tree to tree. His tracks cease at the foot of a pine, up which he has ascended within these few hours. He may be concealed now amid the thickest foliage. It is very pleasant to stand now in a high pine wood where the sun shines in amid the pines and hemlocks and maples as in a warm apartment. I see at Warren's Crossing where, last night perhaps, some partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] rested in this light, dry, deep snow. They must have been almost completely buried. They have left their traces at the bottom. They are such holes as would be made by crowding their bodies in backwards, slanting-wise, while perhaps their heads were left out. The dog scared them out of similar holes yesterday in the open orchard. I watched for a long time two chickadee-like birds, — only, I thought, a good deal larger, — which kept ascending the pitch pines spirally from the bottom like the nuthatch. They had the markings and the common faint note of the chickadee, yet they looked so large and confined themselves so to the trunk that I cannot but feel still some doubt about them. They had black chins, as well as top of head; tail, black above; back, slate; sides, dirty-white or creamy; breast, etc., white

Set a trap in the woods for wild mice. I saw where they had run over the snow, making a slight impression, thus:



the tracks some five inches apart, frequently with a very distinct mark of the tail. These tracks commonly came together soon and made one beaten trail where two or three had passed, or one several times; as if they had hopped along, two, three, or four in company The whole trail would be five or six inches wide

Under the birches, where the snow is covered with birch seeds and scales, I see the fine tracks, undoubtedly of linarias [**Common Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*]. The track of one of these birds in the light surface looks like a chain, or the ova of toads. Where a large flock has been feeding, the whole surface is scored over by them.



February 13, Tuesday: At 10 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Walden Woods. It was not cold but the sky was somewhat overcast.



February 13. In A. M.—To Walden Woods

Not cold; sky somewhat overcast

The tracks of partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] are more remarkable in this snow than usual, it is so light, being at the same time a foot deep. I see where one has waddled along several rods, making a chain-like track about three inches wide (or two and a half), and at the end has squatted in the snow, making a perfectly smooth and regular oval impression, like the bowl of a spoon, five inches wide. Then, six inches beyond this, are the marks of its wings where it struck the snow on each side when it took flight. It must



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

have risen at once without running. In one place I see where one, after running a little way, has left four impressions of its wings on the snow on each side extending eighteen or twenty inches and twelve or fifteen in width: In one case almost entire wing was distinctly impressed, eight primaries and five or six secondaries. In one place, when alighting, the primary quills, five of them, have marked the snow for a foot. I see where many have dived into the snow, apparently last night, on the side of a shrub oak hollow. In four places they have passed quite underneath it for more than a foot; in one place, eighteen inches. They appear to have dived or burrowed into it, then passed along a foot or more underneath and squatted there, perhaps, with their heads out, and have invariably left much dung at the end of this hole. I scared one from its hole only half a rod in front of me now at 11 A. M. These holes seen sidewise look thus:]— It is evidently a hardy bird, and in the above respects, too, is like the rabbit, which squats under a brake or bush on the snow. I see the traces of the latter in hollows in the snow in such places, — their forms

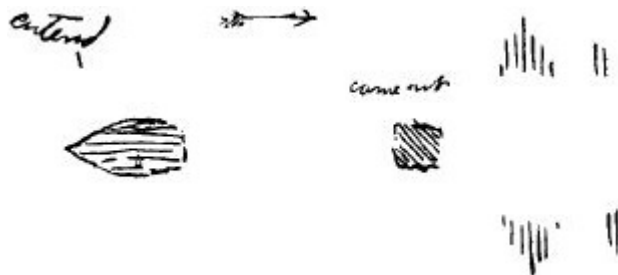
In the Journal of the [Rev. William Adams](#) (afterward settled in Dedham), written apparently in and about Cambridge, Mass. (he graduated in 1671 at Cambridge), he says under “Dece 1” (1670), “This day was the first flight of snow this winter it being hardly over shoes.” And 1671, November “24. The first great snow this winter being almost knee deep.” (Hist. Coll., 4th Series, vol. I.)

An English antiquarian says, “May-Flower was a very favorite name with English seamen, and given by them to vessels from almost every port in England.” (Ibid. p. 85.)

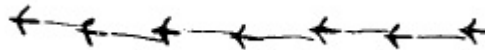
“Hurts” is an old English word used in heraldry, where, according to Bailey, it is “certain balls resembling hurtle berries.”

One of these pigweeds in the yard lasts the snowbirds all winter, and after every new storm they revisit it. How inexhaustible their granary!

To resume the subject of partridges, looking further in an open place or glade amid the shrub oaks and low pitch pines, I found as many as twenty or thirty places where partridges had lodged in the snow, apparently the last night or the night before. You could see commonly where their bodies had first struck the snow and furrowed it for a foot or two, and six inches wide, then entered and gone underneath two feet and rested at the further end, where the manure is left. Is it not likely that they remain quite under the snow there, and do not put their heads out till ready to start? In many places they walked along before they went under the snow. They do not go under deep, and the gallery they make is mostly filled up behind them, leaving only a thin crust above. Then invariably, just beyond this resting-place, you could see the marks made by their wings when they took their departure:



These distinct impressions made by their wings, in the pure snow, so common on all hands, though the bird that made it is gone and there is no trace beyond, affect me like some mystic Oriental symbol, — the winged globe or what-not, — as if made by a spirit. In some places you would see a furrow and hollow in the snow where there was no track for rods around, as if a large snowball or a cannon-ball had struck it, where apparently the birds had not paused in their flight. It is evidently a regular thing with them thus to lodge in the snow. Their tracks, when perfectly distinct, are seen to be almost in one straight line thus, trailing the middle toe:



about five inches apart. In one place I saw where one had evidently trailed the tips of the wings, making two distinct lines five or six inches apart, one on each side the foot-tracks; probably made by a male.

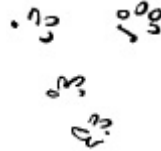
In the same place were many great tracks of the white rabbit. The earliest, made while the snow was very soft, were very large and shapeless, somewhat like the marks made by snow falling from the trees. More recent ones

NATHAN BAILEY

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

had settled and broken the slight crust around them, leaving a large indentation. The distinct track was like this:




the front tracks, which are the largest, being about two and a half inches in diameter, and the whole track of the four feet often one foot long. These impressions so slight (though distinct) it is hard to realize that so heavy an animal made them. I see where the squirrels have been eating the pitch pine cones since the last snow.

BAILEY'S DICTIONARY



February 16. Still rains a little this morning. Water at the Mill-Dam higher than ever since the new block was built — or longer. Ground half bare, but frozen and icy yet P.M. — To Cliff via Spanish Brook. A thick fog without rain. Sounds sweet and musical through this air, as crows, cocks, and striking on the rails at a distance. In the woods by the Cut, in this soft air, under the pines draped with mist, my voice and whistling are peculiarly distinct and echoed back to me, as if the fog were a ceiling which made this hollow an apartment. Sounds are not dissipated and lost in the immensity of the heavens above you, but your voice, being confined by the fog, is distinct, and you hear yourself speak. It is a good lichen day. Every crust is colored and swollen with fruit, and C. is constantly using his knife and filling his pockets with specimens. I have caught a mouse at last, where were tracks like those of February 12th, but it is eaten half up, apparently by its fellow (?). All the flesh is eaten out and part of the skin; one fore foot eaten off, but the entrails left. No wonder we do not find their dead bodies in the woods. The rest of the trap is not moved or sprung, and there is no track of a large animal or bird in the snow. It may have been a weasel. The sand is flowing fast in forms of vegetation in the Deep Cut. The fog is so thick we cannot see the engine till it is almost upon us, and then its own steam, hugging the earth, greatly increases the mist. As usual, it is still more dense over the ice at the pond

The ground is more than half bare, especially in open fields and level evergreen woods [Goes on melting till there is only a little icy snow left on north of hills in woods on the 10th of March, and then is whitened again.]. It is pleasant to see there the bright evergreens of the forest floor, undimmed by the snow, — the wintergreen, the greatleaved pyrola, the shin-leaf, the rattlesnake-plantain, and the lycopodiums. I see where probably rabbits have nibbled off the leaves of the wintergreen. It is pleasant to see elsewhere, in fields and on banks, so many green radical leaves only half killed by the winter. Are those little scratches across pallescent lichens which C. notices made by squirrels?

I find in the leavings of the partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] numerous ends of twigs. They are white with them, some half an inch long and stout in proportion. Perhaps they are apple twigs. The bark (and bud, if there was any) has been entirely digested, leaving the bare, white, hard wood of the twig. Some of the ends of apple twigs looked as if they had been bitten off. It is surprising what a quantity of this wood they swallow with their buds. What a hardy bird, born amid the dry leaves, of the same color with them, that, grown up, lodges in the snow and lives on buds and twigs! Where apple buds are just freshly bitten off they do not seem to have taken so much twig with them

The drooping oak leaves show more red amid the pines this wet day, — agreeably so, — and I feel as if I stood a little nearer to the heart of nature

The mouse is so much torn that I cannot get the length of the body and its markings exactly. Entire length, 8 inches [Probably an inch too much.]; length of head to base of ears, 1 inch; body, 3 (?); tail, 3 1/2. Brown or reddish-brown above; white beneath; fur slate above and beneath; tail also darker above, light beneath; feet white; hind legs longest, say 11 inches long; fore 3/4; hind foot more than 3/4 inch long; five toes on hind feet, four on front, with rudiment of thumb without claw, with little white protuberances on the soles of all; ears large, almost bare, thin, slaty-colored, 5/8 inch long on outside; upper jaw 1/4 + inch longer than lower; tail round, hairy, gradually tapering, dimly ringed; longest mustachios 1 3/8 inches; incisors varnish or dry maple-wood color [Vide February 20.]. From Emmons's account I should think it the Arvicola Emmonsii of De Kay, or deer mouse, which is thought a connecting link between the Arvicola and Gerbillus. The Gerbillus is the only other described much like it, and that is a "yellowish cream color" beneath





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Where snow is left on banks I see the galleries of mice (?) or moles (?) unroofed. The mouse I caught had come up through the snow by the side of a shrub oak, run along a rod, and entered again, i. e. before I set the trap.

February 22, Thursday: It would not be until the availability of stop-motion photography in 1931 that it would be possible to ascertain that the male ruffed grouse makes its drumming noise not by striking its wings against its drumming stand or its body or behind its back, but by the rapidity of the motion of its feathers through the air (This would be photographically documented by Dr. Arthur A. Allen).

### CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO




JOHN FARMER

February 22. P. M.—To J. Farmer's

Remarkably warm and pleasant weather, perfect spring. I even listen for the first bluebird. I see a seething in the air over clean russet fields [Also the 24th, which is very cold.]. The westerly wind is rather raw, but in sheltered places it is deliciously warm. The water has so far gone down that I get over the Hunt Bridge causeway by going half a dozen rods on the wall in one place. This water must have moved two or three hundred cartloads of sand to the side of the road. This damage would be avoided by raising the road

J. Farmer showed me an ermine weasel he caught in a trap three or four weeks ago. They are not very common about his barns. All white but the tip of the tail; two conspicuous canine teeth in each jaw. In summer they are distinguished from the red weasel, which is a little smaller, by the length of their tails, particularly, — six or more inches, while the red one's is not two inches long. He says their track is like that of the mink:— as if they had only two legs. They go on the jump. Sometimes make a third mark. He saw one in the summer (which he called the red weasel, but, as he thought the red twice as big as the white, it may have been a white one) catch a striped squirrel thus: He was at work near the wall near his house when he saw a striped squirrel come out of the wall and jump along by the side of a large stone. When he had got two or three feet along it, as it were in the air, the weasel appeared behind him, and before he had got four feet had him by the throat. Said a man told him that he saw a weasel come running suddenly to an apple tree near which he was working, run round and round and up it, when a squirrel sitting on the end of a branch jumped off, and the weasel, jumping, had him before he touched the ground. He had no doubt that when the weasel ran round the tree he was on the track of the squirrel

F. said he had many of the black rat, but none or very few of the wharf rats, on his premises. He had seen mice-nests twenty feet up trees. Three or four weeks ago he traced a mink by his tracks on the snow to where he had got a frog from the bottom of a ditch, — dug him out. Says that where many minnows are kept in a spring they will kill four or five hundred at once and pile them up on the bank. Showed me his spring, head of one of the sources of Dodge's Brook, which by his mark is not a quarter of an inch higher now, when there is so much water on the surface, than it was in the midst of the great drought last summer. But the important peculiarity of it is that when, in a dry spell, this stream is dry fifteen or twenty rods from this source, it may suddenly fill again before any rain comes. This does not freeze, even for twenty rods. A pool in it, some dozen or more rods from source, where his cattle drink, he never saw frozen

He had seen a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] drum standing on a wall. Said it stood very upright and produced the sound by striking its wings together behind its back, as a cock often does, but did not strike the wall nor its body. This he is sure of, and declares that he is mistaken who affirms the contrary, though it were Audubon himself. Wilson says he "begins to strike with his stiffened wings" while standing on a log, but does not say what he strikes, though one would infer it was either the log or his body. Peabody says he beats his body with his wings

The sun goes down to-night under clouds, —a round red orb, —and I am surprised to see that its light, falling on my book and the wall, is a beautiful purple, like the poke stem or perhaps some kinds of wine

You see fresh upright green radical leaves of some plants — the dock, probably water dock, for one— in and about water now the snow is gone there, as if they had grown all winter. Pitch pine cones must be taken

from the tree at the right season, else they will not open or "blossom" in a chamber. I have one which was gnawed off by squirrels, apparently of full size, but which does not open. Why should they thus open in the chamber or elsewhere? I suppose that under the influence of heat or dryness the upper side of each scale expands while the lower contracts, or perhaps only the one expands or the other contracts. I notice that the upper side is a lighter, almost cinnamon, color, the lower a dark (pitchy?) red.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS






## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



April 19, Thursday. 5:00 A.M. — Up Assabet.


Warm and still and somewhat cloudy. Am without greatcoat. The guns are firing and bells ringing. I hear a faint honk and, looking up, see going over the river, within fifty rods, thirty-two geese [**Canada Goose**  **Branta canadensis**] in the form of a hay-hook, only two in the hook, and they are at least six feet apart. Probably the whole line is twelve rods long. At least three hundred have passed over Concord, or rather within the breadth of a mile, this spring (perhaps twice as many); for I have seen or heard of a dozen flocks, and the two I counted had about thirty each. Many tortoise have their heads out. The river has fallen a little. Going up the Assabet, two or three tortoises roll down the steep bank with a rustle. One tumbles on its edge and rolls swiftly like a disk cast by a boy, with its back to me, from eight or ten feet into the water. I hear no concert of tree sparrows. Hear the tull-lull of myrtle-bird [**White-throated Sparrow**  **Zonotrichia albicollis**] in street, and the jingle of the chip-bird [**Chipping Sparrow**  **Spizella passerina**].

This forenoon, sit with open window.

Now plowing and planting will begin generally.


P.M. — To Walden.

Some golden willows will now just peel fairly, though on this one the buds have not started. (Another sudden change in the wind to northeast and a freshness with some mist from the sea at 3.30 P.M.) These osiers to my eye have only a little more liquid green than a month ago. A shad frog on the dry grass. The wild red cherry will begin to leaf to-morrow.

From Heywood's Peak I thought I saw the head of a loon in the pond, thirty-five or forty rods distant. Bringing my glass to bear, it seemed sunk very low in the water, —all the neck concealed,— but I could not tell which end was the bill. At length I discovered that it was the whole body of a little duck, asleep with its head in its back, exactly in the middle of the pond. It had a moderate-sized black head and neck, a white breast, and seemed dark-brown above, with a white spot on the side of the head, not reaching to the outside, from base of mandibles, and another, perhaps, at the end of the wing, with some black there. It sat drifting round a little, but with ever its breast toward the wind, and from time to time it raised its head and looked round to see if it were safe. I think it was the smallest duck I ever saw. Floating buoyantly asleep on the middle of Walden Pond. Was it not a female of the buffle-headed or spirit duck [**Bufflehead**  **Bucephala albeola**]? I believed the wings looked blacker when it flew, with some white beneath. It floated like a little casket, and at first I doubted a good while if it possessed life, until I saw it raise its head and look around. It had chosen a place for its nap exactly equidistant between the two shores there, and, with its breast to the wind, swung round only as much as a vessel held by its anchors in the stream. At length the cars scared it.

Goodwin had caught twenty-five pouts and one shiner at the Walden meadow, but no perch.

Slippery elm in tumbler to-day: probably to-morrow at Cliffs.

A partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  **Bonasa umbellus** (**Partridge**)] drums.



### CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

May 3, Thursday: At 3 PM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5) and had a conversation about Jonas Melvin with Humphrey Buttrick, one of the few Concordians who had been able to return from the [War upon Mexico](#).





May 3, 1855: P.M. — To Assabet Bath.

Small pewee; *tchevet*, with a jerk of the head. Hardhack leafed two or maybe three days in one place. Early pyrus leafed yesterday or day before, if I have not named it. The skull of a horse, — not a mare, for I did not see the two small canine teeth in the upper jaw, nor in the under, — six molars on each side, above and below, and six incisors to each jaw. I first observed the stillness of birds, etc., at noon, with the increasing warmth, on the 23d of April. Sitting on the bank near the stone-heaps, I see large suckers rise to catch insects, — sometimes leap. A butterfly one inch in alar extent, dark, velvety brown with slate-colored tips, on dry leaves. On the north of Groton Turnpike beyond Abel Hosmer's, three distinct terraces to river; first annually overflowed, say twenty-five or thirty rods wide, second seven or eight feet higher and forty or sixty wide, third forty feet higher still. Sweet-fern opened apparently yesterday. *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* began to leaf yesterday. Young red maple leaf to-morrow; also some white birch, and perhaps sugar maple.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Humphrey Buttrick, one of eight who alone returned from Texas out of twenty-four, says he can find wood-cock's eggs; now knows of several nests; has seen them setting with snow around them; and that Melvin has seen partridges' [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] eggs some days ago. He has seen crows building this year. Found in a hen-hawk's nest once the legs of a cat. Has known of several goshawks' nests (or what he calls some kind of eagle; Garfield called it the Cape eagle); one in a shrub oak, with eggs. Last year his dog caught seven black ducks so far grown that he got sixty cents a pair for them; takes a pretty active dog to catch such. He frequently finds or hears of them. Knew of a nest this year. Also finds wood ducks' nests. Has very often seen partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus*] drum close to him. Has watched one for an hour. They strike the body with their wings.




CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

He shot a white-headed eagle from Carlisle Bridge. It fell in the water, and his dog was glad to let it alone. He suggested that my fish hawks found pouts in holes made by ice.




May 7 5 A.M. — to Island.

Finger-cold & windy. The sweet-flags showed themselves about in the pads. Hear Maryland yellowthroat. Many grackles still in flocks singing on trees, male and female. the latter a very dark or black ash, but with silvery eye. I suspect the red-wings [Red-winged Blackbird  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] are building. Large white maples began to leaf yesterday at least, generally; one now shows considerably across the river. The aspen is earlier. *Viburnum dentatum* yesterday leafed. Bass to-morrow (some shoots sheltered now). A crow's nest near the top of a pitch pine about 20 feet high, just completed, betrayed by the bird's cawing & alarm — as on the 5th *one* came and sat on a bare oak within 30 40 feet, cawed reconnoitred & then both flew off to a distance while I discovered & climbed to the nest within a dozen rods. One comes near to spy you first. It was about 16 inches over — of the p. pine dead twigs laid across the forks — & white oak leas & bark fibres laid copiously on them — the cavity deep & more than half covered & concealed with a roof of leaves — a long sloping approach or declivity left on one side the nest. Red currant out.

P.M. to Lee's Cliff *via* Hubbard's Bath.

*Viola eucullata* apparently a day or two. A ladybug and bumblebee, the last probably some time. A lily wholly above water, and yellow, in Skull-Cap Meadow, ready to open. [On the 12th I observed it sunk beneath the water.] See *Rana fontinalis*.

Climbed to 2 crows nests or — maybe one of them a squirrel's — in Hub's grove. Do they not some times use a squirrel's nest for a foundation? A Ruby-crested wren is ap. attracted & eyes me. It is wrenching & fatiguing as well as dirty work to climb a tall pine with nothing or maybe only dead twigs & stubs to hold by. You must proceed with great deliberation & see well where you put your hands & your feet. Saw prob. a female *F. Fusca* sail swift & low close by me — and alight on a rail fence — It was a rich very dark perhaps reddish slate brown — I saw some white under the head — no white on rump — wings thickly barred with dark beneath. It then flew & alighted on a maple Did not fly so irregularly as the last one I called by this name. The early willow on the left beyond the bridge has begun to leaf, but by no means yet the one on the right. Scared up 2 gray squirrels in the Holden wood which ran glibly up the tallest trees on the opposite side to me & leaped across from the extremity of the branches to the next trees & so on very fast ahead of me — Remembering — aye aching with — my experience in climbing trees this Pm & morning I could not but admire their exploits. — To see them travelling with so much swiftness & ease that road over which I climbed a few feet with such painful exertion! A partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] flew up from within 3 or 4 feet of me with a loud





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


whirr & betrayed one cream colored egg in a little hollow amid the leaves.



**A Grouse Nest with 10 Eggs Found by Herbert W. Gleason  
at the Base of a Tree Near Brister's Spring**

Hear the tweezer-bird. It looks like a bluish slate above, with a greenish(?) yellow back and bright orange-yellow throat and breast, forked tail, two white bars on wings, whitish vent. Another, probably female, paler bluish, with fainter yellow and a conspicuous black crescent on breast. This is undoubtedly the parti-colored warbler, *i.e.* Brewer's blue yellow-back (*Sylvia Americana* of Latham and Audubon, *pusilla* of Wilson). *Vide* June 18th, 1854 and May 9th, 1853. I believe the yellow-rumped warbler has a note somewhat like the tweezer's.

Climbed a hemlock to a very large & complete prob. gray squirrel's nest — 18 inch diameter — a foundation of twigs — on which a body of leaves — & some bark fibers lined with the last — and the whole covered with many fresh green hemlock twigs 1 foot or more long with the leaves on — which had been gnawed off — & many strewed the ground beneath having fallen off — Entrance one side.

A short dist. beyond this & the hawks-nest pine — I observed a mid sized red oak standing a little aslant on the side-hill of over the swamp — with a pretty large hole in one side about 15 feet from the ground where ap. a limb on which a felled tree lodged had been cut some years before & so broke out a cavity — I thought that such a hole was too good a one not to be improved by some inhabitant of the wood — Perhaps the gray squirrels I had just seen had their nest there — or was not the entrance big enough to admit a screech owl [**Eastern Screech-Owl**  *Otus asio*].

So I thought I would tap on it & put my ear to the trunk — & see if I could hear anything stirring within it but I heard nothing. Then I concluded to look into it — So I shinned up — & when I reached up one hand to the hole to pull myself up by it the thought passed through my mind perhaps something may take hold of my fingers — but nothing did — The first limb was on the nearly directly opposite to the hole — & resting on this I looked in — & to my great surprise there squatted filling the hole which was about 6 inches deep & 5 to 6 wide — a salmon-brown bird not so big as a partridge — seemingly asleep within 3 inches of the top & rath close to my face — It was a minute or two before I made it out to be an owl — It was a salmon brown or fawn(?) above — the feathers shafted with small blackish brown somewhat hastate (?) marks —



greyish toward the ends of the wings & tail as far as I could see.

A large white circular space about or behind eye banded in rear by a pretty broad 1/3 of an inch & quite conspicuous perpendicular dark brown stripe. Egret, say 1 1/4 or 1 1/2 inches long sharp triangular reddish brown without mainly. It lay crowded in that small space — with its tail somewhat bent up — & one side of its head turned up with one egret — & its large dark eye open only by a long slit about 1/16 of an inch wide — visible breathing — After a little while I put in one hand and stroked it repeatedly whereupon it reclined its head a little lower & closed its eye entirely. Though curious to know what was under it I disturbed it no farther at that time.

In the mean while the crows were making a great cawing amid & over the pine-tops beyond the swamp — & at intervals I heard the scream of a hawk, prob — the surviving male hen hawk, whom they were pestering (unless they had discovered the male screech owl) & a part of them came cawing about me. This was a very fit place for hawks & owls to dwell in the thick wood just over a white spruce swamp — in which the glaucous kalmia grows — The grey squirrels — partridges — hawks — & owls all together — It was prob. these screech



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

owls which I heard in moon light nights hereabouts last fall. *Vide* end of this day.

Birch leaf to-day; probably some yesterday, with white maple. The Conantum thorn (cockspur?) leaf with earliest. That little red-stemmed (?) moss has now yellow-green oval fruit hanging densely in the sod. Sweet-briar shoots two Indies long; this one of the earlier roses to leaf. Put it with early rose. The *Rubus triflorus* up two inches or more. Put it next after raspberry for present.

*Polygonatum pubescens* at Lee's, in three or four days. *Amelanchier Botryapium* on rocks, partly open; will probably shed pollen to-morrow. The long, narrow unfolded flower-buds, *rose-pink* without, are very pretty with the dark-*purplish* leaves, — prettier than the open ones, — like little cigarettes, to compare fair with foul. The dark-purple fruit-like fascicles of the staminate flowers of the ash on the rocks are now very remarkable, about the size of pignuts, and looking somewhat like them against the sky on the perfectly bare tree, or like dry alder scales or cones; will shed pollen in a clay or two. Oftener one *pedicelled* anther and stamen than two together in the very minute calyx, — if it is one. Young bass from seed an inch high, the two leaves remarkably cut.

Returning by owl's nest about 1 hour before sunset — I climbed up and looked in again. The owl was gone but there were 4 nearly quite warm round *dirty brownish white* eggs [MacGillivray describes no eggs of this color, — only white, — and the same with *Nuttall*, except the great gray owl. {EDITORIAL NOTE: Screech owl's eggs, *when clean*, are always white.}], quite warm — on nothing but the bits of rotten wood which made the bottom of the hole — The eggs were very nearly as large at one end as the other — slightly oblong 1 3/8 inches by 1 2/8 as nearly as I could measure. It would prob. have hatched within a week the young being consid feathered & the bill remarkably developed. Perhaps she heard me coming & so left the nest. My bird corresponds in color, as far as I saw it, with Wilson's *Strix asio*, but not his *naevia*, which *Nuttall* and others consider a young (?) bird, though the egg was not pure white. I do not remember that my bird was barred or *mottled* at all. [*Vide* the 12th.]

*Nuttall* says, Little Screech-Owl: Greenland to Florida — chiefly prey on mice — also small birds beetles, crickets, &c — nests in May & June. & lined with &c &c eggs 4 to 6 —; several bluebirds, black birds, and song sparrows in one. In cloudy weather come out earlier. Wilson's thrush attacked one. Note in autumn, "hō, hō hō hō hō hō hō, proceeding from high and clear to a low guttural shake or trill."

Was not that an owls feather which I found 1/2 mile beyond, downy more than half, and with base and separate white points beyond a dark band at the end?

Was not mine a bird of last year? — But MacGillivray says of owls that the young dif. very little from the old "the older the individ. becomes, the more simple is the coloring; the dark markings diminish in extent, and the finer mottlings are gradually obliterated." *Rhus Toxicodendron* under rocks leaf.



May 12. Cold enough for a fire this many a day.

6 A.M. — To Hill.

I hear the myrtle-bird's' (White-throat sparrow's) *te-e-e, te-e-e, ttt, ttt*, clear flute-like whistle, and see eight or ten crow blackbirds together.

P.M. — To Lee's Cliff.

C. says he saw upland plover two or three nights The sweet-gale begins to leaf. I perceive the fragrance of the *Salix alba*, now in bloom, more than an eighth of a mile distant. They now adorn the causeways with their yellow blossoms and resound with the hurry of bumblebees, etc., etc. I have found half a dozen robins' nests with eggs already, —one in an elm, two in a *Salix alba*, one in a *Salix nigra*, one in a pitch pine, etc., etc. I find the partridge-nest [**Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] of the 7th partially covered with dry oak leaves, and two more eggs only, three in all, cold. Probably the bird is killed.

As I approached the owl's nest [**Eastern Screech-Owl** *Otus asio*], I saw her run past the hole up into that part of the hollow above it, and probably she was there when I thought she had flown on the 7th. I looked in, and at first did not know what I saw. One of the three remaining eggs was hatched, and a little downy *white* young one, two or three times as long as an egg, lay helpless, between the two remaining eggs. Also a dead white-bellied mouse (*Mus leucopus*) lay with them, its tail curled round one of the eggs. *Wilson* says his red owl (*Strix asio*), —with which this apparently corresponds, and not with the mottled, though my egg is not "pure white," — that "the young are at first covered with a whitish down." Heard an oven-bird.

Passing on into the Miles meadow, was struck by the interesting tender green of the just springing foliage of the aspens, apples, cherries (more reddish), etc. It is now especially interesting while you can see through it, and





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

also the tender yellowish-green grass shooting up in the bare river meadows and prevailing over the dark and sere.

Watched a black and white creeper from Bittern Cliff, a very neat and active bird, exploring the limbs on all sides and looking three or four ways almost at once for insects. Now and then it raises its head a little, opens its bill, and, without closing it, utters its faint *seeser seeser seeser*.

From beyond the orchard saw a large bird far over the Cliff Hill [the Cliffs of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason 26/J7)?], which, with my glass, I soon made out to be a fish hawk [Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*] advancing. Even at that distance, half a mile off, I distinguished its gull-like body, – pirate-like fishing body fit to dive, – and that its wings did not curve upward at the ends like a hen-hawk's (at least I could not see that they did), but rather hung down. It came on steadily, bent on fishing, with long and *heavy* undulating wings, with an easy sauntering flight, over the river to the pond, and hovered over Pleasant Meadow a long time on one spot, when more than a hundred feet high, then making a very short circle or two and hovering again, then sauntering off against the woodside. At length he reappeared, passed downward over the shrub oak plain and alighted on an oak (of course now bare), standing this time apparently lengthwise on the limb. Soon took wing again and went to fishing down the stream a hundred feet high. When just below Bittern Cliff [Gleason J6], I observed by its motions that it observed something. It made a broad circle of observation in its course, lowering itself somewhat; then, by one or two steep sidewise flights, it reached the water, and, as near as the intervening trees would let me see, skimmed over it and endeavored to clutch its prey in passing. It failed the first time, but probably succeeded the second. Then it leisurely winged its way to a tall bare tree on the east side of the cliffs, and there we left it apparently pluming itself. It had a very white belly, and indeed appeared all white beneath its body. I saw broad black lines between the white crown and throat.

The brown thrasher is a powerful singer; he is a quarter of a mile off across the river, when he sounded within fifteen rods. Hear the night-warbler. Slippery elm leaf more forward than the common; say yesterday. Only young common yet. White ash begins to shed pollen at Lee's; yesterday, or possibly day before, but no leaves on the same. Hear the first creak of a cricket beneath the rocks there, so serene and composing. Methinks it surpasses the song of all birds; sings from everlasting to everlasting. Apparently a thousand little slender catchflies shooting up on the top of the cliff. The red oak there leafed a day or two, or one day earlier than hickory, and the black near it not yet. Rhus radiains leafed there a day or two. See one white-throat sparrow still. The hearing of the cricket whets my eyes. I see one or two long lighter and smoother streaks across the rippled pond from west to east, which preserve their form remarkably, only are bent somewhat at last. The zephyr does not strike the surface from over the broad button-bush row till after a rod or so, leaving a perfectly smooth border, with a fine, irregular shaded edge where the rippling begins. I now begin to distinguish where at a distance the *Amclanchier Botryapium*, with its white against the russet, is waving in the wind.

Under Lee's Cliff, about one rod east of the ash, am surprised to find some pale-yellow columbines, — not a tinge of scarlet, — the leaves and stem also not purplish, but a yellowish and light green, with leaves differently shaped from the common, the parts, both flower mid leaves, more slender, and the leaves not so flat, but inclining to fold. One flower of the *Polygonatum pubescens* open there; probably may shed pollen tomorrow. Returning over Conantum [Gleason J6], I directed my glass toward the dead tree on Cliffs [the Cliffs of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason 26/J7)], and was surprised to see the fish hawk still sitting there, about an hour after he first alighted; and now I found that he was eating a fish, which he had under his feet on the limb and ate as I have already described. At this distance his whole head looked white with his breast.

Just before sundown, took our seats before the owl's nest and sat perfectly still and awaited her appearance. We sat for half an hour, and it was surprising what various distinct sounds we heard there deep in the wood, as if the aisles of the wood were so many ear-trumpets, — the cawing of crows, the peeping of hylas in the swamp and perhaps the croaking of a tree-toad, the oven-bird, the *yorrick* of Wilson's thrush, a distant stake-driver, the night-warbler and black and white creeper, the lowing of cows, the late supper horn, the voices of boys, the singing of girls, — not all together but separately, distinctly, and musically, from where the partridge and the red-tailed hawk and the screech owl sit on their nests.



May 26: 8 A.M. — By boat to *Kalmia glauca* and thence to scouring-rush.

Again a strong cold wind from the north by west, turning up the new and tender pads. The young white lily pads are now red and crimson above, while greenish beneath. Nightshade dark-green shoots are eight inches long. Button-bush would commonly be said to begin to leaf.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

At Clamshell. *Ranunculus acris* and *bulbosus* pollen apparently about two or three days. Comandra pollen apparently two clays there. *Arenaria serpyllifolia* and *scleranthus*, how long? White oak pollen. The oaks apparently shed pollen about four days later than last year; may be owing to the recent cold weather. Interrupted fern pollen the 23(k may have been a day or two. Cinnamon fern to-day. Checkerberry shoots one inch high. *Carex stipata*? Close-spiked sedge in Clamshell Meadow some time. Early willow on right beyond Hubbard's Bridge leafed since 12th; say 19th or *generally* before button-bush.

At Kalmia Swamp. — *Nemopantes*, apparently several days, and leaf say before tupelo. White spruce pollen one or two days at least, and now begins to leaf.

To my surprise the *Kalmia glauca* almost all out; perhaps began with rhodora. A very fine flower, the more interesting for being early. The leaf say just after the lambkill. I was wading through this white spruce swamp just to look at the leaves. The more purple rhodora rose here and there above the small andromeda, so that I did not at first distinguish the *K. glauca*. When I did, probably my eyes at first confounded it with the lambkill, and I did not remember that this would not bloom for some time. There were a few leaves just faintly started. But at last my eyes and attention both were caught by those handsome umbels of the *K. glauca*, rising, one to three together, at the end of bare twigs, six inches or more above the level of the andromeda, etc., together with the rhodora<sup>42</sup> Umbels, one and one half inches [in] diameter, of five to eighteen flowers on red threads three quarters to an inch long, at first deep rose-color, after pale rose. Twigs bare except two or three small old leaves close to the end of the dry-looking twigs. Flowers not arranged in whorls about the twig, but rising quite above it. The larger flowers about nine-sixteenths inch diameter. Flowers somewhat larger, methinks, and more terminal than lambkill. The whole about two feet high in sphagnum. The lambkill is just beginning to be flower-budded.

What that neat song-sparrow-like next of grass merely, in the wet sphagnum under the andromeda there, with three eggs, - in that very secluded place, surrounded by the watery swamp and andromeda, - -from which the bird stole like a mouse under the andromeda? *Vide* egg. It is narrower and more pointed at one end and lighter, a little, -the brown less confluent, - than that of Hoc song sparrow with one spot on breast which took from ivy tree tuft. The last is bluish-white very thickly spotted and blotched with brown. Four eggs first seen, I think, the 22d.

Swamp-pink leaf before lambkill. A mosquito. Lupine in house from Fair Haven Hill, and probably in field.

At the screech owl's nest [**Eastern Screech-Owl** *Otus asio*] I now find two young slumbering, almost uniformly gray above, about five inches long, with little dark-grayish tufts for incipient horns (?). Their heads about as broad as their bodies. I handle them without their stirring or opening their eyes. There are the feathers of a small bird and the leg of the *Mus leucopus* in the nest.

The partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] which on the 12th had left three cold eggs covered up with oak leaves is now sitting on eight. She apparently deserted her nest for a time and covered it.




**A Grouse Nest with 10 Eggs Found by Herbert W. Gleason at the Base of a Tree Near Brister's Spring**

Already the mouse-ear down begins to blow in the fields and whiten the grass, together with the bluets. In Conant's thick wood on the White-Pond-ward lane, hear the evergreen-forest note, but commonly, at a distance, only the last notes - a fine sharp to *té té*. The mountain laurel near scouring-rush apparently just begun to leaf.


42. The rhodora did not accompany it into the more open and level and wet parts, where was andromeda almost alone.

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Trientales open. Do I not hear a tanager? See a beautiful blue-backed and long-tailed pigeon [**American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius*] sitting daintily on a low white pine limb.

I perceive no new life in the pipes (*Equisetum hyemale*), except that some are flower-budded at top and may open in a week, and on pulling them up I find a new one just springing from the base at root. The flower-bud is apparently on those dry-looking last year's plants which I thought had no life in them.

Returning, I lay on my back again in Conant's thick wood. Saw a redstart over my head there; black with a sort of brick red on sides [of] breast, spot on wing, and under root of tail. Note heard once next day, at Kalmia Swamp, somewhat like *aveet aveet aveet aveet*. In the meanwhile hear another note, very smart and somewhat sprayey, rasping, *tshrip tshrip tshrip tshrip*, or five or six times with equal force each time. The bird hops near, directly over my head. It is black, with a large white mark forward on wings and a fiery orange throat, above and below eye, and line on crown, yellowish beneath, white vent, forked tail, dusky legs and bill; holds its wings (which are light beneath) loosely. It inclines to examine about the lower branches of the white pines or midway up. The Blackburnian warbler [**Blackburnian Warbler**  *Dendroica fusca*] very plainly; whose note [Nuttall](#) knows nothing about.

Two-leaved Solomon's-seal pollen not long in places. *Ranunculus recurvatus* at Corner Spring up several days at least; pollen. Trillium pollen maybe several days. Arum, how long? The *Ranunculus Purshii* in that large pool in the Holden Swamp Woods snakes quite a show at a little distance now.

See to-day (and saw the 23d) a larger peewee-like bird on the shore, with longer, perhaps more slender, livings, black or blackish without white spots; all white beneath; and when it goes off it flies higher. Is it not the *Totanus solitarius*, which Brown found at Goose Pond?

I think that the red-fruited choke-berry has shed pollen about a day, though I have not examined. The leaves are a little downy beneath and the common peduncle and the pedicels stout and quite hairy, while the black-fruited is smooth and glossy.

December 14, Friday: William M. White's version of the journal entry is:

*Suddenly I heard the screaming mew  
And then the whir of a partridge  
On or beneath an old decaying apple tree  
Which the pines had surrounded.  
There were several such,  
And another partridge burst away from one.  
They shoot off swiftly and steady,  
Showing their dark-edged tails,  
Almost like a cannon-ball.*



Dec. 14. It began to snow again last evening, but soon (ceased, and now it has turned out a Eric winter morning, with half an inch of snow on the ground, the air full of mist, through which the smokes rise up perfectly straight; and the mist is frozen in minute leafets or) the fences and trees and the needles of the pines, silvering them.

I stood by Bigelow the blacksmith's forge yesterday, and saw him repair an axe. He burned the handle out, then, with a chisel, cut off the red-hot edge even, there being some great gaps in it, and by hammering drew it out and shaped it anew, — all in a few minutes. It was interesting to see performed so simply and easily, by the aid of fire and a few rude tools, a work which would have surpassed the skill of a tribe of savages.

P.M. — To pink Azalea Woods.

The warm sun leas quite melted the thin snow on the south aides of the hills, but I go to see the tracks of animals

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

that have been out on the north sides. First, getting over the wall under the walnut trees on the south brow of the hill, I see the broad tracks of squirrels, probably red, where they have ascended and descended the trees, and the empty shells of walnuts which they have gnawed left on the snow. The snow is so very shallow that the impression of their toes is the more distinctly seen. It imparts life to the landscape to see merely the squirrels' track in the snow at the base of the walnut tree. You almost realize a squirrel at every tree. The attractions of nature are thus condensed or multiplied. You see not merely bare trees and ground which you might suspect that a squirrel had left, but you have this unquestionable and significant evidence that a squirrel has been there since the snow felt, — as conclusive as if you had seen him.

A little further I heard the sound [of] a downy woodpecker tapping a pitch pine in a little grove, and saw him inclining to dodge behind the stem. He flitted from pine to pine before me. Frequently, when I pause to listen, I hear this sound in the orchards or streets. This was in one of these dense groves of young pitch pines.

Suddenly I heard the screwing mew and then the whir of a partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] on or beneath an old decaying apple tree which the pines had surrounded. There were several such, and another partridge burst away one. They shoot off swift and steady, showing dark-edged tails, almost like a cannon-ball. I saw one's track under an apple tree and where it had pecked a frozen-thawed apple.

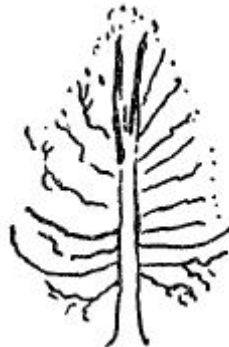
Then I came upon a fox-track made last night, leading toward a farmhouse, — Wheeler's, where there are many hens, — running over the side of the hill parallel with Wheeler's new wall. He was dainty in the choice of his ground, for I observed that for a mile he had adhered to a narrow cow-path, in which the snow lay level, for smoothness. Sometimes he had cantered, and struck the snow with his foot between his tracks. Little does the farmer think of the danger which threatens his hens.

In a little hollow I see the sere gray pennyroyal rising above tire snow, which, snuffed, reminds me of garrets full of herbs.

Now I hear, half a mile off, the hollow sound of woodchopping, the work of short winter days begun, which is gradually laying bare, and impoverishing our landscape. In two or three thicker woods which I have visited this season, I was driven away by this ominous sound.

Further over toward the river, I see the tracks of a deer mouse on a rock, which suddenly come to an end where apparently it had ascended a small pine by the twig which hung over it. Sometimes the mark of its tail was very distinct. Afterwards I saw in the pasture westward where many had run about in the night. In one place many had crossed the cow-path in which I was walking, in one trail, or the same one had come and one many times. In the large hollows where rocks have been blasted, and on the sides of the river, I see irregular spaces of dark ice bare of snow, which was frozen after the snow ceased to fall. But this ice is rotten and mixed with snow. I am surprised to see the river frozen over for the most part with this thin and rotten snow ice, and the drooping or bent alders are already frozen into this slush, giving to the stream a very wintry aspect. I see some squirrel-tracks about a hole in a stump.

At the azalea meadow or swamp, the red tops of the osiers, which are very dense and of a uniform height, are quite attractive, in the absence of color at this season. Any brighter and warmer color catches our eye at this season. I see an elm there whose bark is worn quite smooth and white and bare of lichens, showing exactly the height at which the ice stood last winter. Looking more closely at the light snow there near the swamp, I found that it was sprinkled all over (as with pellets of cotton) with regular star-shaped cottony flakes with six points, about an eighth of an inch in diameter and on an average a half an inch apart. It snowed geometry. How snug and warm a hemlock looks in the winter! That by the azalea looks thus:



There is a tendency in the limbs to arrange themselves ray-wise about a point one third from the base to the top. What singular regularity in the outline of a tree!





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I noticed this morning successive banks of frost on the windows, marked by their irregular waving edges, like the successive, five, ten, and fifteen fathom lines which mark the depth of the shores on charts. Thus by the snow I was made aware in this short walk of the recent presence there of squirrels, a fox, and countless mice, whose trail I had crossed, but none of which I saw, or probably should have seen before the snow fell. Also I saw this afternoon the track of one sparrow, probably a tree sparrow, which had run among the weeds in the road.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


1856

February 4, Monday: Thoreau to his journal:



[February 4, 1856] P. M. — To Walden.

I got to walk at 3 P. M., thermometer at 18°. It has been about this (and 22°) at this hour for a week or two. All the light snow, some five inches above the crust, is adrift these days and driving over the fields like steam, or like the foam-streaks on a flooded meadow, from northwest to southeast. The surface of the fields is rough, like a lake agitated by the wind.

I see that the partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] feed quite extensively on the sumach berries, e. g. at my old house. They come to them after every snow, making fresh tracks, and have now stripped many bushes quite bare.

At Tanager Glade I see where the rabbits have gnawed the bark of the shrub oaks extensively, and the twigs, down to the size of a goose-quill, cutting them off as smoothly as a knife. They have also gnawed some young white oaks, black cherry, and apple. The shrub oaks look like hedges which have been trimmed or clipped.

I have often wondered how red cedars could have sprung up in some pastures which I knew to be miles distant from the nearest fruit-bearing cedar, but it now occurs to me that these and barberries, etc., may be planted by the crows, and probably other birds.

The oak leaves which have blown over the snow are collected in dense heaps on the still side of the bays at Walden, where I suspect they make warm beds for the rabbits to squat on.



February 8, Friday: [Edward Tyrrel Channing](#) died. [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) would write a biographical notice which would appear in a published collection of his lectures at [Harvard College](#) — lectures that he had delivered to, among others, student [David Henry Thoreau](#).

### CHANNING'S LECTURES




Feb. 8. 9 A.M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

A clear and a pleasanter and warmer day than we have had for a long time. The snow begins (at noon) to soften somewhat in the road.

For two or three weeks, successive light and dry snows have fallen on the old crust and been drifting about on it, leaving it at last three quarters bare and forming drifts against the fences, etc., or here and there low, slaty, fractured ones in mid-field, or pure white hard-packed ones. These drifts on the crust are commonly quite low and flat. But yesterday's snow turning to rain, which froze as it fell, there is now a glaze on the trees, giving them a hoary look, icicles like rakes' teeth on the rails, and a thin crust over all the snow. At this hour the crust sparkles with a myriad brilliant points or mirrors, one to every six inches, at least. This crust is cracked like ice into irregular figures a foot or two square. *Perhaps* the snow has settled considerably, for the track in the roads is the highest part. Some heard a loud cracking in the ground or ice last night.

I cut through, five or six rods from the east shore of Fair Haven, and find seven inches of snow, nine inches of snow ice and eight of water ice, — seventeen of both. The water rises to within half an inch of the top of the ice. Isaac Garfield has cut a dozen holes on the west side. The ice there averages nineteen inches in thickness. Half the holes are five or six rods from the shore, and the rest nine or ten, the water from three to seven feet deep. In some places more than half the whole depth is ice. The thinnest ice is 17 inches; the thickest, 20+. [In the middle of river, in front of our house, same day, it is 13+ inches thick, only 5 of it snow ice, it having been late to freeze there, comparatively.] The inner row invariably the thickest. The water rises above the ice in some cases.

Edward and Isaac Garfield were fishing there, and Puffer came along, and afterward Lewis Miner with his gun. He cannot get near the partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] on account of the



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE



## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


cracklings of the crust. I saw the last two approaching with my glass.

The fishermen agreed saying that the pickerel have generally been eating, and are full, when they bite. Puffer thinks they eat a good deal, but seldom. Some think it best to cut the holes the day before, because the noise frightens them; and the crackling of the crust to-day was thought to frighten there. E. Garfield says that his Uncle Daniel was once scaling a pickerel, when he pricked his finger against the horn of a pout which the pickerel had swallowed. He himself killed a pickerel with a paddle, in the act of swallowing a large perch. Puffer had taken a striped snake out of one.

They send to Lowell for their bait, and fishermen send thither from far and wide, so that there is not a sufficient supply for them. I. Garfield once caught an eel there with his pickerel bait, through the ice; also speared a trout that weighed three and a half pounds, he says, off Well Meadow.

E. Garfield says that he was just turning into the pond from up-stream when he heard a loud sound and saw and caught those two great mud turtles. He let the boat drift down upon them. One had got the other by the neck, and their shells were thumping together and their tails sticking up. He caught one in each hand suddenly, and succeeded in getting them into the boat only by turning them over, since they resisted with their claws against the side; then stood on them turned over, paddled to nearest shore, pulled his boat up with his heel, and, taking a tail in each hand, walked backward through the meadow in water a foot deep, dragging them; then carried one a few rods, left him and returned for the other, and so on. One weighed forty-three and the other forty-seven pounds, together ninety. Puffer said that he never saw two together so heavy. I. Garfield said that he had seen one that weighed sixty-three pounds. All referred to the time when (about fifteen years ago; one said the year of the Bunker Hill Monument celebration) some forty were found dead on the meadows between there and Sudbury. It was about the end of March, and Puffer inferred that they had come out thus early from the river, and, the water going down, the ice had settled on them and killed them; but the Garfields thought that the ice, which tore up the meadows very much that year, exposed them and so they froze. I think the last most likely. Puffer searches for them in May under the cranberry vines with a spear, and calls one of the small kinds the "grass tortoise."

E. Garfield says that he saw the other day where a fox had caught in the snow three partridges  and eaten two. He himself last winter caught two, on the hillside south of Fair Haven, with his hands. They flew before him and dived into the snow, which was about a foot deep, going twice their length into it. He thrust his hand in and caught them. Puffer said that his companion one night speared a partridge  on the alders on the south side of the pond.

E. Garfield says there were many quails here last fall, but that they are suffering now. One night as he was spearing on Conant's cranberry meadow, just north the pond, his dog caught a sheldrake in the water by the shore. Some days ago he saw what he thought a hawk, as white as snow, fly over the pond, but it *may* have been a white owl (which last he never saw). [Was it a gyrfalcon?] He sometimes sees a hen-hawk at this season. Speaks again of that large speckled hawk he killed once, which some called a "cape eagle." Had a hum-bird's **[Ruby-throated Hummingbird  Archilochus colubris]** nest behind their house last summer, and was amused to see the bird drive off other birds; would pursue a robin and alight on his back; let none come near. I. Garfield saw one's nest on a horizontal branch of a white pine near the Charles Miles house, about seven feet from ground. E. Garfield spoke of the wren's nest as not uncommon, hung in the grass of the meadows, and how swiftly and easily the bird would run through a winrow of hay.

Puffer saw a couple of foxes cross the pond a few days ago. The wheelwright in the Corner saw four at once, about the same time.

They think that most squirrel-tracks now are of the gray ones; that they do not lay up anything. Their tracks are much larger than those of the red. Puffer says that five gray squirrels came out of one of their leafy nests in a middle-sized white pine, *after* it was cut down, behind the Harrington house the other day, and, a day or two after, three out of another. He says that they, too, use bark in making their nests, as well [as] leaves, — the inner bark of old chestnut rails, which looks like seaweed.

E. Garfield says the chip squirrels come out this month.

Puffer saw a star-nosed mole yesterday in the road. Its track was dog-like.



Coming home at twelve, the ice is fast melting on the trees, and I see in the drops the colors of all the gems. The snow is soft, and the eaves begin to run as not for many weeks.

Thermometer at 3.30 P. M., 31°.

Puffer once found the nest of what he calls the deer mouse (probably jumping) in pile of wood at what is now R. Rice's place in Sudbury, and the old one carried off nine young clinging to her teats. These men do not chop now; they saw, because the snow is so deep and the crust cuts their legs.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Mr. Prichard tells me that he remembers a six weeks of more *uninterruptedly severe* cold than we have just [had], and that was in '31, ending the middle of January. The eaves on the south side of his house did not once run during that period, but they have run or drifted a trifle on several days during the past six weeks. Puffer says that he and Daniel (?) Haynes set lines once when there was good skating in all the bays, from the long causeway in Sudbury down to the railroad bridge, but caught only two or three perch.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

EDWARD TYRREL CHANNING was born in Newport, in Rhode Island, December 12, 1790. The biography of his elder brother, William Ellery Channing, has made all acquainted with the history of his family. Coming from Dorsetshire in England, they resided for several generations in Newport, and filled highly respectable positions in professional and commercial life. His father, after holding the offices of District Attorney of the United States, and Attorney General of the State, died young, leaving a family of nine children.

The biography to which we have referred has also shown us the virtues and strength of mind of his mother, who was a daughter of William Ellery. The eldest brother, Francis Dalla Channing, died young, like his father, while rapidly advancing in reputation at the Boston bar. The second brother in age, and third in order of death, was the celebrated divine.

The eldest now surviving is the distinguished physician and late professor in the Medical College of Harvard University.

Edward entered Harvard University in 1804, at the age of thirteen. He was not graduated in course, as he was involved in the famous rebellion of 1807, one of the few in which the students seem, on the whole, not to have been in the wrong. But he received his degree a few years afterwards, and, in 1851, the further degree of Doctor of Laws. On leaving college, he studied law with his elder brother, and was admitted to the Boston bar. He read law philosophically and carefully, carrying along with his stricter professional studies, a course of reading in history and in the Greek and Roman classics. It was thought by his friends that he would ripen into a learned and accomplished jurist, as his mind was judicial, and his scholarship much above that of most of his contemporaries at the bar. But his paramount tastes were literary; and with a circle of friends, nearly all of whom have since become known to the public, he devoted himself chiefly to literary pursuits.

The North American Review, the earliest permanent periodical in America, had its origin in a club of young men who, in the winter of 1814-15, projected a bi-monthly magazine, to be called the New England Magazine and Review.

The first mover in this undertaking was Mr. Willard Phillips, then a tutor at Cambridge, and since judge of Probate, and well known as the author of the learned treatises on Insurance and Patents. Mr. Phillips was to be the editor, and committees were to be appointed for the different departments, who were to inspect and pass upon the contributions. The committee on



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

politics was to be composed of George Cabot, James Lloyd, John Lowell, Josiah Quincy, and others. President Kirkland was particularly active and earnest in favor of the undertaking. The first meeting was attended by seven persons, of whom, in a memorandum found among his papers, Mr. Channing could only recollect besides himself, President Kirkland, Richard H. Dana and Mr. Phillips. The results of this meeting were given by Mr. Channing in a letter to his friend, Mr. George Ticknor, then at Washington, dated December 10, 1814, from whom the club had been promised an article upon Aristophanes, for their first number. At this time, however, Mr. William Tudor, since known as author of the life of James Otis, returned from Europe, with a plan for publishing a periodical. The field not being wide enough for two, an amicable arrangement was made, by which the club discontinued their proceedings, which had gone as far as the issuing of circulars, the procuring of some subscribers, and a contract with publishers, and transferred their labors and the good-will of their projected magazine to Mr. Tudor; and in May 1815, Mr. Tudor issued the first number of the North American Review. Mr. Tudor edited it for two years, when, in 1817, it passed into the hands of a club, composed of the members of the original club and a few others, among whom were Jared Sparks, since the distinguished historian, then a tutor in Cambridge, John Gallison, William Powell Mason, and Nathan Hale. Mr. Sparks edited it for one year, when the editorship was undertaken by Mr. Channing, assisted by his cousin, Richard H. Dana, both being under the age of thirty. The club now held weekly meetings for reading and deciding upon communications, and for selecting and distributing subjects to be written upon. These, though in some part business meetings, were kept up with much interest, vivacity and harmony; the literary friends of the associates often attended, and the zeal and spirit of the association became infused into the Review. With Mr. Channing's papers, we find his correspondence relating to the Review, including several letters of considerable interest. Among these, are letters from Mr. Bryant, with criticisms and suggestions on literary subjects, and from Mr. Verplanck and Chancellor Kent on matters of law and history. In the autumn of 1819, at the age of twenty-eight, Mr. Channing was appointed Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, at Cambridge. This terminated his editorship of the Review, which was transferred to Mr. Edward Everett, the proprietorship still remaining in the association. The account of this literary undertaking is carried into these details, because it is thought to be an important chapter in the history of the periodical literature of America. Mr. Channing held the office of Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory for thirty-two years. The students who enjoyed the privilege of his instruction, now to be numbered by thousands rather than by hundreds, in all parts of our land, and in all occupations, unite in grateful acknowledgment of their



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

obligations to him. His reputation for pure style, and for exquisite taste and judgment in English literature, has been long established; and all who have been his pupils know how faithfully and successfully he brought these gifts and acquirements to bear upon the duties of his office. They acknowledge, too, his dignity, justice and impartiality, and his insight into character. They recognize, almost daily, the benefits of his criticisms in composition and elocution.

But these constitute by no means the sum of their obligations. He was their adviser and guide in their reading: that which develops the minds and so much forms the tastes and influences the opinions of the young. Not merely by his course of lectures, and by private interviews, but also in the voluntary reading classes that met at his study, he drew them from the fascinations of the superficial, brilliant favorites of the day, to the writers of deep thought, elevated sentiments and pure style. During the term of his professorship, he outlived many fashions of opinion and taste in literature and elocution.

For thirty years and more, he stood a breakwater against the tides and currents of false and misleading fashions; and under that lee, in calmer airs, and in smoother but not less deep waters, the student was protected in his feebler and less skilful early efforts. Many will recall the quiet, keen, epigrammatic satire, that he used so sparingly and so well, with which he gave a death wound to the popularity of some ill-deserving favorite in oratory or poetry. Yet, though severe in his tastes, he was, on the whole, a wide liker. He was not fond of fault finding. He was no martinet. Wherever he saw sincerity, earnestness and power, no man made larger allowances for faults. So it was that, although decided in his convictions and exact in his tastes, yet, as is well known to his friends, those young men who early espoused and have since distinguished themselves in courses of doctrine and style most distasteful to him, still preserved intimate relations with him in college, and cordial friendships in after life. Thus he escaped the condition in which too many nice critics find themselves, a condition marked rather by distastes than by tastes, and powerless for good influence over the tempers and feelings of the young. He was also much aided by his humor and wit, qualities which so liberalize and make genial the mind. In the exercise of these gifts he was choice and reserved, but as his humor was of that kind which springs from and attaches itself to what is general in human nature, it was widely received and well remembered.

It is in no spirit of disparagement to other institutions that we refer to the fact, that for the last quarter of a century Cambridge has been distinguished for the purity and elegance of its style in composition and elocution. And it is no injustice to other teachers there, indeed it is but uttering their common voice when we add that the credit of this is chiefly due to Mr. Channing.

The department of themes, forensics and elocution has not usually, in our colleges, held a high position, compared with



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the other departments, as respects the determining of academic rank, and the attention to it has been less exact and obligatory. But Mr. Channing carried his department forward until its relative influence was so great that excellence in it became essential to honors and high rank, and neglect of it incompatible with continuance in college at all. Themes, forensics and declamations became frequent, and distinction in this department more coveted than in any other.

If it be said in offset to this commendation, as has sometimes been suggested, that Cambridge has been less distinguished for boldness, idiosyncracies and vigor, waiving the question of the justice of the suggestion, we may reply that if true, or so far as it be true, this is not to be attributed to the department of rhetoric and belles-lettres, but rather to the classes of society from which the Cambridge students are chiefly drawn, and to the uniform set and drift of opinion in matters literary, political and religious, which has so long marked the highly cultivated, but small and rather removed society of which the university and neighboring city have been the Centre. It may also be treated as one of the compensations which must always be made for the advantages of long established, reposing and highly educated communities.

Mr. Channing was a good classical scholar, and at one time made a particularly careful study of the Greek and Latin orators, and continued to the last to read a few of the poets, and the *De Officiis* and other essays of Cicero. But, his reading lay chiefly in the works of his own tongue. It is needless to say that he was a thoughtful student of Shakspeare, Milton and Spenser, and a familiar reader of the prose writers of Queen Anne's time, and of Burke, Johnson, Goldsmith, Fielding, Richardson and Scott. All this, is of course. He was also a student of Chaucer and the earliest English writers, and of the old dramatists, and a lover of the unique and quaint, the novelists and humorists of all periods. The theologians, too, Barrow, Taylor and South, were the friends of his more serious leisure, which they shared with Young, Cowper and Bunyan. Of the writers of the Regency and since, while he yielded most perhaps to the charm of Scott, yet he was among the earliest to recognize the genius and influences, in their various characters, of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Southey, Campbell and Lamb. With our own literature, he had grown up. Irving, Cooper, Bryant, and Miss Sedgwick, were his contemporaries; while Longfellow, and our historians, have gained their reputations since he came to maturity. In the productions of England at the present time, he saw so much of vicious style, and of questionable usefulness of thought, that he suffered them mostly to glide by him; but to the humor and pathos of Dickens, with all his defects, he was fully alive.

Like most men, he passed through his period of metaphysical inquiry, and during that time he made careful study of the different schools, and knew well how the leading minds had treated the great problems of life. The result appears to have



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

been a preference for the philosophy of Reid, from whose style of thought he seemed to receive peculiar satisfaction.

In the department of oratory, Mr. Channing exerted an excellent influence upon the students. Respect for his judgment, and a wholesome fear of his satire, kept them from indulgence in that captivating, but eventually palling oratory, often so seductive to the young, and led them to the selection of passages from the poets and prose writers, the statesmen and advocates, whose reputations have been tested by time. He was not himself an orator. But there was in his public delivery, though neither impassioned nor exactly graceful, something which produced the unmistakable impression of a man of dignity and thought, a gentleman, speaking on a subject which he understood and felt. In more private familiar reading, of prose or verse, his style was nearly perfect.

In politics, like most of his relatives and friends, who gathered in the family circles of Judge Dana at Cambridge, and of Mr. Ellery at Newport, he was educated in the school of Washington, and adopted the opinions of the Federal party. Through life, he was conservative, in the true and high sense of that term.

But with much that sometimes takes to itself that name, being little else than the results of timidity, love of security and indifference to the rights and advancement of men, he had no more sympathy than with radicalism. He had strong instincts of liberty; and his sympathies were always with the efforts for reasonable and responsible systems of freedom, at home or abroad.

In 1826, Mr. Channing married his cousin, Henrietta A.S. Ellery, who survives him. From his appointment until he resigned his office in 1861, his life was strictly academic. The announcement of his resignation surprised his most intimate acquaintance. He had formed an early resolution to retire from office at the age of sixty, and although in full vigor, and with good reason to look forward to many years of health and ability, he refused to recall his resignation, resisting the most flattering and pressing requests from his brother officers and friends.

Mr. Channing was a member and communicant of the church attached to the college chapel.

In his theological opinion, he was a Unitarian, of the old school. He did not embrace the doctrine of the Trinity, but he held high and reverent views of a personal Deity, of the nature and offices of the Saviour, and of revelation. Close as was his intimacy with the English classical authors, there was no book he knew so intimately and so nearly by heart, as the Holy Scriptures. In these he was a daily and devout reader.

Of his conversational talent, his friends need not be told, but it will be a pleasure to them to recall its charm. Natural, free, animating, humorous, and, when need be, using against any predominant folly or evil, that classic, restrained, but effective satire, of which he was a master, his style in conversation was as pure and choice as in writing. But it was



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

not a finish or choiceness which labored or embarrassed. It was as natural to him, as awkwardness and solecisms are to many. Not a professed story-teller, in characteristic anecdote or graphic description of persons, classes or neighborhoods, in portraying what was peculiar in character or manners, he was not easily to be surpassed. Still, his best conversation was his most thoughtful. While no man more readily fell into, or more successfully sustained the humorous, it was strictly his recreation and not his habit. His numerous friends and relatives, who enjoyed, at his house, the weekly Saturday dinner, at which, without special invitation, it was known they were always welcome, will take a sad pleasure in calling to mind, among the beauties and privileges of their lives, the attractions that presided at either end of the table, dividing their attention and doubling their delight.

As he was not a professed wit, so he was not a controversialist. His powers were best seen in the contemplative, in the pursuit of serious thought, or of beauty in nature, art or character.

As a letter-writer, he was valued by his friends beyond price. Perhaps there was no field in which his talents played more naturally and fitly than in the light and shade, the affectionate, grave and humorous of friendly letter writing.

Throughout life he retained the warmth of his affection for the young; and anyone who had the claim upon him of blood, or of childhood or youth, must have been ill-deserving indeed not to have held an inner place in his heart.

It has been remarked of him by one who knew him intimately from boyhood, that although society or intercourse with a single friend always pleased and animated him, and his powers particularly displayed themselves in conversation, yet he was as fond of being alone as if he had been unsocial and morose.

His preference for solitude arose from the cheerfulness and equanimity of his temper, and his great resources in himself for pleasure and improvement.

A change to society was not unwelcome to him, but the return to solitude was even more congenial.

All that we have here attempted to portray has gone from us. But it will live in the recollections of his friends; and when they too have passed away, it will still linger in the traditions of the university and city.

Mr. Channing left no children, but a band of most attached relatives, in every degree of consanguinity, and at all stages of life, followed his body to the grave. He lies by the side of his brother William, at Mount Auburn.

Mr. Channing was not known as an author. That is to say, he published no book. But in his influence over the taste and judgment of the men who learned from him, it would not be easy to estimate his indirect contributions to the literature and eloquence of America. He was, still, widely known and highly valued as an occasional contributor to the North American and other reviews. His life of his grandfather, William Ellery, in Mr. Sparks's series, is one of the most exquisite of American



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

biographies.

In the leisure of the few years after his retirement from the professorship, he prepared, out of his course of lectures on English literature, the following series of Essays, for the press. They are published just as he left them, in the hope that they may be suggestive of pleasing memories to his pupils, and may add a valuable contribution to the critical literature of our country.

February 11, Monday: [Caroline Lee Hentz](#) died of pneumonia at the age of 56. The body would be placed in the cemetery of St. Luke's Church in Marianna, Florida. During this year would be published her THE BANISHED SON, her COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE, and her ERNEST LINWOOD.

The Texas House mortgage that the Thoreau family of Concord had placed on record on September 14, 1844 was recorded at this point as having been discharged.

[THOREAU RESIDENCES](#)

[John Thoreau](#)'s full payment of the Augustus Tuttle mortgage on the [Yellow House](#) was placed on record with Concord Justice of the Peace George Merrick Brooks.



Feb. 11. P. M. -To Fair Haven Pond by river.

Israel Rice says that he does not know that he can remember a winter when we had as much snow as we have had this winter. Eb. Conant says as much, excepting the year when he was twenty-five, about 1803. It is now fairly thawing, the eaves running; and puddles stand in some places. The boys can make snowballs, and the horses begin to slump occasionally.

Saw a partridge [[Ruffed Grouse](#) [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] by the riverside, opposite Fair Haven Hill, which at first I mistook for the top of a fence-post above the snow, amid some alders. I shouted and waved my hand four rods off, to see if it was one, but there was no motion, and I thought surely it must be a post. Nevertheless I resolved to investigate. Within three rods, I saw it to be indeed a partridge. [to my surprise](#), standing perfectly still, with its head erect and neck stretched upward. It was as complete a deception as if it had designedly placed itself on the line of the fence and in the proper place for a post. It finally stepped off daintily with a teetering gait and head up, and took to wing.

I thought it would be a thawing day by the *sound*, the peculiar sound, of cock-crowing in the morning.

It will indicate what steady cold weather we have had to say that the lodging snow of January 13th, though it did not lodge remarkably, has not yet completely melted off the sturdy trunks of large trees.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

May 24, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed Mrs. Whitman's Haverhill cemetery lots.

A story by [Louisa May Alcott](#) appeared in Boston's Saturday Evening Gazette, entitled "Mabel's May Day."



That night Captain John Brown and his men went to nearby Pottawatomie Creek and he directed his men in the murder of five proslavery settlers. One of the men that "St. John the Just"<sup>43</sup> Brown had hacked to pieces

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43. So denominated by [Bronson Alcott](#).

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

with broadswords was an unarmed settler named James Doyle. This is his widow speaking:

“When [we] went to Kansas, ... it was to get to a free state where there would be no slave labor to hinder white men from making a fair day’s wages; [he] never owned any slaves, never expected to, nor did not want any.”



“BLEEDING KANSAS”

What had been going around was coming around! –It appears that they considered that they were needing to kill exactly five because their statistics were that a total of five free-state settlers had been killed since the outbreak of factional violence in Kansas in late 1855. In addition, it seems they felt that they were taking






## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

vengeance for the beating of Senator Charles Sumner, as well as for the burning of several buildings in Lawrence KA on May 21st by an armed band of pro-slavery Missourians. –An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, that sort of thingie.



May 24. Pratt gave me the wing of a sparrow (?) hawk which he shot some months ago. He was coming from his house to his shop early in the morning when he saw this small hawk, which looked like a pigeon, fly past him over the Common with a sparrow in his clutches, and alight about six feet up the south buttonwood in front of Tolman's. Having a small Maynard's revolver in his pocket, loaded with a ball size of a pea, he followed, and, standing twenty-two paces from the tree in the road, aimed and brought down both hawk and sparrow at a distance of about six rods, cutting off the wing of the former with the ball. Thus he confessed he could not do again if he should try a hundred times. It must be a sparrow hawk, according to Wilson and Nuttall, for the inner vanes of the primaries and secondaries are thickly spotted with brownish white.

Humphrey Buttrick says that he hears the note of the woodcock [**American Woodcock**  ***Scolopax minor***] from the village in April and early in May (too late now); that there were some this year breeding or singing; by the riverside in front of Abel Heywood's. He says that when you see one spring right up straight into the air, you may go to the spot, and he will surely come down again after some minutes to within a few feet of the same spot and of you. Has known a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  ***Bonasa umbellus*** (**Partridge**)] to fly at once from one to two miles after being wounded (tracked them by the blood) without alighting. Says he has caught as many as a dozen partridges  in his hands. He lies right down on them, or where he knows them to be, then passes his hands back and forth under his body till he feels them. You must not lift your body at all or they will surely squeeze out, and when you feel one must be sure you get hold of their legs or head, and not feathers merely.

To-day is suddenly overpoweringly warm. Thermometer at 1 P.M., 94° in the shade! but in the afternoon it suddenly fell to 56, and it continued cold the next two days.



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



June 11, Wednesday: Henry Thoreau for the 12th time deployed in his journal a weather term that had been originated by [Luke Howard](#): "Great **cumuli** are slowly drifting in the intensely blue sky, with glowing white borders."<sup>44</sup>



June 11. P. M. -To Flint's Pond.

The locust in graveyard shows but few blossoms yet. It is very hot this afternoon, and that peculiar stillness of summer noons now reigns in the woods. I observe and appreciate the shade, as it were the shadow of each particular leaf on the ground. I think that this peculiar darkness of the shade, or of the foliage as seen between

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

you and the sky, is not accounted for merely by saying that we have not yet got accustomed to clothed trees, but the leaves are rapidly acquiring a darker green, are more and more opaque, and, besides, the sky is lit with the intensest light. It reminds me of the thunder-cloud and the dark eyelash of summer. Great cumuli are slowly drifting in the intensely blue sky, with glowing white borders. The red-eye sings incessant, and the more indolent yellow-throat vireo, and the creeper, and perhaps the redstart? or else it is the parti-colored warbler. I perceive that, scent from the young sweet-fern shoots and withered blossoms which made the first settlers of Concord to faint on their journey.

Saw yesterday a *great* yellow butterfly with black marks.

See under an apple tree, at entrance of Goose Pond Path from Walden road, a great fungus with hollow white stem, eight or nine inches high, whose black funereal top has incited this morning, leaving a black centre with thin white scales on it. All the cistuses are shut now that I see, and also the veiny-leaved hieracium with one leaf on its stem, not long open. I notice no white lily pacts near the bathing-rock in Flint's pond. See a bream's nest two and a quarter feet [in j diameter, laboriously scooped out, and the surrounding bottom for a diameter of eight feet (!) comparatively white and clean, while all beyond is mud and leaves, etc., and a very large green and cupreous bream with a red spot on the operculum is poised over the centre, while half a dozen shiners are hovering about, apparently watching a chance to steal the spawn.

A partridge [Ruffed Grouse █ *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] with young in the Saw Mill Brook path. Could hardly tell what kind of creature it was at first, it made such a noise and fluttering amid the weeds and bushes. Finally ran off with its body flat and wings somewhat spread.

*Utricularia vulgaris* very abundant in Everett's Pool. A beautiful grass-green snake about fifteen inches long, light beneath, with a yellow space under the eyes along the edge of the upper jaw.

The *Rubus triflorus* apparently out of bloom at Saw Mill, before the high blackberry has begun.

Rice tells me he found a turtle dove's nest on an apple tree near his farm in Sudbury two years ago, with white eggs; so thin a bottom you could see the eggs through.




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44. You can consult all Dr. Bradley P. Dean's detective work in this regard in the lead article of the last [Thoreau Society Bulletin](#) he was able to put out before his unexpected and untimely death: Fall 2005, Number 253, "Science, Poetry, and 'Order among the Clouds': Thoreau and Luke Howard."



RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1857



March 8: P.M.—To Hill.

When I cut a white pine twig the crystalline sap instantly exudes. How long has it been thus? Get a glimpse of a hawk, the first of the season. The tree sparrows sing a little on this still sheltered and sunny side of the hill, but not elsewhere. A partridge [Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus (Partridge)] goes off from amid the pitch pines. It lifts each wing so high above its back and flaps so low, and withal so rapidly, that they present the appearance of a broad wheel, almost a revolving sphere, as it whirs off like a cannonball shot from a gun.



Minott told me again the reason why the bushes were coming in so fast in the river meadows. Now that the mower takes nothing stronger than molasses and water, he darsn't meddle with anything bigger than a pipe-stem.

April 29, Wednesday: Headquarters for the US Army, Division of the Pacific, was "permanently" established at the Presidio. (They're gone now, of course.)



April 29. Purple finch sings on R.W.E.'s trees.

P.M. — To Dugan Desert.

At Tarbell's watering-place, see a dandelion, its conspicuous bright-yellow disk in the midst of a green space on the moist bank. It is thus I commonly meet with the earliest dandelion set in the midst of some liquid green patch. It seems a sudden and decided progress in the season. On the pitch pines beyond John Hosmer's, I see old cones within two feet of the ground on the trunk, — sometimes a circle of them around it, — which must have been formed on the young tree some fifteen years ago. Sweet-fern at entrance of Ministerial Swamp. A partridge [Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus (Partridge)] there drums incessantly. C. says it makes his

ELLERY CHANNING

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

heart beat with it, or he feels it in his breast.



I find that that clayey-looking soil on which the bæomyees grows is a very thin crust on common sand only. I have seen that pretty little hair-cap moss (*Pogo natum brevicaulis*? [Thoreau added here: “No”]) for a fortnight out at least; like little pine trees; the staminate pretty, cup-shaped and shorter.

A steel-blue-black flattish beetle, which, handled, imparted a very disagreeable carrion-like scent to fingers.

Miles’s Pond is running off. The sweet-gale, willows, etc., which have been submerged and put back, begin to show themselves and are trying to catch up with their fellows.

I am surprised to see how some blackberry pastures and other fields are filling up with pines, trees which I thought the cows had almost killed two or three years ago; so that what was then a pasture is now a young wood-lot. A little snow still lies in the road in one place, the relic of the snow of the 21st.



May 26. Pink azalea in garden. Mountain-ash a day; also horse-chestnut the same. Beach plum well out, several days at least. Wood pewee, and Minott heard a loon go laughing over this morning.

The vireo days have fairly begun. They are now heard amid the elm-tops. Thin coats and straw hats are worn. I have noticed that notional nervous invalids, who report to the community the exact condition of their heads and stomachs every morning, as if they alone were blessed or cursed with these parts; who are old betties and quiddles, if men; who can’t eat their breakfasts when they are ready, but play with their spoons, and hanker after an ice-cream at irregular hours; who go more than half-way to meet any invalidity, and go to bed to be sick on the slightest occasion, in the middle of the brightest forenoon,—improve the least opportunity to be sick;—I observe that such are self-indulgent persons, without any regular and absorbing employment. They are nice, discriminating, experienced in all that relates to bodily sensations. They come to you stroking their wens, manipulating their ulcers, and expect you to do the same for them. Their religion and humanity stick. They spend the day manipulating their bodies and doing no work; can never get their nails clean.

Some of the earliest willows about warm edges of woods are gone to seed and downy.

P. M.—To Saw Mill Brook.

It is very hazy after a sultry morning, but the wind is getting east and cool. The oaks are in the gray, or a little more, and the silvery leaflets of the deciduous trees invest the woods like a permanent mist. At the same season with this haze of buds comes also the kindred haziness of the air.

I see the common small reddish butterflies.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Very interesting now are the red tents of expanding oak leaves, as you go through sprout-lands,—the crimson velvet of the black oak and the more pinkish white oak. The salmon and pinkish-red canopies or umbrellas of the white oak are particularly interesting. The very sudden expansion of the great hickory buds, umbrella-wise. Now, at last, all leaves dare unfold, and twigs begin *to shoot*.

As I am going down the footpath from Britton's camp to the spring, I start a pair of nighthawks (they had the white on the wing) from amid the dry leaves at the base of a bush, a bunch of sprouts, and away they flitted in zigzag noiseless flight a few rods through the sprout-land, dexterously avoiding the twigs, uttering a faint hollow *what*, as if made by merely closing the bill, and one alighted flat on a stump.

On those carpinus trees which have fertile flowers, the sterile are effete and drop off.

The red choke-berry not in bloom, while the black is, for a day or more at least.

Roadside near Britton's camp, see a grosbeak, apparently female of the rose-breasted, quite tame, as usual, brown above, with black head and a white streak over the eye, a less distinct one beneath it, two faint bars on wings, dirty-white bill, white breast, dark spotted or streaked, and from time [to time] utters a very sharp *chirp* of alarm or interrogation as it peers through the twigs at me.

A lady's-slipper. At Cliffs, no doubt, before. At Abel Brooks's (or Black Snake, or Red Cherry, or Rye) Hollow, hear the wood thrush.



In Thrush Alley, see one of those large ant-hills, recently begun, the grass and moss partly covered with sand over a circle two feet in diameter, with holes two to five inches apart, and the dry sand is dark-spotted with the fresh damp sand about each hole.

My mother was telling to-night of the sounds which she used to hear summer nights when she was young and lived on the Virginia Road,—the lowing of cows, or cackling of geese, or the beating of a drum [this is a reference to the drumming of the male **Ruffed Grouse**, *Bonasa umbellus* in the woods] as far off as Hildreth's, but above all Joe Merriam whistling to his team, for he was an admirable whistler. Says she used to get up at midnight and go and sit on the door-step when all in the house were asleep, and she could hear nothing





[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

in the world but the ticking of the clock in the house behind her.



June 14, Sunday: There were several police forces in New-York at this time and, not to put too fine a point on the matter, sometimes it was difficult to figure out which street people were the policemen and which were merely members of gangs of street thugs. According to the New-York Times of this date, when officers of the “Metropolitan Police Force” had made an arrest for disorderly conduct on East 9th Street their prisoner had been taken from them by an officer of the “Municipal Police Force.” A group of members of the 1st service had then gone to the headquarters of the 2d and regained custody of their prisoner and arrested the officer who had been responsible plus a city official who had attempted to come to his assistance. A mob of policemen of the 2d agency had then demonstrated loudly in the vicinity of the headquarters of the 1st agency on East 6th Street (this struggle would go on for weeks and would culminate in the brawls between the “Dead Rabbits” and the “Bowery Boys” that are depicted in the 2002 Martin Scorsese movie “Gangs of New York.”



Stepping to the beat of a different drummer, big city style.

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



June 14. Sunday. 7 A.M. to Clarks Island— B.M. Watson tells me that he learns from pretty good authority that Webster once saw the [sea serpent](#). It seems it was first seen in the bay between Manomet & Plymouth beach — by a perfectly reliable witness (many years ago—) who was accustomed to look out on the sea with his glass every morning the first thing as regularly as he ate his breakfast— One morning he saw this monster — with a head somewhat like a horses raised some six feet above the water—& his body the size of a cask trailing behind— He was careering over the bay chasing the mackerel which ran ashore in their fright & were washed up & died in great numbers. The story is that Webster had appointed to meet some Plymouth gentlemen at Manomet & spend the day fishing with them. After the fishing was he set out to return to Duxbury in his sail boat with Peterson, as he had come, & on the way they saw the sea serpent, which answered to the common account of this creature— It passed directly across their bows only six or 7 rods off & then disappeared. On the sail however Webster having had time to reflect on what had occurred — at length said to Peterson “For God’s sake, never say a word about this to any one — for if it should be known that I should have seen the sea-serpent, I should never hear the last of it— but wherever I went should have to tell the story to every one I met.” So it has not leaked out till now.

Watson also tells me (& Ed Watson confirms it — his father having probably been of the party) that many years ago a party of Plymouth gentlemen rode round by the shore to the Gurnet & there had a high time. When they set out to return they left one of their number a General Winslow, asleep— and as they rode along homeward amused themselves with conjecturing what he would think when he waked up & found himself alone. When at length he awoke, he comprehended his situation at once, and it being low tide & he being somewhat excited by the wine he had drunk — he mounted his horse and rode along the shore to Saquish Head in the opposite direction— From here to the end of Plymouth Beach is about a mile & a quarter and it being low tide he then waded his horse as far as the Beacon north of the channel at the entrance to Plymouth Harbor — about 3/4 of a mile — & then boldly swam him horse across to the end of Plymouth further beach about 1/2 mile ^— notwithstanding a strong current — & having having landed safely — he whipped up & soon reached having come only about 8 miles the town ^— & had ample time to warm & dry himself at the tavern before his companions who had at least 20 miles to ride about through Marshfield & Duxbury— And when they found him sitting by the tavern fire they at first thought it was his ghost —

Mr. Ed. Watson’s brother (half?), the one who used to live in his schooner, told me that he saw (I suppose not long before) a stream of what they call “kelp flies,” supposed to be generated by the rotting kelp, flying along just under the bank, on the shore in Duxbury, some ten feet wide by six deep and of indefinite length, - for he did not know how long they would be passing, -and flying as close as they could conveniently. Ed. Watson had no doubt of it. They also have what they call menhaden flies. This was an offset to my account of the ephemeræ. Mr. Albert Watson’s sons are engaged in lobster catching. One will get two hundred in a day. I was surprised to hear that their lobster-traps



were made in Vermont, costing something over a dollar apiece, — much timber, — but it seems they can be made cheaper there and sent down by railroad. They use sculpins, perch, etc., etc., for bait, catching it in a circular net, with an iron ring. There were a couple of quarts of pine plugs or wedges in a boat, with which to plug the claws of the lobsters to prevent their fighting and tearing each other’s claws off in the cars. There are larger. crates of latticework, six or eight feet square, sunk to a level with the water, in which they keep them fresh. They get three cents apiece for them, not boiled.

Saw them swim three horses across from Saquish Head to the island, a quarter of a mile or more. One rows a small boat while a man holds the bridle. At first the horses swam faster than the man could row, but soon they were somewhat drawn after the boat. They have sometimes driven a whole drove of cattle over at once.

Saw an abundance of horseshoe crabs on the Saquish shore, generally coupled, the rearmost or male (if that is he with two club feet) always the smaller. Often there were three or even four in a string, all moving about close to the shore, which apparently they affect. The pigs get a little nutriment out of them. Looking front the island, the water is a light green over a shoal.

In a little reel cedar grove, of young trees surrounding an old tram:, the only indigenous wood on the island, some three rods by two, and fifteen feet high, I counted thirty-five crow blackbirds’ nests, sometimes two or three near together in a tree, the young fluttering about and some dead beneath. The old in numbers were meanwhile coarsely chattering over our heads. The nests appeared to be made partly of the grassy seaweed.

E. Watson says that he saw a hen catch and devour a mouse, rather young, that was running across his barn floor. In the shade of the orchard there, amid seaweed, a variety of whiteweed with more entire leaves, etc., and apparently without rays. Is it the Connecticut variety, with short rays?

Mr. Watson describes a sea turtle, as big as a mud turtle, found on the shore once. It had a large dent in its back,





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

in which you [could] lay your hand, — a wound.

Evening. —At B.M. Watson's again. Hear a new song, very sweet and clear from what at first sounded like a golden robin, then a purple finch. It was not the first.

B.M. Watson speaks of an old lady named Cotton, now alive and over ninety, who is the Plymouth oracle. He says that his father-in-law Russell (whom I saw and who told me this once) knew a Cobb, who had seen Peregrine White.

Watson had a colt born about ten or eleven the last evening. I went out to see it early this morning, as it lay in the cold pasture. It got up alarmed and trotted about on its long large legs, and even nibbled a little grass, and behaved altogether as if it had been an inhabitant of this planet for some years at least. They are as precocious as young partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)]. It ran about most of the day in the pasture with its mother. Watson was surprised to see it so much larger than the night before. Probably they expand at once on coming to the light and air, like a butterfly that has just come out of its chrysalis.



July 25, Saturday: On this day John Lewis was **hanged** outside the municipal prison of Cardiff, Wales — his wife Mrs. Gwen Lewis had been found dead in a stairwell after her employer, the solicitor John Morgan, had allowed her money to purchase food, and the court inferred that her husband had shoved her down because he wanted to purchase alcohol (this would be the final public hanging in Wales).

At Vandoeuvres, **Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel**, who would be referred to as the “Swiss **Thoreau**,” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “At ten o'clock this evening, under a starlit sky, a group of rustics under the windows of the salon employed themselves in shouting disagreeable songs. Why is it that this tuneless shrieking of false notes and scoffing words delights these people? Why is it that this ostentatious parade of ugliness, this jarring vulgarity and grimacing is their way of finding expression and expansion in the great solitary and tranquil night?

Why? Because of a sad and secret instinct. Because of the need they have of realizing themselves as individuals, of asserting themselves exclusively, egotistically, idolatrously — opposing the self in them to everything else, placing it in harsh contrast with the nature which enwraps us, with the poetry which raises us above ourselves, with the harmony which binds us to others, with the adoration which carries us toward God. No, no, no! Myself only, and that is enough! Myself by negation, by ugliness, by grimace and irony! Myself, in my caprice, in my independence, in my irresponsible sovereignty; myself, set free by laughter, free as the demons are, and exulting in my freedom; I, master of myself, invincible and self-sufficient, living for this one time yet by and for myself! This is what seems to me at the bottom of this merry-making. One hears in it an echo of Satan, the temptation to make self the center of all things, to be like an Elohim, the worst and last revolt of man. It means also, perhaps, some rapid perception of what is absolute in personality, some rough exaltation of the subject, the individual, who thus claims, by abasing them, the rights of subjective existence. If so, it is the caricature of our most precious privilege, the parody of our apotheosis, a vulgarizing of our highest greatness. Shout away, then, drunkards! Your ignoble concert, with all its repulsive vulgarity, still reveals to us, without knowing it, something of the majesty of life and the sovereign power of the soul.”



July 25, Saturday. Very early this morning we heard the note of the wood thrush, on awaking, though this was a poor singer. I was glad to find that this prince of singers was so common in the wilderness... The shores of this lake are rocky, rarely sandy, and we saw no good places for moose to come out on, i.e. no meadows. What P. called Cancomgomoc Mountain, with a double top, was seen north over the lake in mid-forenoon. Approaching the shore, we scared up some young dippers with the old bird. Like the *shecorways*, they ran over the water very fast. Landing on the east side, four or five miles north of Kinco, I noticed roses (*R.*



RUFFED GROUSE


DIFFERENT DRUMMER

*nitida*) in bloom, and, as usual, an abundance of rue (*Thalictrum Cornuti*) along the shore. The wood there was arbor-vitæ, spruce, fir, white pine, etc. The ground and rotting trunks, as usual, covered with mosses, some strange kinds, — various wild feather and leaf-like mosses, of rank growth, that were new or rare to me, — and an abundance of *Clintonia borealis*....

The Indian started off first with the canoe and was soon out of sight, going much faster than an ordinary walk. We could see him a mile or more ahead, when his canoe against the sky on the height of land between Moosehead and the Penobscot was all that was to be seen about him....



Here, among others, were the *Aster Radula*, just in bloom; large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), in fruit. The great purple orchis (*Platanthera fimbriata*), very splendid and perfect ones close to the rails. I was surprised to see it in bloom so late. *Vaccinium Canadense*; *Dalibarda repens*, still in bloom; *Pyrola secunda*, out of bloom; *Oxalis Acetosella*, still occasionally in flower; Labrador tea (*Ledum latifolium*), out of bloom; *Kalmia glauca*, etc., etc., close to the track.

A cousin of mine and his son met with a large male moose on this carry two years ago, standing within a few rods of them, and at first mistook him for an ox. They both fired at him, but to no purpose.

As we were returning over the track where I had passed but a few moments before, we started a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] with her young partly from beneath the wooden rails. While the young hastened away, she sat within seven feet of us and plumed herself, perfectly fearless, without making a noise or ruffling her feathers as they do in our neighborhood, and I thought it would be a good opportunity to observe whether she flew as quietly as other birds when not alarmed. We observed her till we were tired, and when we compelled her to get out of our way, though she took to wing as easily as if we had not been there and went only two or three rods, into a tree, she flew with a considerable whirl, as if this were unavoidable in a rapid motion of the wings....



Here was a canoe on the stocks, in an earlier stage of its manufacture than I had seen before, and I noticed it particularly. The St. Francis Indian was paring down the long cedar strips, or lining, with his crooked knife.

As near as I could see, and understand him and Polis, they first lay the bark flat on the ground, outside up, and two of the top rails, the inside and thickest ones, already connected with cross-bars, upon it, in order to get the form; and, with logs and rocks to keep the bark in place, they bend up the birch, cutting down slits in the edges from within three feet of the ends and perpendicularly on all sides about the rails, making a square corner at the ground; and a row of stakes three feet high is then driven into the ground all around, to hold the bark up in its place. They next lift the frame, *i.e.* two rails connected by cross-bars, to the proper height, and sew the bark strongly to the rails with spruce roots every six inches, the thread passing around the rail and also *through* the ends of the crossbars, and sew on strips of bark to protect the sides in the middle. The canoe is as yet carried out square down  at the ends (not ) and is perfectly flat on the bottom.

(This canoe had advanced thus far.)

Then, as near as I could learn, they shape the ends (?), put in all the lining of long thin strips, so shaped and shaved as just to fit, and fill up the bark, pressing it out and shaping the canoe. Then they put in the ribs and put on the outer or thinnest rail over the edge of the bark....

Our path up the bank here led by a large dead white pine, in whose trunk near the ground were great square-cornered holes made by the woodpeckers, probably the red-headed. They were seven or eight inches long by four wide and reached to the heart of the tree through an inch or more of sound wood, and looked like great mortise-holes whose corners had been somewhat worn and rounded by a loose tenon. The tree for some distance was quite honeycombed by them. It suggested woodpeckers on a larger scale than ours, as were the trees and the forest!...

Returning, we found the tree cranberry in one place still in bloom. The stream here ran very swiftly and was hard to paddle against.

October 20, Tuesday: An advertisement for a runaway [slave](#) appeared in the [Baltimore Sun](#):

\$200 REWARD - Ran away from the subscriber, living near Reisterstown, Baltimore county, on the night of the 4th of October, 1857, my negro man, named CHARLES HARDEN, belonging to the undersigned. Charles is about five feet seven or eight inches high,<sup>45</sup> stout built, has pretty much of a down look when spoken to, and has a scar on



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

one of his fore-fingers, supposed to be on his right hand, occasioned by a felon, and appears to be a little stiff in one of his knees when he walks. There was another boy in company with him belonging to Mr. Daniel Banks. I will give the above reward for his apprehension and delivery to me, on in the city of Baltimore or Baltimore county jail, so that I can get him.  
JESSE STOCKSDALE,  
near Reisterstown, Baltimore county,  
State of Maryland

*Know all men by these presents that I, **Ben W. Keyser** of Washington County in the District of Columbia for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars to me paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged have and by these presents do bargain and sell and convey to **Margaret Henson** and her heirs, of the said District of Columbia, my Negro man servant **Otho Henson**, purchased by me from Susan Evans, relict of John Evans.*

*Witness my hand and seal this 20th day of October 1857.*

*Ben W. Keyser {seal}*

*Witness*

*Peter A. Reller*

An incident of this day on the old Carlisle Road has found its way into John Hanson Mitchell's *WALKING TOWARDS WALDEN: A PILGRIMAGE IN SEARCH OF PLACE* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), pages 198-199:



October 20, Tuesday, 1857: P.M. –To the Easterbrooks Country.

I go along the riverside and by [Dakin the pumpmaker](#)'s. There is a very strong northwest wind, Novemberish and cool, raising waves on the river and admonishing to prepare for winter.

I see two *Chenopodium album* with stems as bright purple and fair as the poke has been, and the calyx lobes enveloping the seeds the same color. Apples are gathered; only the ladders here and there, left leaning against the trees.

I had gone but little way on the old Carlisle road when I saw Brooks Clark, who is now about eighty and bent like a bow, hastening along the road, barefooted, as usual, with an axe in his hand; was in haste perhaps on account of the cold wind on his bare feet. It is he who took the Centinel so long. When he got up to me, I saw that besides the axe in one hand, he had his shoes in the other, filled with knurly apples and a dead robin. He stopped and talked with me a few moments; said that we had had a noble autumn and might now expect some cold weather. I asked if he had found the robin dead. No, he said, he found it with its wing broken and killed it. He also added that he had found some apples in the woods, and as he had n't anything to carry them in, he put 'em in his shoes. They were queer-looking trays to carry fruit in. How many he got in along toward the toes, I don't know. I noticed, too, that his pockets were stuffed with them. His old tattered frock coat was hanging in strips about the skirts, as were his pantaloons about his naked feet. He appeared to have been out on a scout this gusty afternoon, to see what he could find, as the youngest boy might. It pleased me to see this cheery old man, with such a feeble hold on life, bent almost double, thus enjoying the evening of his days. Far be it from me to

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45. In descriptions of runaway [slaves](#), 5 feet 5 or 6 inches was the average height.

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

call it avarice or penury, this childlike delight in finding something in the woods or fields and carrying it home in the October evening, as a trophy to be added to his winter's store. Oh, no; he was happy to be Nature's pensioner still, and birdlike to pick up his living. Better his robin than your turkey, his shoes full of apples than your barrels full; they will be sweeter and suggest a better tale. He can afford to tell how he got them, and we to listen. There is an old wife, too, at home, to share them and hear how they were obtained. Like an old squirrel shuffling to his hole with a nut. Far less pleasing to me the loaded wain, more suggestive of avarice and of spiritual penury.

This old man's cheeriness was worth a thousand of the church's sacraments and memento mori's. It was better than a prayerful mood. It proves to me old age as tolerable, as happy, as infancy. I was glad of an occasion to suspect that this afternoon he had not been at "work" but living somewhat after my own fashion (though he did not explain the axe), -had been out to see what nature had for him, and now was hastening home to a burrow he knew, where he could warm his old feet. If he had been a young man, he would probably have thrown away his apples and put on his shoes when he saw me coming, for shame. But old age is manlier; it has learned to live, makes fewer apologies, like infancy. This seems a very manly man. I have known him within a few years building stone wall by himself, barefooted. I keep along the old Carlisle road. The leaves having mostly fallen, the country now seems deserted, and you feel further from home and more lonely. I see where squirrels, apparently, have gnawed the apples left in the road. The barberry bushes are now alive with, I should say, thousands of robins feeding on them. They must make a principal part of their food now. I see the yellowish election-cake fungi. Those large chocolate-colored ones have been burst some days (at least).

BARBERRY



Warren Brown, who owns the Easterbrooks place, the west side the road, is picking barberries. Allows that the soil thereabouts is excellent for fruit, but it is so rocky that he has not patience to plow it. That is the reason this tract is not cultivated. The yellow birches are generally bare. The sassafras in Sted Buttrick's pasture near to E. Hubbard's Wood, nearly so; leaves all withered. Much or most of the fever-bush still green, though somewhat wrinkled.<sup>46</sup>

There was Melvin, too, a-barberrying and nutting. He had got two baskets, one in each hand, and his game-bag, which hung from his neck, all full of nuts and barberries, and his mouth full of tobacco. Trust him to find where the nuts and berries grow. He is hunting all the year and he marks the bushes and the trees which are fullest, and when the time comes, for once leaves his gun, though not his dog, at home, and takes his baskets to the spot. It is pleasanter to me to meet him with his gun or with his baskets than to meet some portly caterer for a family, basket on arm, at the stalls of Quincy Market. Better Melvin's pignuts than the others' shagbarks. It is to be observed that the best things are generally most abused, and so are not so much enjoyed as the worst. Shagbarks are eaten by epicures with diseased appetites; pignuts by the country boys who gather them. So fagots and rubbish yield more comfort than sound wood.

Melvin says he has caught partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] in his hands. If there's only one hole, knows they've not gone out. Sometimes shoots them through the snow.

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrooks Country! Not a cultivated, hardly a cultivatable field in it, and yet it delights all natural persons, and feeds more still. Such great rocky and moist tracts, which daunt the farmer, are reckoned as unimproved land, and therefore worth but little; but think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries, and of wild apples, so fair, both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts; Clark, Brown, Melvin, and the robins, these, at least, were attracted thither this afternoon. There are barberry bushes or clumps there, behind which I could actually pick two bushels of berries without being seen by you on the



46. Fever-bush in '61, October 9th, at height of change!!



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

other side. And they are not a quarter picked at last, by all creatures together. I walk for two or three miles, and still the clumps of barberries, great sheaves with their wreaths of scarlet fruit, show themselves before me and on every side, seeming to issue from between the pines or other trees, as if it were they that were promenading there, not I.

That very dense and handsome maple and pine grove opposite the pond-hole on this old Carlisle road is Ebby Hubbard's.<sup>47</sup> Melvin says there are those alive who remember mowing there. Hubbard loves to come with his axe in the fall or winter and trim up his woods.

Melvin tells me that Skinner says he thinks he heard a wildcat scream in E. Hubbard's Wood, by the Close. It is worth the while to have a Skinner in the town; else we should not know that we had wildcats. They had better look out, or he will skin them, for that seems to have been the trade of his ancestors. How long Nature has manoeuvred to bring our Skinner within ear-shot of that wildcat's scream! Saved Ebby's wood to be the scene of it! Ebby, the wood-saver.

Melvin says that Sted sold the principal log of one of those pasture oaks to Garty for ten dollars and got several cords besides. What a mean bribe to take the life of so noble a tree!

Wesson is so gouty that he rarely comes out-of-doors, and is a spectacle in the street; but he loves to tell his old stories still! How, when he was stealing along to get a shot at his ducks, and was just upon them a red squirrel sounded the alarm, chickaree chickaree chickaree, and off they went; but he turned his gun upon the squirrel to avenge himself.

It would seem as if men generally could better appreciate honesty of the John Beaton stamp, which gives you your due to a mill, than the generosity which habitually throws in the half-cent.

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47. Sted Buttrick's, according to Melvin.


[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Mitchell's WALKING TOWARDS WALDEN also refers to WALDEN as "Thoreau's monumental, sustained essay on the sense of place" and refers to WEEK as "a Luminist painting, ... a Taoist landscape: the narrator ascends [*sic*] the Concord and Merrimack rivers, climbs through the foothills, ascends Mt. Washington (the sacred mountain of the local Indians), and then, at the very summit, describes nothing, a caesura, an American version of the Taoist concept of *wu*, the emptiness where all things are contained, where the transcendental Oversoul exists. There is even a blank space at that point in the narrative in early editions of the book."



November 8, Sunday: A warm cloudy, rain-threatening morning. About 10 A.M. a long flock of geese [**Canada Goose**  *Branta canadensis*] are going over from northeast to southeast, or parallel with the general direction of the coast and great mountain-ranges. The sonorous, quavering sounds of the geese are the voice of this cloudy air, —a sound that comes from directly between us and the sky; an aerial sound, and yet so distinct, heavy, and sonorous, a clanking chain drawn through the heavy air. I saw through my window some children looking up and pointing their tiny bows into the heavens, and I knew at once that the geese were in the air. It is always an exciting event. The children, instinctively aware of its importance, rushed into the house to tell their parents. These travellers are revealed to you by the upward-turned gaze of men. And though these undulating lines are melting into the southwestern sky, the sound comes clear and distinct to you as the clank of a chain in a neighboring smithy. So they migrate, not flitting from hedge to hedge, but from latitude to latitude, from State

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

### ASTRONOMY

to State, steering boldly out into the ocean of the air. It is remarkable how these large objects, so plain when your vision is rightly directed, may be lost in the sky if you look away for a moment, —as hard to hit as a star with a telescope. It is a sort of encouraging or soothing sound to assuage their painful fears when they go over a town, as a man moans to deaden physical pain. The direction of their flight each spring and autumn reminds us inlanders how the coast trends. In the afternoon I met Flood, who had just endeavored to draw my attention to a flock of geese in the mizzling air, but encountering me he lost sight of them, while I, at length, looking that way, discerned them though he could not. This was the third flock to-day. Now if ever, then, we may expect a change in the weather.

P.M. —To the swamp in front of the C. Miles house.

The great white pines on the hill south of it were cut, apparently last winter. I count on two stumps about one hundred and twenty-five rings, and the sap averages in each case about three inches thick.

In a thick white pine wood, as in that swamp at the east end, where the ground is level, the ground now (and for some time) is completely covered with a carpet of pale-brown leaves, completely concealing the green mosses and even some lycopodiums. The effect is exactly as [if] a uniform pale-brown matting had been spread over the green and russet floor. It is even soothing to walk over this soft and springy bed. How silently and unobserved by most do these changes take place! This additional warm matting is tucked about their roots to defend them from the frost. It is interesting to see the green of mosses peeping out here and there. You hear only the soft crisped sound of sinking needles under your feet.

I find in the swamp there by the larches the *Kalmia glauca*, good specimens.

I have no doubt that a good farmer, who, of course, loves his work, takes exactly the same kind of pleasure in draining a swamp, seeing the water flow out in his newly cut ditch, that a child does in its mud dikes and water-wheels. Both alike love to play with the natural forces. There is quite a ravine by which the water of this swamp flows out eastward, and at the bottom of it many prinus berries are conspicuous, now apparently in their prime. These are appointed to be an ornament of this bare season between leaves and snow. The swamp-pink's large yellowish buds, too, are conspicuous now. I see also the swamp pyrus buds, expanded sometimes into small leaves. This, then, is a regular phenomenon. It is the only shrub or tree that I know which so decidedly springs again in the fall, in the Indian summer. It might be called the Indian-summer shrub. The clethra buds, too, are decidedly expanded there, showing leaflets, but very small. Some of the new pyrus leaves are nearly full-grown. Would not this be a pretty device on some hale and cheery old man's shield, —the swamp pyrus unfolding its leaves again in the fall? Every plant enjoys some preeminence, and this is its. The most forward to respond to the warmer season. How much spring there is in it! Its sap is most easily liquefied. It takes the least sun and mildness to thaw it and develop it. It makes this annual sacrifice of its very first leaves to its love for the sun. While all other shrubs are reserved, this is open and confiding. I see it not without emotion. I too have my spring thoughts even in November. This I see in pleasant October and November days, when rills and birds begin to tinkle in winter fashion through the more open aisles of the swamps.

I do not know exactly what that sweet word is which the chickadee says when it hops near to me now in those ravines.

The chickadee  
Hops near to me.

When the air is thick and the sky overcast, we need not walk so far. We give our attention to nearer objects, being less distracted from them. I take occasion to explore some near wood which my walks commonly overshoot.

What a difference it makes between two ravines in other respects exactly similar that in the one there is a stream which drains it, while the other is dry!

I see nowadays in various places the scattered feathers of robins, etc., where some hawk or beast of prey has torn them to pieces.

I step over the slip-noose snares which some woodling has just set. How long since men set snares for partridges [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] and rabbits?

Ah, my friends, I know you better than you think, and love you better, too. The day after never, we will have an explanation.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



November 20, Friday: High wind in the night, shaking the house, apparently from the northwest. About 9.30 A.M., though there is very little cloud, I see a few flakes of snow, two or three only, like flocks of gossamer, straggling in a slanting direction to the ground, unnoticed by most, in a rather raw air. At ten there is a little more. The children in the next yard have seen it and are excited. They are searching to see if any rests on the ground.

In books, that which is most generally interesting is what comes home to the most cherished private experience of the greatest number. It is not the book of him who has travelled the farthest over the surface of the globe, but of him who has lived the deepest and been the most at home. If an equal emotion is excited by a familiar homely phenomenon as by the Pyramids, there is no advantage in seeing the Pyramids. It is on the whole better, as it is simpler, to use the common language. We require that the reporter be very permanently planted before the facts which he observes, not a mere passer-by; hence the facts cannot be too homely. A man is worth most to himself and to others, whether as an observer, or poet, or neighbor, or friend, where he is most himself, most contented and at home. There his life is the most intense and he loses the fewest moments. Familiar and surrounding objects are the best symbols and illustrations of his life. If a man who has had deep experiences should endeavor to describe them in a book of travels, it would be to use the language of a wandering tribe instead of a universal language. The poet has made the best roots in his native soil of any man, and is the hardest to transplant. The man who is often thinking that it is better to be somewhere else than where he is excommunicates himself. If a man is rich and strong anywhere, it must be on his native soil. Here I have been these forty years learning the language of these fields that I may the better express myself. If I should travel to the prairies, I should much less understand them, and my past life would serve me but ill to describe them. Many a weed here stands for more of life to me than the big trees of California would if I should go there. We only need travel enough to give our intellects an airing. In spite of Malthus and the rest, there will be plenty of room in this world, if every man will mind his own business. I have not heard of any planet running against another yet.


P.M. –To Ministerial Swamp.

Some bank swallows' nests are exposed by the caving of the bank at Clamshell. The very smallest hole is about two and a half inches wide horizontally, by barely one high. All are much wider than high (vertically). One nest, with an egg in it still, is completely exposed. The cavity at the end is shaped like a thick hoe-cake or lens, about six inches wide and two plus thick, vertically. The nest is a regular but shallow one made simply of stubble, about five inches in diameter, and three quarters of an inch deep.

I see many pollywogs in cold pools now.

I enter the Ministerial Swamp at the road below Tarbell's. The water andromeda leaves are brown now, except where protected by trees. In some places where many of the bright-crimson shoots of high blueberry are seen together, they have a very pretty effect, a crimson vigor to stand above the snow. Where the larches stand thick with their dark boles and stems, the ground is thickly strewn with their fine and peculiarly dark brown leaves, chaff-like, i. e. darker than those of other pines, perhaps like black walnut or cherry shavings. As where other evergreens stand thick, little or nothing grows beneath. I see where squirrels (apparently) have eaten and stripped the spruce cones. I distinguished where the earth was cast out in cutting ditches through this swamp long ago, and this earth is covered and concealed with a thick growth of cup and cockscomb lichens. In this light-lying earth. in one place, I see where some creature some time ago has pawed out much comb of some kind of bee (probably for the honey?), making a hole as big as my head, and this torn comb lies about.

Returning through Harrington's land, I see, methinks, two gentlemen plowing a field, as if to try an agricultural experiment, –for, it being cold and windy, both plowman and driver have their coats on, –but when I get closer, I hear the driver speak in a peculiarly sharp and petulant manner to the plowman as they are turning the land furrow, and I know at once that they belong to those two races which are so slow to amalgamate. Thus my little idyl is disturbed.

I see a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] on the ground under a white oak by Tarbell's black birches, looking just like a snag.

This is the second time I have seen them in such a place. Are they not after acorns?

In the large Tommy Wheeler field, Ranunculus bulbosus in full bloom!

I hear again the soft rippling of the Assabet under those black birches, which Tappan once remarked on. It is not so steep a fall as to be hoarse.

The hardy tree sparrow has taken the place of the chipping and song sparrow, so much like the former that most do not know it is another. His faint lisping chip will keep our spirits up till another spring.

I observed this afternoon how some bullocks had a little sportiveness forced upon them. They were running down a steep declivity to water, when, feeling themselves unusually impelled by gravity downward, they took the hint even as boys do, flourished round gratuitously, tossing their hind quarters into the air and shaking their heads at each other, but what increases the ludicrousness of it to me is the fact that such capers are never



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

accompanied by a smile. Who does not believe that their step is less elastic, their movement more awkward, for their long domesticity?

November 28, Saturday: Harper's Weekly featured an elaborate derogation of Brigham Young's Utah preparations to resist an invading US Army (Mormon husbands prepping their many lovely wives to march off and do battle).



MORMONISM



November 28, Saturday: P.M. –Around Ebby Hubbard's woodlot. On the hillside above his swamp, near the Ministerial land, I found myself walking in one of those shelf-like hillside paths made by Indians, hunters, cows, or what-not, and it was beset with fresh snares for partridges, this

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

wise: Upright twigs are stuck in the ground across the path, a foot or more in height and just close enough



together to turn a partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] aside, leaving a space about four inches wide in the middle, and some twigs are stretched across above to prevent the birds hopping over. Then a sapling about an inch in diameter or less is bent over, and the end caught under one of the twigs which has a notch or projection on one side, and a free-running noose, attached to the sapling, hangs in the opening and is kept spread by being hung on some very slight nicks in the two twigs. This seems to suppose the bird to be going one way only, but perhaps if it cannot escape one way it will turn and try to go back, and so spring the trap.

I saw one that was sprung with nothing in it, another whose slip-noose was blown or fallen one side, and another with a partridge still warm in it. It was a male bird hanging dead by the neck, just touching its toes to the ground. It had a collar or ruff about its neck, of large and conspicuous black feathers with a green reflection. This black is peculiar to the male, the female's being brown. Its feet, now clinched in its agony, were the strangest-looking pale blue, with a fine fringe, of scales or the like, on each side of each toe. The small black feathers were centred with gray spots. The scapulars were darker brown, dashed with large clear pale-brown spots; the breast-feathers light with bright-brown marks. The tail-feathers had each a broad black bar, except the middle one, which was more mixed or grayish there. The bands of the females are said to be more brown, as is their collar. There were a few droppings of the bird close by the snare in two instances. Were they dropped after it was caught? Or did they determine the locality of the snare?

These birds appear to run most along the sides of wooded banks around swamps. At least these paths and snares occur there oftenest. I often scare them up from amid or near hemlocks in the woods.

The general color of the bird is that of the ground and dry leaves on it at present. The bird hanging in the snare was very inconspicuous. I had gone close by it once without noticing it. Its wings are short and stout and look as if they were a little worn by striking the ground or bushes, or perhaps in drumming. I observed a bare bright-red or scarlet spot over each eye.

Spoke to Skinner about that wildcat which he says he heard a month ago in Ebby Hubbard's woods. He was going down to Walden in the evening, to see if geese had not settled in it (with a companion), when they heard this sound, which his companion at first thought made by a coon, but S. said no, it was a wildcat. He says he has heard them often in the Adirondack region, where he has purchased furs. He told him he would hear it again soon, and he did. Somewhat like the domestic cat, a low sort of growling and then a sudden quick-repeated caterwaul, or yow yow yow, or yang yang yang. He says they utter this from time to time when on the track of some prey.

CAT

December 14, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) repeated his survey of March 1850 in "Samuel Heywood's pasture" south of [Walden Pond](#) in Lincoln, a plot of 13 acres 80 rods, to adjust the woodlot lines between [Waldo Emerson](#) and Charles Bartlett who owned land east of his.



SAMUEL HEYWOOD

(Cyrus Hubbard had surveyed this land for Emerson on December 16, 1848. According to a letter written by Emerson to his brother William Emerson on October 4, 1844, he had bought the land from some men whom he met while walking in the woods. The next day he went back with some "well beloved gossips" and they persuaded him to buy about 3 more acres from Heartwell Bigelow to protect his investment. This is the land on which Thoreau built his house. Thoreau may also have done some surveying for Warren Nixon, of Lincoln land near the Emerson-Bartlett land.)

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

View [Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys (but not this one) courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

[http://www.concordlibrary.net/scollect/Thoreau\\_surveys/Thoreau\\_surveys.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.net/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/Thoreau_surveys.htm)

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

In the [District of Columbia](#), home of our nation's puzzle palace on the Potomac, an idea reached its completion that had begun process 'way back on December 26, 1849:

*Know all men by these presents that I, **Mary Watts** of Saint Mary's County and State of [Maryland](#) for and in consideration of the sum of seven hundred dollars current money, to me in hand paid by Thomas Sumerville F.B. of the county and state aforesaid, at and before the sealing and delivery hereof, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge; have granted, bargained and sold, and by these presents, do, grant, bargain and sell unto the said **Thomas Sumerville F.B.** his executors, administrators and assigns, one Negro woman **Maria** aged twenty five years, one Negro child named **Sarah Ann** ages six years, one Negro child named **Thomas Randolph** aged three years, and one other Negro child named **Mary Ellen** aged one year, all which Negroes are slaves for life.*

*To have and hold the said described Negroes above bargained and sold to the said Thomas Somerville F.B. his executors, administrators and assigns, forever unto his and their only proper use and benefit, and I, the said Mary Watts for myself, my executors and administrators, shall and will warrant, and forever defend by these presents to the said Thomas Somerville F.B. his executors, administrators and assigns, the said described Negroes, against my executors and administrators, and against and all every other person or persons whomsoever I administer the same or any part thereof. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the twenty sixth day of December Eighteen Hundred and Forty Nine.*

*Signed, sealed and delivered*

*in the presence of } Mary Watts {seal}*

*N. Furck*

*Received of **Thomas Sumerville F.B.** the sum of seven hundred dollars in the full of the consideration specified to be paid in the above Bill of sale.*

*26th December 1849 Mary Watts*

*State of [Maryland](#), St. Mary's County, J.P.*

*On this 26th day of December 1849 before one of the justices of the peace of the state of Maryland in and for said county, personally appeared **Mary Watts** and acknowledges the foregoing bill of sale or instrument of writing to be her act and deeds according to the purport true intent and meaning thereof-And at the same time and place also appeared before me **Thomas Somerville F.B.** the grantee oath that the consideration set forth in the said Bill of sale is true and bona fide as therein*

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

set forth.

Acknowledged & sworn before

N. Furck, J.P. {seal}

Jany. 3rd 1850. Recd. of **Thomas Sumerville** the sum of one dollar the stamp duty required by law on this Bill of sale.

Wm. T. Maddox

St. Mary's Cnty.

Saint Marys County to wit

Thereby certify that the foregoing is truly taken from the original field in my office on the 3rd Jany. 1850.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my office this 12th day of March eighteen hundred and fifty.

Wm. Maddox

St. Mry's. Cnty. Clk.

Deed of manumission

District of Columbia, County of Washington

To all whom it may concern. Be it known that I, **Thomas Sumerville** of the city of Washington in the district of Columbia for divers good causes and considerations, me thereunto moving have released from slavery, liberated, manumitted and set free and by means presents do hereby release from slavery, liberate, manumit and set free my wife **Maria** being of the age of thirty four years and able to work and gain a sufficient livelihood and maintenance and she the said Negro slave named **Maria Somerville** I do declare to be henceforth free, manumitted, discharged from all manner of service or servitude to me, my executors and administrators forever.

In witness whereof I have this fourteenth day of December in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Seven set my hand and seal.

Thomas (X) Sumerville {seal}

Signed Sealed

and delivered in presence of

Witness Jas. Cull

?Alexander Cull

District of Columbia, Washington County

On this 14th day of December 1857 before me the subscriber a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid personally appeared **Thomas Sumerville** and acknowledged the above Deed of manumission to be his act and deed for the purpose set forth.

Jas. Cull, J.P. {seal}

December 15, Tuesday: In our nation's idea palace, somebody had a decent idea:

Know all men by these presents that I, **John B. Grayson** of the County of Prince William and State of Maryland for certain good

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

and lawful causes one thereto moving and in consideration of the payment to me of the sum of one thousand two hundred dollars by **William Wright** of the State of New Jersey the receipts whereof is hereby acknowledged do hereby emancipate and set free the following slaves to me belonging: that is to say: woman **Mary**--aged about 31 years (thirty-one)---the wife of **Washington Wood** and the two children of said Washington and Mary named respectively **Martha** about eight years old and **Marallina** about four years old and do forever discharge the same from servitude to me and my heirs forever.

In witness whereof I have and do hereby set my hand and affix my seal this 15 December 1857.

Signed Sealed and

Delivered in presence of  
I.H. Goddard

F.I. Mumphery      J.B. Grayson {seal}

District of Columbia, Washington County to wit  
I, I. H. Goddard a Justice in & for the county and district aforesaid do hereby certify that **John B. Grayson** a party to a certain deed bearing date the 15th day of December in the year 1857 and hereto annexed personally appeared before me in my said county being proved to my satisfaction as the person who executed the said deed and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed.

Given under my hand & seal this 15th day of December in the year 1857.

I.H. Goddard J.P. {seal}

MANUMISSION



December 15. Within a day or two, I saw another partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] in the snare of November 28th, frozen stiff. To-day I see that some creature has torn and disembowelled it, removing it half a rod, leaving the head in snare, which has lifted it three or four feet in the air on account of its lightness. This last bird was either a female or young male, its ruff and bar on tail being rather dark-brown than black.



December 27, Sunday: French and British warships opened fire on **Canton**. Their bombardment lasted 27 hours and set the city on fire.

It was on about this date that Modest Musorgsky began musical studies with Mily Balakirev in St. Petersburg.

Retired for only a month, Louis Spohr tripped on the steps at the museum in Kassel and broke an arm. Although he would recover, he would never again be able to perform on the violin in public.

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern for male octet and strings by Franz Schubert to words of **Goethe** was performed for the initial time, in Vienna.



December 27. A clear, pleasant day. P.M. --To Goose Pond.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER



Tree sparrows about the weeds in the yard. A snowball on every pine plume, for there has been no wind to shake it down. The pitch pines look like trees heavily laden with snow oranges. The snowballs on their plumes are like a white fruit. When I thoughtlessly strike at a limb with my hatchet, in my surveying, down comes a sudden shower of snow, whitening my coat and getting into my neck. You must be careful how you approach and jar the trees thus supporting a light snow.

Partridges [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] dash away through the pines, jarring down the snow.

Mice have been abroad in the night. We are almost ready to believe that they have been shut up in the earth all the rest of the year because we have not seen their tracks. I see where, by the shore of Goose Pond, one has pushed up just far enough to open a window through the snow three quarters of an inch across, but has not been forth. Elsewhere, when on the pond, I see in several places where one has made a circuit out on to the pond a rod or more, returning to the shore again. Such a track may, by what we call accident, be preserved for a geological period, or be obliterated by the melting of the snow.



Goose Pond is not thickly frozen yet. Near the north shore it cracks under the snow as I walk, and in many places water has oozed out and spread over the ice, mixing with the snow and making dark places. Walden is almost entirely skimmed over. It will probably be completely frozen over to-night.<sup>48</sup>

I frequently hear a dog bark at some distance in the night, which, strange as it may seem, reminds me of the cooing or crowing of a ring dove which I heard every night a year ago at Perth Amboy. It was sure to coo on the slightest noise in the house; as good as a watch-dog. The crowing of cocks, too, reminds me of it, and, now I think of it, it was precisely the intonation and accent of the cat owl's hoo-hoo-hoo-oo, dwelling in each case sonorously on the last syllable. They get the pitch and break ground with the first note, and then prolong and swell it in the last. The commonest and cheapest sounds, as the barking of a dog, produce the same effect on fresh and healthy ears that the rarest music does. It depends on your appetite for sound. Just as a crust is sweeter to a healthy appetite than confectionery to a pampered or diseased one. It is better that these cheap sounds be music to us than that we have the rarest ears for music in any other sense. I have lain awake at night many a time to think of the barking of a dog which I had heard long before, bathing my being again in those waves of sound, as a frequenter of the opera might lie awake remembering the music he had heard.

DOG

As my mother made my pockets once of Father's old fire-bags, with the date of the formation of the Fire Society on them, -1794, -though they made but rotten pockets, -so we put our meaning into those old mythologies. I am sure that the Greeks were commonly innocent of any such double-entendre as we attribute to them.

One while we do not wonder that so many commit suicide, life is so barren and worthless; we only live on by an effort of the will. Suddenly our condition is ameliorated, and even the barking of a dog is a pleasure to us. So closely is our happiness bound up with our physical condition, and one reacts on the other. Do not despair of life. You have no doubt farce enough to overcome your obstacles. Think of the fox prowling through wood and field in a winter night for something to satisfy his hunger. Notwithstanding cold and the hounds and traps, his race survives. I do not believe any of them ever committed suicide. I saw this afternoon where probably a fox had rolled some small carcass in the snow.

I cut a blueberry bush this afternoon, a venerable-looking one bending over Goose Pond, with a gray, flat, scaly bark, the bark split into long, narrow, closely adhering scales, the inner bark dull-reddish. At several feet from the ground it was one and five sixteenths inches in diameter, and I counted about twenty-nine indistinct rings. It seems a very close-grained wood. It appears, then, that some of those old gray blueberry bushes which overhang the pond-holes have attained half the age of man.

I am disappointed by most essays and lectures. I find that I had expected the authors would have some life, some very private experience, to report, which would make it comparatively unimportant in what style they expressed themselves, but commonly they have only a talent to exhibit. The new magazine which all have been expecting may contain only another love story as naturally told as the last, perchance, but without the slightest novelty in it. It may be a mere vehicle for Yankee phrases.

48. Yes.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

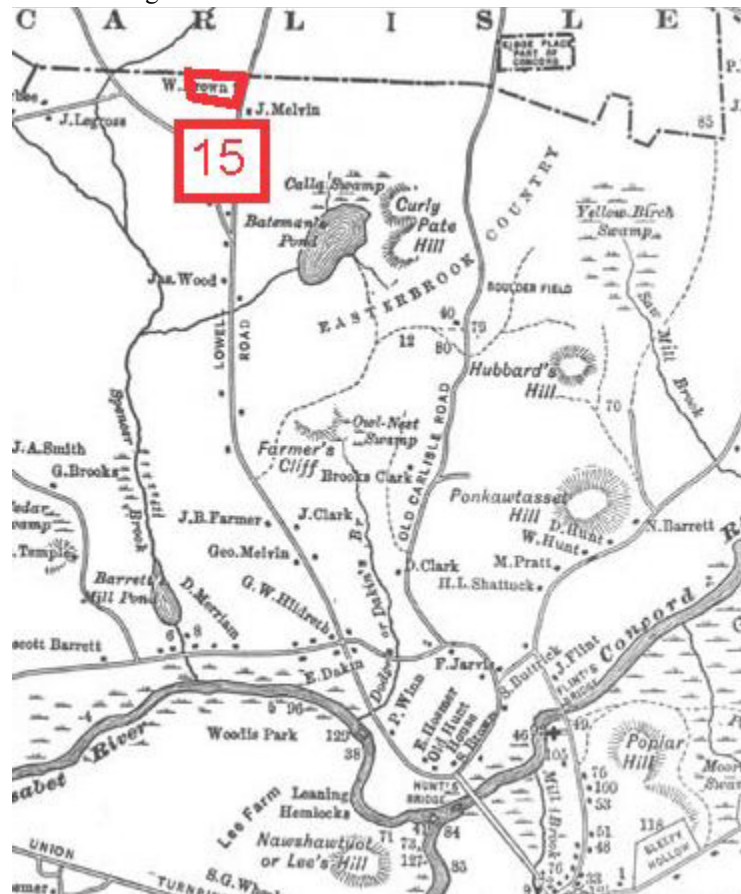
What interesting contrasts our climate affords! In July you rush panting into [a] pond, to cool yourself in the tepid water, when the stones on the bank are so heated that you cannot hold one tightly in your hand, and horses are melting on the road. Now you walk on the same pond frozen, amid the snow, with numbed fingers and feet, and see the water-target bleached and stiff in the ice.

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1858

April 12, Monday: William D. Brown paid [Henry Thoreau](#) \$3.<sup>00</sup> to survey an Acton woodlot near Damon's Factory. Part of this lot was cut during 1857-1858 and the lot was sold to Richard Warner.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/collect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/Thoreau\\_Surveys.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/collect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm)

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

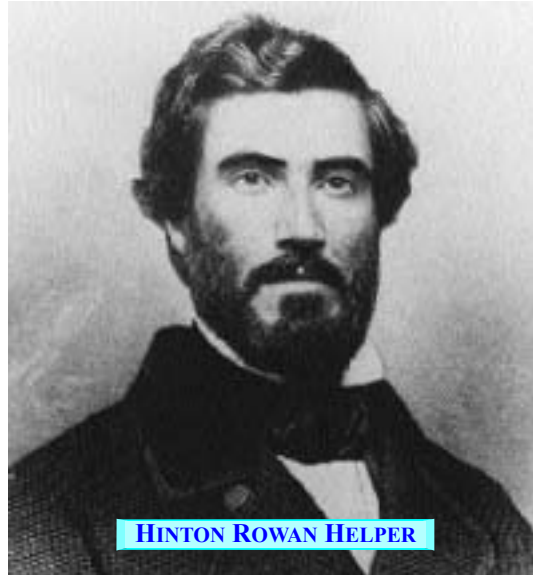
ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/15.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/15.htm)

Hinton Rowan Helper sought to assault Senator Asa Biggs of his home state of North Carolina for having accused him, on April 5th on the floor of the US Senate, of having changed his name from “Helper” and of having committed petty theft. However, his Colt revolver and Bowie knife were confiscated and he was taken under arrest. A number of the prominent Republican legislators, amused at the sight of one of their Southern Democratic colleagues being assaulted by one of his constituents, raised a fund of \$1,000 and posted bail for this racist abolitionist Southern Republican.



(Cassius M. Clay, who would become a Major General of the US Volunteers in the civil war, was at this point an enthusiastic supporter and distributor of Helperist literature. –As was Senator Andrew Johnson, who would become in 1865 the President of the United States.)



April 12, 1858: A. M. — Surveying part of William P. Brown’s wood-lot in Acton, west of factory. Returning on the railroad, the noon train down passed us opposite the old maid Hosmer’s house. In the woods just this side, we came upon a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] standing on the track, between the rails over which the cars had just passed. She had evidently been run down, but though a few small feathers were scattered along for a dozen rods beyond her, and she looked a little ruffled, she was apparently more disturbed in mind than body. I took her up and carried her one side to a safer place. At first she made no resistance, but at length fluttered out of my hands and ran two or three feet. I had to take her up again and carry and drive her further off, and left her standing with head erect as at first, as if beside herself. She was not lame, and I suspect no wing was broken. I did not suspect that this swift wild bird was ever run down by the cars. We have an account in the newspapers of every cow and calf that is run over, but not of the various wild creatures who meet with that accident. It may be many generations before the partridges learn to give the cars a sufficiently wide berth.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

December 15, Wednesday: Establishment of the “Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de [Suez](#).”

EGYPT

[M<sup>r</sup> H.D. Thoreau](#) was being written to by Ticknor & Fields in Boston.



*Boston, Dec 15 1858*

*M<sup>r</sup> H. D. Thoreau*

*Dear Sir,*

*Concord*

*Mass.*

*In our last account we credited you capl on the balance of copies of Walden, including quite a number of copies then on hand unsold. — As the Edition was so nearly out we paid for all at that time— We have never been out of the book, but there is very little demand for it. The 16 cops. req<sup>d</sup>. were sent in the Edition printed.— We enclose ck \$11.25 for 15 cops Concord River, sold leaving in our hands 17 cops.*

*Truly Yours*

*W.D. Ticknor & Co.*

**NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE DECEMBER 15TH, 1858 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFY AT BEST).**

December 25, [Christmas Day](#): The shift from family members working the farm together to the father and older children leaving home for work while the mother rears the young ones occurred in the beginning of the 19th Century. At the same time, the home and family came to be seen as havens in a cruel world, and children as qualitatively different from adults, and deserving of nurturing. [Christmas](#) celebrated the wonders of family life. 19th-Century diaries tend to mention more visiting during December than in any other month. The diary of Miss Lindsley of Downsville, New York, for example, describes [Christmas](#) visits in 1858:

Saturday 25 [1858] Came to father's, where I spend most of my time this winter, last evening. Chauncey & Calista started after Emma. They came to downsville & bro't Lilla with them. They then turned back & came home. Emma & Ephraim came to father's about dark last evening. Watched with Peter last night.

Saturday Dec. 25. 1858 Accepted an invitation to dine

Ruffed Grouse

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

at Mr. Beare's with others. Emma went with Eph., who was on this way to Franklin. Sra & Calista went to Walton village, & reached Mr. Beare's about 5 P. M. Miss Emma Berray accompanied them. J'as. W. Holmes & Amy, with Willie & Little Alice, Came to father's about 1 P. M. Chauncey & I Started for Mr. Beares about 2 P. M., & arrived there at 3.20 P. M.. The whole Stayed all night. We had an interesting visit (Lindsley 1858).

Lindsley spent her [Christmas](#) visiting with friends and family, enjoying a [Christmas](#) dinner and spending the whole night at the host house, along with all the other visitors. As it was recorded, this visit seems to be both secular and conventional, as it did not involve a church service and was recorded as a habitual December action.<sup>49</sup>

In the diary of Nathaniel Arbuckle, a farmer of Delhi, New York for whom [Christmas](#) has always been just another workday (except that it was the day on which his taxes fell due), we can see that the holiday was changing for his children. The reason why the holiday was changing for his children was, they were getting a [Christmas](#) Break from school — because their teacher was observing the holiday:

24 Still Continues to Snow a little but it Don't Gain much nay School this Day the teacher being absent till the 27th Keeping the Hall a days to Morrow is Christmas which he Claims 25 This is Christmas went to Delhi in the Sleigh Paid our tax \$7.63, Militia tax 50 Cents \$8.23 in all Fine Day Sleighing not very Good

[Walden Pond](#) froze. John Goodwin told Thoreau that once a partridge had struck a twig or limb in the woods as it flew away from him, so that it fell and he was able to secure it.



December 25: P. M. – Up river on ice to Fair Haven Pond and across to Walden.

The ground is still for the most part bare. Such a December is at least as hard a month to get through as November. You come near eating your heart now.

There is a good deal of brown or straw-color in the landscape now, especially in the meadows, where the ranker grasses, many of them uncut, still stand. They are bleached a shade or two lighter. Looking from the sun, there is a good deal of warm sunlight in them. I see where one farmer has been getting this withered sedge on the ice within a day or two for litter, in a meadow which had not been cut. Of course he could not cut very close.

The ice on the river is about half covered with light snow, it being drifted thus, as usual, by the wind. (On Walden, however, which is more sheltered, the ice is uniformly covered and white.) I go running and sliding from one such snow-patch to another. It is easiest walking on the snow, which gives a hold to my feet, but I walk feebly on the ice. It is so rough that it is but poor sliding withal.

I see, in the thin snow along by the button-bushes and willows just this side of the Hubbard bridge, a new track to me, looking even somewhat as if made by a row of large rain-drops, but it is the track of some small animal. The separate tracks are at most five eighths of an inch in diameter, nearly round, and one and three quarters to two inches apart, varying perhaps half an inch from a straight line, thus:



Sometimes they are three or four inches apart. The size is but little larger than that of a mouse, but it is



49. Baker, Lisa B. CHRISTIANITY, SECULARIZATION, AND [CHRISTMAS](#) IN THE UNITED STATES 1850 AND TODAY. Religious Studies/Sociology Senior Thesis for Professors Gary Herion and Ed Ambrose, May 1999





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

never  thus, or like a mouse. Goodwin, to whom I described it, did not know what it could be. The sun getting low now, say at 3.30, I see the ice green, southeast. Goodwin says that he once had a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] strike a twig or limb in the woods as she flew, so that she fell and he secured her. Going across to Walden, I see that the fuzzy purple wool-grass is now bleached to a dark straw-color without any purple. I notice that a fox has taken pretty much my own course along the Andromeda Ponds. The sedge which grows in tufts eighteen or twenty inches high there is generally recurring, thus:-



I see that the shiners which Goodwin is using for bait to-day have no longitudinal dark bar or line on their sides, such as those minnows of the 11th and 18th had. Yet I thought that by the position of their fins, etc., the latter could not be the banded minnow. Walden at length skimmed over last night, i. e. the two holes that remained open. One was very near the middle and deepest part, the other between that and the railroad. Now that the sun is setting, all its light seems to glance over the snow-clad pond and strike the rocky shore under the pitch pines at the northeast end. Though the bare rocky shore there is only a foot or a foot and a half high as I look, it reflects so much light that the rocks are singularly distinct, as if the pond showed its teeth. I stayed later to hear the pond crack, but it did not much. How full of soft, pure light the western sky now, after sunset! I love to see the outlines of the pines against it. Unless you watch it, you do not know when the sun goes down. It is like a candle extinguished without smoke. A moment ago you saw that glittering orb amid the dry oak leaves in the horizon, and now you can detect no trace of it. In a pensive mood I enjoy the complexion of the winter sky at this hour. Those small sphagnous mountains in the Andromeda Ponds are grotesque things. Being frozen, they bear me up like moss-clad rocks and make it easy getting through the water-brush. But for all voice in that serene hour I hear an owl hoot. How glad I am to hear him rather than the most eloquent man of the age! I saw a few days ago the ground under a swamp white oak in the river meadow quite strewn with brown dry galls about as big as a pea and quite round, like a small fruit which had fallen from it.

1859



April 17. P.M.–Up Assabet.

The river, which had got down on the 10th so that I could not cross the meadows, is up again on account of snow and rain, so that I push with difficulty straight to Mantatuket’s Rock, but, I believe, is already falling. Many grackles and robins are feeding on those strips of meadow just laid bare. It is still rather cold and windy, and I listen for new birds under the lee of the Rock woods in vain; but I hear the hum of bees on a willow there, and this fine susurrus makes the weather seem warmer than it is. At the same time I hear the low stuttering of the *Rana halecina* from the Hunt meadow (call it the Winthrop meadow).

How pleasing and soothing are some of the first and least audible sounds of awakened nature in the spring, as this first humming of bees, etc., and the stuttering of frogs! They cannot be called musical,—are no more even than a noise, so slight that we can endure it. But it is in part an expression of happiness, an ode that is sung and whose burden fills the air. It reminds me of the increased genialness of nature. The air which was so lately void and silent begins to resound as it were with the breathing of a myriad fellow-creatures, and even the unhappy man, on the principle that misery loves company, is soothed by this infinite din of neighbors. I have listened for the notes of various birds, and now, in this faint hum of bees, I hear as it were the first twittering of the bird Summer. Go ten feet that way, to where the northwest wind comes round the hill, and you hear only the dead mechanical sound of the blast and your thoughts recur to winter, but stand as much this way in the sun and in the lee of this bush, and your charmed ears may hear this faint susurrus weaving the web of summer. The notes of birds are interrupted, but the hum of insects is incessant. I suppose that the motion of the wings of the small tipulidae which have swarmed for some weeks produced a humming appreciated by some ears. Perhaps the phoebe heard and was charmed by it. Thus gradually the spaces of the air are filled. Nature has taken equal care to cushion our ears on this finest sound and to inspire us with the strains of the wood thrush and poet. We may say that each gnat is made to vibrate its wings for man’s fruition. In short, we hear but little music in the world which charms us more than this sound produced by the vibration of an insect’s wing and in some still and sunny nook in spring.

A wood tortoise on bank; first seen, water so high.

I heard lately the voice of a hound hunting by itself. What an awful sound to the denizens of the wood! That relentless, voracious, demonic cry, like the voice of a fiend! At hearing of which, the fox, hare, marmot, etc., tremble for their young and themselves, imagining the worst. This, however, is the sound which the lords of creation love to accompany and follow, with their bugles and “mellow horns” conveying a similar dread to the hearers instead of whispering peace to the hare’s palpitating breast.

A partridge [Ruffed Grouse] *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge) drums.

DOG



April 22, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by Hobart & Robbins in Boston, enclosing three checks for the total amount of \$12.<sup>00</sup> in payment for plumbago and requesting a receipt.

*Boston 22<sup>d</sup>. April 1859  
Mr. Henry D. Thoreaux  
Concord, Mass.*

*Dr. Sir,  
Enclosed please find twelve dollars to pay for the Plumbago  
Receipt bill & return by mail  
One \$5.00 bill The [M]averick Bank (No. 800)  
One 5.00 " " [M]alden do, ( " 1678.)*

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

One 2.00 " " Lechemere do, ( " 9570.)  
 Yr's Truly  
 Hobart & Robbins




April 22: The *Salix purpurea* in prime, out probably three or four days; say 19th. Arbor-vitæ, how long?

P. M. – In a fine rain, around Walden.

I go by a *Populus grandidentata* on the eastern sand slope of the Deep Cut just after entering, whose aments (which apparently here began to shed pollen yesterday) in scattered clusters at the ends of the bare-twigs, but just begun to shed their pollen, not hanging loose and straight yet, but curved, are a very rich crimson, like some ripe fruit, as mulberries, seen against the sand. I cannot represent the number in a single cluster, but they are much the handsomest now before the crimson anthers have burst, and are all the more remarkable for the very open and bare habit of the tree.




When setting the pines at Walden the last three days, I was sung to by the field sparrow [Field Sparrow  *Spizella pusilla*]. For music I heard their jingle from time to time. That the music the pines were set to, and I have no doubt they will build many a nest under their shelter. It would seem as if such a field as this – a dry open or half-open pasture in the woods, with small pines scattered in it – was well-nigh, if not quite, abandoned to this one alone among the sparrows. The surface of the earth is portioned out among them. By a beautiful law of distribution, one creature does not too much interfere with another. I do not hear the song sparrow here. As the pines gradually increase, and a wood-lot is formed, these birds will withdraw to new pastures, and the thrushes, etc., will take their place. Yes, as the walls of cities are fabled to have been built by music, so my pines were established by the song of the field sparrow. They commonly-place their nests here under the shelter of a little pine in the field.

As I planted there, wandering thoughts visited me, which I have now forgotten. My senses were busily suggesting them, though I was unconscious of their origin. *E.g.*, I first *consciously* found myself entertaining the thought of a carriage on the road, and directly after I was aware that I heard it. No doubt I had heard it before, or rather my ears had, but I was quite unconscious of it, — it was not a fact of my then state of existence; yet such was the force of habit, it affected my thoughts nevertheless, so double, if not treble, even, are we. Sometimes the senses bring us information quicker than we can receive it. Perhaps these thoughts which run in ruts by themselves while we are engaged in some routine may be called automatic. I distinctly entertained the idea of a carriage, without the slightest suspicion how it had originated or been suggested to my mind. I have no doubt at all that my ears had heard it, but my mind, just then preoccupied, had refused to attend to it. This suggests that most, if not all, indeed, of our ideas may be due to some sort of sensuous impression of which we may or may not be conscious.

This afternoon there is an east wind, and a rain-storm accordingly beginning, the eighth of the kind with this wind.

I still see a large flock of grackles.

Within a few days I pricked my fingers smartly against the sharp, stiff points of some sedge coming up. At Heywood's meadow, by the railroad, this sedge, rising green and dense with yellow tips above the withered clumps, is very striking, suggesting heat, even a blaze, there.

Scare up partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] feeding about the green springy places under the edge of hills. See them skim or scale away for forty rods along and upward to the woods, into which they swiftly scale, dodging to right and left and avoiding the twigs, yet without once flapping the wings after having launched themselves.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

October 30, Sunday: The trial of John Brown concluded, with a finding of guilt. The separate trials of the others indicted, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Edwin Coppoc](#), Shields Green, and [Aaron D. Stevens](#), would begin, and would come to their conclusions, shortly.



Green

Copeland

Haslitt

[Henry Thoreau](#) notified [Concord](#) town officials that he would speak that evening on “The character of John Brown, now in the clutches of the slaveholder.”



That evening, [Thoreau](#) delivered “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN” in the vestry of the First Parish Meetinghouse in Concord. Emerson was present, and would report to Charles Wesley Slack in Boston that “He read it with great force & effect, & though the audience was of widely different parties, it was heard without a murmur of dissent.” In regard to Thoreau’s impassioned oration, this is what I have to offer. Take it for granite, Thoreau always knows what he is saying. Speaking not only of John Brown’s sharp tongue

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

but also of his carbine bought and paid for, one of the things Henry said on the evening of October 30, 1859 was



*The tools were in the hands of one who could use them.*



This is now on page 133 of REFORM PAPERS. **But what I need to get you to understand is that it means exactly what it means, not what you maybe thought it would mean were it you who had said it.** The thing I need you to notice is that Thoreau's remark is an implicit reference to [Miguel de Cervantes](#)'s



*En manos eftâ el pandero que le fabra bien tañer,  
reſpondio Sancho Pança.*



This is an aphorism from Part II, Chapter 22 of *EL INGENIOSO HIDALGO DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA*. In current Spanish: *En manos está el pandero que le sabrán bien tañer*, or “In hands is the drum that it they

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

know well to beat” or, rather, “The drum is in the hands of one who well knows how to thump it.” Thus Thoreau’s remark about the *rat-a-tat-tat* of Brown’s sharp tongue and Christian carbine is also an implicit reference to the most-quoted passage in WALDEN by far, the passage in which an obscure metaphor is drawn apparently on the basis of the drummer-boy *rat-a-tat-tatting* away on [Concord](#) common during the annual militia training!



What is happening in that passage of Cervantes’s book is that Sancho Panza was lowering Don Quijote into the Montecinos cave by a rope. And he was using this old Spanish proverb to say don’t worry, I know how to handle this rope, I won’t let you fall. He was practicality incarnate, all means and no end, while Don Quijote was impracticality ensouled, on his way to make his central attempt to define the relationship between reality and illusion, all end and no means.

We may well ask ourselves in what way a reference to Don Quijote might be seen as appropriate in this context of Thoreau’s defense of Brown. I can think of several right off.

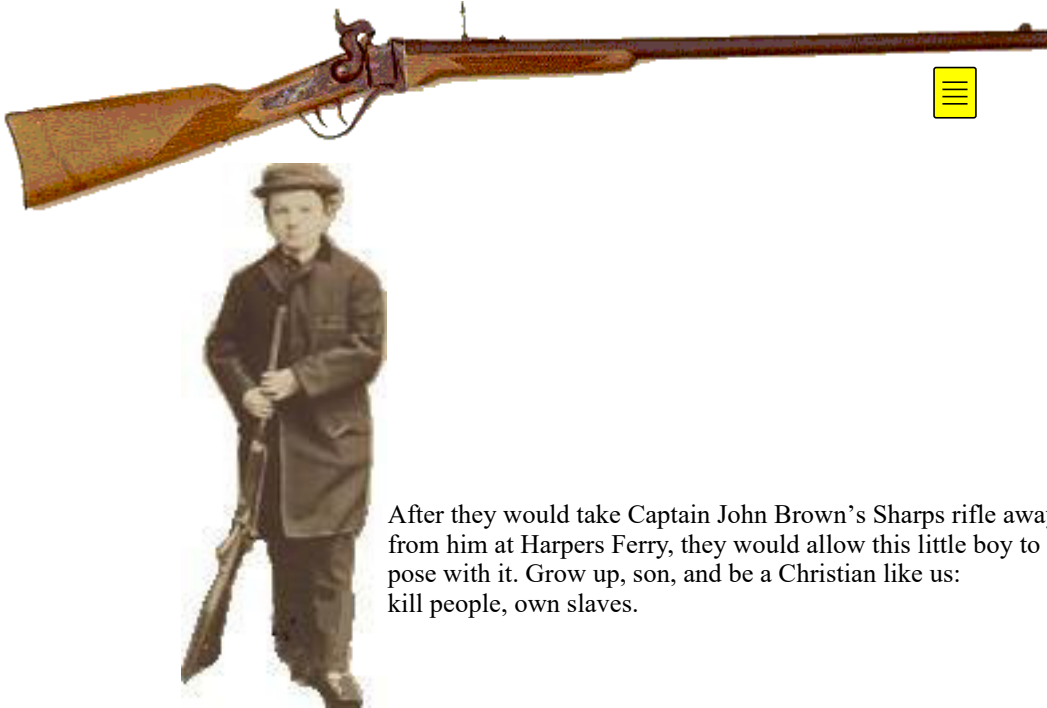
1st, many scholars would insist to us that a study of the work of Cervantes is central to any consideration of the manner in which our representations of the world can, and cannot, modify the contexts in which our lives are embedded. That Sharps rifle was supposed to be the lever by which Brown was rearranging reality, but in actuality in that world of men at arms such a stick was of influence primarily as a symbol, while Brown’s primary lever for rearranging the reality of American race relations was –as Thoreau was emphasizing– his sharp tongue. Holding that Sharps rifle in his hand only served to draw attention to that tongue of his, attention that his sharp tongue deserved. We can say Thoreau’s problem essentially was, in the case of Brown, that he had decided he could not be satisfied with reality. Refusing to repeat the gestures that custom, tradition, and

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

instinct make so easy, Thoreau was insisting on the coming into being of our myth of equality and fraternity.



After they would take Captain John Brown's Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

2d, Don Quijote was *un hombre exageradamente grave y serio o puntilloso*, and this is a fine and accurate description not only of Concord's own knight of the woebegone countenance, Bronson Alcott, but also of John Brown. If Alcott could be said to have been a Quijote whose favorite reading was the New Testament, Brown was a Quijote whose favorite reading was the Old. Don Quijote said

These saints and knights were of the same profession as myself, which is the calling of arms. Only there is this difference between them and me, that they were saints, and fought with divine weapons, and I am a sinner and fight with human ones.

3d, there is the problem of the ridiculous mismatch of means and objectives about which Brown commented in his note on the morning of his [hanging](#). Brown wanted a world of justice and peace and dignity so he set about enthusiastically to kill us until we got his idea, which is a fine way to get someone's attention but is inherently self-defeating.

4th, in associating Brown with Don Quijote, [Thoreau](#) was making an implicit reference to the freeing of slaves as a knightly suspension of the ethical — for Don Quijote's pity, compassion, and love came to outweigh the rigor of justice in that knight's liberating of the galley slaves, and in the declaration he made to the guards of

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the slaves, and in his comments to Sancho and the priest. He said

It is not right that honorable men should be executioners of others.

Finally, this “tool” aphorism extracted from the episode in which Don Quijote descended on a rope into the cave of Montecinos is central to the story’s process of *sanchificación* of the knight’s spirituality and *quijotización* of the squire’s carnality. By virtue of their shared adventures, the righteously indignant northern white American and the desperately indignant southern white American needed to figure out a way to rid themselves of a society based on shackles: they needed to sanchify and quijotize each other. That’d be preferred to our northern Quijotes and southern Panzas using their efficient tools to kill each other standing in rows, which was otherwise the obvious prospect. When Don Quijote emerged from the cave of Montecinos he said to Sancho Panza

Everything that offers some difficulty seems impossible to you.

But he added

Time will pass.

In this writing I will not only attempt to salvage Thoreau’s talk about Christian carbines and sharp tongues by linking it (via its implicit referent in Cervantes’s *rub-a-dub-dub* text about the foolishness of desperate acts of chivalry) to its implicit referent in Thoreau’s *rat-a-tat-tat* text about the foolishness of a life of quiet desperation.

I will also demonstrate that this sound metaphor of Thoreau’s –the distant different drummer– is, itself, an implicit reference to a [Quaker](#) non-violent metaphor of the inner light in common usage among members of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), particularly those of the liberal faction including Friend [Elias Hicks](#) and his student Friend [Lucretia Mott](#), and that such a metaphor cannot be bent –as it is commonly now bent by the unspirited– to sponsor the path of violence. Thoreau left himself an escape hatch and, in his appeal for sympathy for Captain Brown after that man’s desperate attempt to set free the despairing slaves of America, neither explicitly nor implicitly sanctioned any of John Brown’s violent means. I would maintain that Thoreau’s deportment and his words subsequent to the ill-advised Harpers Ferry raid in 1859 were precisely

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

parallel to Friend Lucretia’s deppoment and her words after the ill-advised “Christiana Riot” in 1851.



Thoreau said in public, in regard to American slavery, that he did not wish to kill nor to be killed, but could foresee circumstances in which both these things would be by him unavoidable (REFORM PAPERS 133). Playing to his audience, our author elided the vast difference between killing and dying precisely as Richardson elided Charles Baudelaire. It was only in Thoreau’s private notes during his lifetime –to his Journal that is, and although as he says there was no lock on the door of his cabin there was in fact a lock on the desk in which he kept his Journal– that he was able to say plainly that **when he said “both these things” he meant precisely “both these things,”** not one and, if he turned out to be a lucky and competent killer, not the other, that if it came to the sacrificing of others to his own principles, this would necessarily involve his own simultaneous self-sacrifice for his principles, that he meant he might decide to not be alive rather than continue to be alive in a world that also included slavery.<sup>50</sup> Now, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard pointed out in a writing that,

50. There is a phrase “noble army of Martyrs” in the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER that came into use in 1549 that may explain [Thoreau](#)’s remark about becoming willing to kill, or to die, to end enslavement. The phrase may have come into the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER from the *TE DEUM*, quite a bit older.

# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

although it dates to the same year of 1859, was unavailable to [Thoreau](#),<sup>51</sup> that



Assuming then that a person is the victim of an illusion, and that in order to communicate the truth to him the first task, rightly understood, is to remove the illusion – if I do not begin by deceiving him, I must begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposes that the receiver’s ability to receive is undisturbed. But here such is not the case; an illusion stands in the way. That is to say, one must first of all use the caustic fluid. But this caustic means is negativity, and negativity understood in relation to the communication of the truth is precisely the same as deception. What then does it mean “to deceive”? It means that one does not begin **directly** with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man’s illusion as good money.



I am not saying Thoreau was wrong to elide in this way in that place at that time, for he was doing his level best to communicate with a bunch of people who were getting ready to line up and shoot each other down in windrows, and also I was not there and also I have great respect for his judgment, but I am saying that if there was a time for this sort of elision, it is now past. If not then, at least now, we should face the issue squarely. But unfortunately, as I said, the issue is not being faced squarely. For instance, on the night of July 10th in the Center Galleria of Worcester, an actor employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, David Barto, sponsored in part by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, re-enacted Thoreau’s lecture “A Plea for Capt. John Brown.”

Worcester’s Mechanics Hall where the lecture was originally delivered was under restoration, but every effort was made for verisimilitude and Barto was able to lean on the wooden lectern that Thoreau had used on November 3, 1859 at Mechanics Hall. My impression is that Barto makes a Thoreau who is entirely too belligerent, for instance humorously threatening to beat children with his walking stick should they ask questions at the wrong times, humorously inviting one fellow to join him outside for a fight after the talk should he fail to follow Thoreau’s rules, etc. Therefore, in the question and answer period, I raised my hand

51. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard. THE POINT OF VIEW FOR MY WORK AS AN AUTHOR. NY: Harper & Row, 1962, pages 25-6.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

and posed the following question to Barto in his rôle as [Thoreau](#):

I have heard you, and am troubled, troubled by what would seem to be a studied ambiguity on an issue of the greatest relevance. Tell me, in the dark of the night when you could not sleep, and you scratched these lines frantically across scraps of paper with your pencil - can you recollect that frame of mind?- what was your intention? If it came to kill or be killed, for those are two very different things, if it came to the taking of the life of another for liberty, or giving your own for liberty -for these are two very different things- if it came to continuing your life but as a murderer- if it came to the point of doing evil so that good will come- what, sir, was your secret intention as you scratched out your draft of this speech? Is it your intention to teach us, by your life, how and when to **die** or how and when to **kill**?

In response Barto feigned anger and told me I had no right to inquire as to his private musings. He was unable or unwilling to address the question as posed. Need I mention that this might have got him in trouble with his employer, an agency which also employs a number of armed men in blue and a number of armed men in green, and instructs these armed employees in the fine art of when and how to kill in the name of their employer?

### “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN”

This topic of elision is an interesting topic for those of us who find this sort of topic interesting. While [Thoreau](#) was delivering his “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN” at the Concord Town Hall, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was delivering a sermon in his Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. Later on he would revise this sermon for publication, so we can credit it with some seriousness of preparation, and yet in the sermon he was portraying the raid on Harpers Ferry as having been perpetrated by 17 white men who had gone South without any black sponsorship or involvement and, in their whiteness, had created a race panic: “Seventeen white men surrounded two thousand, and held them in duress.”

A black newspaper would need to comment upon this elision, as of course it had been the noticing of men of mixed race among the members of that invading party which had set off the pronounced race panic: “Mr. Beecher must have read the papers, must have read that there were twenty-two invaders, seventeen white and five black. Why does he omit all mention of the latter? Were they not men?”<sup>52</sup>

December 17, Saturday: George C. Boniface portrayed John Brown at [New-York](#)'s Old Bowery Theater in “The Insurrection, or, Kansas and Harpers Ferry.”



December 17: P. M.- To Walden.

The snow being some three or four inches deep, I see rising above it, generally, at my old bean-field, only my

52. It is very clear from several other things that the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher had written, that had he been forced to respond to this “Were they not men?” rhetorical question, he would easily have responded that indeed they were men — inasmuch as they were all of mixed race rather than being in that “low animal condition” (his category, his words) of pure blackness.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

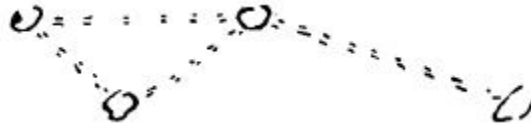
little white pines set last spring in the midst of an immense field of *Solidago nemoralis*, with a little sweet-fern (i. e. a large patch of it on the north side). What a change there will be in a few years, this little forest of goldenrod giving place to a forest of pines!

By the side of the Pout's Nest, I see on the pure white snow what looks like dust for half a dozen inches under a twig. Looking closely, I find that the twig is hardhack and the dust its slender, light-brown, chaffy-looking seed, which falls still in copious showers, dusting the snow, when I jar it; and here are the tracks of a sparrow which has jarred the twig and picked the minute seeds a long time, making quite a hole in the snow. The seeds are so fine that it must have got more snow than seed at each peck. But they probably look large to its microscopic eyes. I see, when I jar it, that a meadow-sweet close by has quite similar, but larger, seeds. This the reason, then, that these plants rise so high above the snow and retain their seeds, dispersing it on the least jar over each successive layer of snow beneath them; or it is carried to a distance by the wind. What abundance and what variety in the diet of these small granivorous birds, while I find only a few nuts still! These stiff weeds which no snow can break down hold their provender. What the cereals are to men, these are to the sparrows. The only threshing they require is that the birds fly against their spikes or stalks. A little further I see the seed-box (?) (*Ludwigia*) full of still smaller, yellowish seeds. And on the ridge north is the track of a partridge [Ruffed Grouse] (*Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)) amid the shrubs. It has hopped up to the low clusters of smooth sumach berries, sprinkled the snow with them, and eaten all but a few. Also, here only, or where it has evidently jarred them down – whether intentionally or not, I am not sure – are the large oval seeds of the stiff-stalked lespedeza, which I suspect it ate, with the sumach berries. There is much solid food in them. When the snow is deep the birds could easily pick the latter out of the heads as they stand on the snow.



I observe, then, eaten by birds to-day, the seed of hardhack and meadow-sweet, sumach, and probably lespedeza, and even seed-box.

Under the hill, on the southeast side of R. W. E.'s lot, where the hemlock stands, I see many tracks of squirrels. The dark, thick green of the hemlock (amid the pines) seems to attract them as a covert. The snow under the hemlock is strewn with the scales of its cones, which they (and perhaps birds?) have stripped off, and some of its little winged seeds. It is pleasant to see the tracks of these squirrels (I am not sure whether they are red or gray or both, for I see none) leading straight from the base of one tree to that of another, thus leaving untrodden triangles, squares, and polygons of every form, bounded by much trodden highways. One, two, three, and the track is lost on the upright bole of a pine, – as if they had played at base-running from goal to goal, while pine cones were thrown at them on the way. The tracks of two or three suggest a multitude. You come thus on the tracks of these frisky and volatile (semivolitant) creatures in the midst of perfect stillness and solitude, as you might stand in a hall half an hour after the dancers had departed.



I see no nests in the trees, but numerous holes through the snow into the earth, whence they have emerged. They have loitered but little on the snow, spending their time chiefly on the trees, their castles, when abroad. The snow is strewn not only with hemlock scales, but, under other trees, with the large white pine scales for rods together where there is no track, the wind having scattered them as they fell, and also the shells of hickory-nuts. It reminds me of the platform before a grocery where nuts are sold. You see many places where they have probed the snow for these white pine cones, evidently those which they cut off green and which accordingly have not opened so as to drop the seeds. This was perhaps the design in cutting them off so early, – thus to preserve them under the snow (not dispersed). Do they find them by the scent? At any rate they will dig down through the snow and come right upon a pine cone or a hickory-nut or an acorn, which you and I cannot do.

Two or three acres of Walden, off the bar, not yet frozen. Saw in [IT] a good-sized black duck, which did not clive while I looked. I suspect it must have been a *Fuligula*, though I saw no white.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

December 24, Saturday: Oberlin College Professor James Monroe returned empty-handed that Christmas Eve to Oberlin, Ohio, having failed to retrieve [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#)'s body from Virginia authorities.

The Reverend Samuel Joseph May had written to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) — who had gone off to Rome in part for his health and in part because he knew what was going to happen at Harpers Ferry and very well understood that he would pay for his part in this were he captured by the federal government. Now a belligerent letter arrived from Parker in Italy characterizing John Brown as “an upright & a downright man, who took his life in his hand & said ‘Slavery **shall** go down.’”

[NOTE THAT FRIEND [JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER](#), WHEN OFFERED ONE OF THE PIKES WHICH HAD BEEN INTENDED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO REBELLING SLAVES FOR HIS INSPECTION, WOULD DECLINE WITH THE COMMENT “IT LOOKS TOO MUCH LIKE MURDER,” AND THAT THE REVEREND [ADIN BALLOU](#) HAD JUST INSISTED THAT TO CHARACTERIZE SUCH A MAN AS JOHN BROWN, A MERE “MILITARY ADVENTURER,” AS A “SELF-SACRIFICING REDEEMER” ON THE MODEL OF JESUS WOULD BE “UNTRUTHFUL, UNJUST, AND UTTERLY ABSURD.”]




December 24: P. M.—To Flint's Pond.

A strong and very cold northwest wind. I think that the cold winds are oftenest not northwest, but northwest by west. There is, in all, an acre or two in Walden not yet frozen, though half of it has been frozen more than a week. I measure the blueberry bush on Flint's Pond Island. The five stems are united at the ground, so as to make one round and solid trunk thirty-one inches in circumference, but probably they have grown together there, for they become separate at about six inches above. They may have sprung from different seeds of one berry. At three feet from the ground they measure eleven inches, eleven, eleven and a half, eight, and six and a half, or, on an average, nine and a half. I climbed up and found a comfortable seat with my feet four feet above the ground, and there was room for three or four more there, but unfortunately this was not the season for berries.

There were several other clumps of large ones there. One clump close by the former contained twenty-three stems within a diameter of three feet, and their average diameter at three feet from the ground was about two inches. These had not been cut, because they stood on this small island which has little wood beside, and therefore had grown the larger. The two prevailing lichens on them were *Parmelia caperata* and *saxatilis*, extending quite around their trunks; also a little of a parmelia more glaucous than the last one, and a little green usnea and a little ramalina. [*Vide* specimens in drawer.]

This island appears to be a mere stony ridge three or four feet high, with a very low wet shore on each side, even as if the water and ice had shoved it up, as at the other end of the pond.

I saw the tracks of a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] more than half an inch deep in the ice, extending from this island to the shore, she having walked there in the slosh. They were quite perfect and reminded me of bird-tracks in stone. She may have gone there to bud on these blueberry trees. I saw where she spent the night at the bottom of that largest clump, in the snow.

Perhaps yet larger ones were seen here before we came to cut off the trees. Judging from those whose rings I have counted, the largest of those stems must be about sixty years old. The stems rise up in a winding and zigzag manner, one sometimes resting in the forks of its neighbor. There were many more clumps of large ones there.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS


RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1860



Jan. 14. About an inch more snow fell this morning. An average snow-storm is from six to eight inches deep on a level.

The snow having ceased falling this forenoon, I go to Holden Wood, Conantum, to look for tracks. It is too soon. I see none at all but those of a hound, and also where a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (**Partridge**)] waded through the light snow, apparently while it was falling, making a deep gutter.

Yesterday there was a broad field of bare ice on each side of the river, i. e. on the meadows, and now, though it is covered with snow an inch deep, as I stand on the river or even on Fair Haven Hill a quarter to half a mile off, I can see where the ice is through the snow, plainly, trace its whole outline, it being quite dark compared with where the snow has fallen on snow. In this case a mantle of light snow even an inch thick is not sufficient to conceal the darkness of the ice beneath it, where it is contrasted with snow on snow.

Those little groves of sweet-fern still thickly leaved, whose tops now rise above the snow, are an interesting warm brown-red now, like the reddest oak leaves. Even this is an agreeable sight to the walker over snowy fields and hillsides. It has a wild and jagged leaf, alternately serrated. A warm reddish color revealed by the snow.

It is a mild day, and I notice, what I have not observed for some time, that blueness of the air only to be perceived in a mild day. I see it between me and woods half a mile distant. The softening of the air amounts to this. The mountains are quite invisible. You come forth to see this great blue presence lurking about the woods and the horizon.



DOG

January 29, Sunday: The sermon of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) celebrated the birthday of [Thomas Paine](#) (this would be distributed in the form of a pamphlet by the Office of [THE DIAL: A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION](#) in Cincinnati, Ohio).

READ THIS PAMPHLET



Jan. 29. Colder than before, and not a cloud in the sky to-day.

P.M.—To Fair Haven Pond and return *via* Andromeda Ponds and railroad.

Half an inch or more of snow fell last night, the ground being half bare before. It was a snow of small flakes not star-shaped.

As usual, I now see, walking on the river and river-meadow ice, thus thinly covered with the fresh snow, that conical rainbow, or parabola of rainbow-colored reflections, from the myriad reflecting crystals of the snow, *i. e.*, as I walk toward the sun,—



always a little in advance of me, of course, angle of reflection being equal to that of incidence.

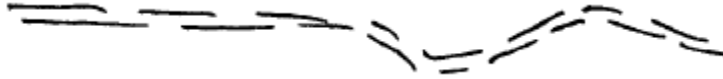
To-day I see quite a flock of the lesser redpolls eating the seeds of the alder, picking them out of the cones just as they do the larch, often head downward; and I see, under the alders, where they have run and picked up the

ALPHABETICAL BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

fallen seeds, making chain-like tracks, two parallel lines.



Not only the Indian, but many wild birds and quadrupeds and insects, welcomed the apple tree to these shores. As it grew apace, the bluebird, robin, cherrybird, kingbird, and many more came with a rush and built their nests in it, and so became orchard-birds. The woodpecker found such a savory morsel under its bark that he perforated it in a ring quite round the tree, a thing he had never done before. It did not take the partridge [Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] long to find out how sweet its buds were, and every winter day she flew and still flies from the wood to pluck them, much to the farmer's sorrow. The rabbit too was not slow to learn the taste of its twigs and bark. The owl crept into the first one that became hollow, and fairly hooted with delight, finding it just the place for him. He settled down into it, and has remained there ever since. The lackey caterpillar saddled her eggs on the very first twig that was formed, and it has since divided her affections with the wild cherry; and the canker-worm also in a measure abandoned the elm to feed on it. And when the fruit was ripe, the squirrel half carried, half rolled, it to his hole, and even the musquash crept up the bank and greedily devoured it; and when it was frozen and thawed, the crow and jay did not disdain to peck it. And the beautiful wood duck, having made up her mind to stay a while longer with us, has concluded that there is no better place for her too.



In order to obtain evidence, that the River Meadow Association needed for use against the [Middlesex Canal Corporation](#) in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (they were accused of having deliberately elevated the waters of the river system above the dams which fed water into their canal, in such manner as to have caused damage to river meadows belonging to others),<sup>53</sup> Thoreau made a chart of all the bridges along 22.15 miles of the Concord and Sudbury Rivers from East Sudbury to Billerica. He utilized Loammi Baldwin's 2d map, of May 1834, which had been surveyed and drawn originally by B.F. Perham and which Thoreau had analyzed and brought up to date during his July 1859 river soundings.

April 19, Thursday: At the annual celebration of the Lexington / [Concord](#) fight, the reputed patriotic poetaster and favorite son Samuel Ripley Bartlett raised questions as to the adequacy of the current generation of patriots:

Oh! Can it be that we degenerate sons,  
False to our blood that from such sources runs,  
Have ceased to pray by word, by deed, by thought;  
Base heirs to glory which our Fathers bought?

**PATRIOTS' DAY**

But on second though the poet recognized that the current generation of patriots would be adequate to this task:<sup>54</sup>

Here still in Concord sleeps the ancient force;  
Here rebels wild, fanatics fierce, we find,  
Who war against a tyranny more dread  
Than that of old, the thralldom of the mind.  
What the old spirit dead? No, No! — it lives.

**OLD NORTH BRIDGE**



April 19, Surveying J.B. Moore's farm.<sup>55</sup>

53. Note that the [Middlesex Canal](#) itself had had to be abandoned in 1853 due to its inability to compete economically with the new rail system, and that whatever business this shell corporation was doing was in the genre of water supply for power, water level regulation, etc.


54. Do you suppose he was speaking of our Henry? –Or was he merely speaking for himself?

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/94a.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/94a.htm)

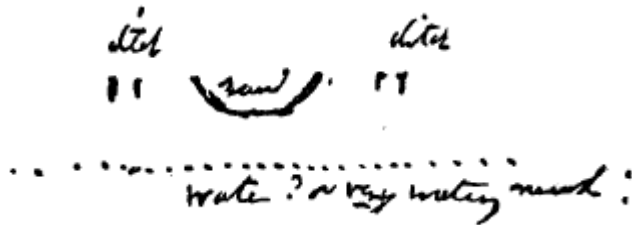
Hear the field sparrow sing on his dry upland, it being a warm day, and see the small butterfly hovering over the dry leaves.

Toward night, hear a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] drum. You will hear at first a single beat or two far apart and have time to say, "There is a partridge," so distinct and deliberate is it often, before it becomes a rapid roll.

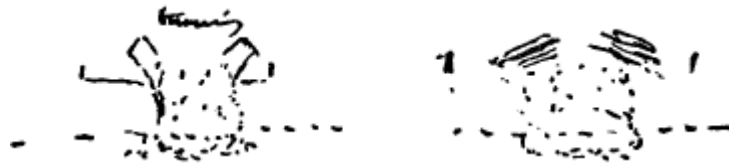


CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

Part of the Bedford road in Moore's swamp had settled a few days ago so much more that the water was six inches deep over it, when they proceeded to cart on more sand; and about the 17th, when they had carted on considerable, half a dozen rods in length suddenly sank before their eyes, and only water and sand was seen where the road had been. One said that the water was six feet deep over the road. It certainly was four or five. The road was laid out fifty feet wide, and without this, one ach side, a broad ditch had been dug, thus:—



As I calculate, at least ten feet in thickness of sand have been placed on this swamp, and the firm mud could not have been less than a dozen more. The weight of the sand has now at last pressed down the mud and broken through it, causing the sides to turn up suddenly, *i.e.*, a thickness of six feet or more to turn, indeed, completely over and bottom side up on to the middle of the road a part of the way. The weight of sand suddenly jerked this tremendous weight of mud right back on to the road, bottom up.



The evening of the 21st a few rods more, with the culvert, went down, so that it was full four feet under water, making some seven or eight rods in all.

Up to about the 17th it had settled gradually, but then it sank *instantly* some five feet. This shows that the weight of sand had burst through the mud, and that therefore it must have been comparatively liquid beneath. Perhaps it was water. In the deepest part of many a seemingly firm swamp which is cultivated, there is an exceedingly thin and liquid mud, or perhaps water. Here was probably once a pond, which has filled up and grown over, but still a relic of it survives deep under the mud in the deepest part.

There are thus the relics of ponds concealed deep under the surface, where they are little suspected, perchance, as under cleared and cultivated swamps or under roads and culverts. The two walls of the culvert must have

55. Captain John Brooks Moore, son of Abel Moore and Ruth Moore born February 18, 1817, had gotten married with Sarah Augusta Hunt of Concord on February 20, 1840 and then, after her death, her sister Almira Caroline Hunt. In 1852, according to the Middlesex Agricultural Society, he had in addition to grapes and vegetables grown 20 varieties of pears and 30 of apples. He would become the sheriff of the county, and would die on August 21, 1887.

At 1P.M. on May 10, Thursday, 1860 at the office of the Old State House in Boston, the firm of N.A. Thompson & Co. would auction Thoreau's plan of John B. Moore's farm in Concord, showing his farmland and the owners of the land that abutted his, oriented with true north at upper left, as a 17-inch by 25-inch document printed on cloth:

[http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/94b.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/94b.htm)



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER


been ten or twelve feet high, of heavy rocks, and yet they had not broken through in all this time till now!



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1931

April 8, Wednesday evening: [Henry Thoreau](#) had made much of the male **Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* “Partridge” that, perched on a specially chosen log in the underbrush, flapping hard, uses its wings to issue a thudding accelerando. During his lifetime there had been dispute and disbelief as to just how a bird could produce sounds merely by moving its feathers,



### CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

but at this day’s meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, held at Pagani’s Restaurant, 42-48 Great Portland Street, W.1., London, [Sir Philip Henry Manson-Bahr](#) put the matter to bed for once and all by standing and whirling about his head a leaded cork into which he had stuck at an acute angle the two outer tail feathers of the Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. This demonstration made it clear that it was feathers that were producing such drumming or bleating sound effects, rather than any sort of vocalization. Various other species of snipe in Asia, Australia, and South America have similar special outer tail feathers that produce tremulous sound effects.

We now have an extensive list of birds that create sounds by means of their feathers, such as the male peacock *Pavo cristatus* that vibrates its long tail plumes while in the presence of females. In the absence of females, when the male spreads its tail in display, it does not bother to shake them to produce this sound. The longer and heavier its tail plumes, the harder it shakes them and the more of this sound it makes.

The Siberian spruce grouse *Dendrogapus falcipennis*, as part of an extraordinary strutting display, holds erect its tail feathers parting them and bringing them together again with an action similar to the opening and closing of a fan. The feathers are modified in such a way as to produce a grating sound. This constitutes the non-vocal “song” of the species and accompanies a visual nuptial posturing.

The European golden-eye duck *Bucephala clangula* and teal *Anas crecca* produce sounds with their wings.

An explosive whirring sound is created by a red grouse *Lagopus lagopus* on sudden take-off. Roosting partridges arrange themselves on the ground in a tight circle and, if startled, “explode.”

The secondary feathers of the male Club-winged Manakin *Machaeropterus deliciosus* produce a violin-like sound that attract females. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FHSQQMnOko>

The commonest instrumental wing noise in the Americas is the hum produced by many species of hummingbirds. One can distinguish among different species by their different wing hums.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Wood pigeons *Columba palumbus* and feral rock doves *C. livia* (street pigeons) clap their wings together in nuptial expression. <mms://audio.bl.uk/media/wildlife/woodpigeon02?.wma?>

The short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* claps its wings together below its body while in mid-air.

The lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, during nuptial displays over the water meadows, uses its wings to make a “zooming” sound.

The little curlew *Numenius minutus* of north-eastern Siberia creates, during an aerial display, a “jet-engine” whine.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1931

Dr. Arthur A. Allen reported his photographic observations of the display of the male **Ruffed Grouse** *Bonasa umbellus*. It turned out that the report that J. Farmer had made to **Thoreau** on February 22, 1855 had been as mistaken as the reports by Wilson and Peabody that had been disputed:



The first one or two wing beats are almost silent and are given while the bird is in a nearly horizontal position, the wings striking downward and inward. The bird's tail is being lowered against the log during this preliminary beat or beats. Then abruptly he stands erect with his tail against the log, wings drooping at this sides and appears to throw his "shoulders" back. This might give the impression that the wings were struck behind the back, because the forward stroke of the wing follows so instantaneously that the eye scarcely perceives it, and it is given with such force and the wings come back to the normal position so quickly that the entire action registers on only one frame of the motion-picture film having an exposure of approximately one-fiftieth of a second. Between the "thumps" the wings of the bird register on the film with scarcely a blur representing the intervals between thumps. The varying tempo of the intervals between thumps has been noticed by all observers and as registered on the film is as follows, each number being the number of pictures or the number of sixteenth of a second between thumps:

5-6-8-8-6-5-5-4-4-3-3-3-2-2-1-2-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-00000000000000000000-1.

If one now examines the series of pictures he will see that not once is the back blurred, as it would be if the wings struck behind the back, and that wherever the wings have moved with sufficient rapidity to cause a compression of the air and resulting sound, they are registered forward and upward. This then is the effective sound-producing stroke of the wing - **forward and upward**- not outward and upward as stated by Sawyer - more like his inward and forward, which he says is silent or nearly so. Moreover, if one watches the tail of the grouse during the drumming performance, he will see it become more and more flattened against the log, for "action and reaction are equal and opposite in direction" and the forward-upward stroke of the wings tends to drive the bird backward and downward on its tail. The reaction that follows cessation of drumming is even more clear to the observer, for always, upon the completion of the drum, the bird pitches slightly forward and the tail lifts from the log as if it were a spring under compression; when the pressure is suddenly released by the cessation of drumming, the tail throws the bird forward and upward and is itself carried upward by the impetus given the bird.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**


**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1933

March 4, Saturday morning: [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) replaced Herbert Clark Hoover as president of the United States. Frances Perkins was sworn in as Secretary of Labor (the first female member of a United States cabinet). FDR deployed [Henry Thoreau](#)'s "fear of fear" trope obtained ultimately from THE BOOK OF PROVERBS (Chapter 3, verse 25 ):

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation  
of the wicked, when it cometh.

in accordance with the manner in which it was conveyed, through [Montaigne](#)'s

The thing I fear most is fear.

as of 1580 and through Sir Francis Bacon's

Nothing is terrible except fear itself.

as of 1623 and on to the [Duke of Wellington](#)'s remark of Thoreau's own generation,<sup>56</sup>

The only thing I am afraid of is fear.

This is what [Thoreau](#) had had to offer on September 7, 1851:

*It is not so much the music as the marching to the music  
that I feel.... Nothing is so much to be feared as  
fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God  
himself.*

"Fear of Fear" Trope

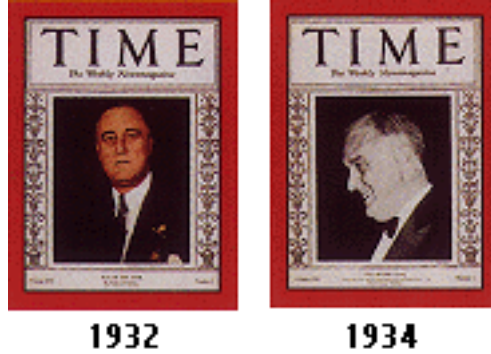
56. Sir Francis Bacon's 1623 "*De Augmentis Scientiarum*," Book II, "*Fortitudo*" and [Montaigne](#)'s 1580 "*Essais*," Book I, Chapter 17. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, Chapter 3, verse 25, records this commonplace — which must be indeed ancient. I got Wellesley's wording from the "Notes of Conversations With the Duke of Wellington" that the Earl of Stanhope published in 1888.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

President Roosevelt in delivering his inaugural address may well have supposed that he was merely using a snippet from Thoreau in his address.<sup>57</sup> **But not really.**



The problem is that Thoreau had been quoting this famous aphorism merely by mentioning it — as today we would say “oh yeah, let’s let a thousand flowers bloom” and bring everyone’s mind to Mao’s quote-by-mention of this well-known line from a Chinese classic essay.

---

57. It is merely a hypothesis, that FDR supposed he was using a quote from [Thoreau](#). Also possible is that the throwaway line “We have nothing to fear but fear itself” in his 1st inaugural address derived from nothing more sophisticated than a department store ad he had recently glimpsed in a newspaper, an ad which had also relied upon this very familiar “nothing to fear but fear” trope!



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

But his comment was trivialized by [Waldo Emerson](#) after his death, when he could no longer defend the



sophistication of his irony, and then it was the “quotation” in this trivialized form that was utilized by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his famous first inaugural address on March 4th, 1933, as part of his totally anti-Thoreauvian legitimization of American progress-thinking:

*This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly, nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.*

The gist of [Thoreau](#)'s deduction had been that, were it really true and meaningful that nothing is so much to be feared as fear, then atheism, something other than fear, would be something not so much to be feared as fear, and therefore even for God –who of course knows as well as anyone that atheism is a silly doctrine– would prefer being atheistic over being fearful. And we note that this *reductio ad absurdum* occurs in a context in which Thoreau has been ruminating about his mysterious

*It is not so much the music as the marching to the music that I feel.*

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

which was tied of course to the mysterious “distant drummer” passage at the end of WALDEN.



### DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I will quote the usual account of the development of this extrapolation, from Kenneth C. Davis's DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY BUT NEVER LEARNED:



Most of Roosevelt's campaign speeches had been written for him, but a handwritten first draft of the inaugural address shows this to be Roosevelt's own work. Yet the speech's most famous line was old wine in a new bottle. Similar sentiments about fear had been voiced before. The historian Richard Hofstadter notes that Roosevelt read Thoreau in the days before the Inauguration and was probably inspired by the line "Nothing is so much to be feared as fear."

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

This DON'T KNOW MUCH simplification elides the fact that Roosevelt was not reading Thoreau directly, but reading him as filtered through the sensibilities of Emerson. Essentially, it can fairly be said, it was **Emerson** that FDR was reading. And the preacher, sorry to say, couldn't figure out how the trout got in the milk.


OURS...to fight for



FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Emerson's son [Eddie Emerson](#), who became [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#), also had attempted to interpret this passage from Thoreau's JOURNAL. However, Dr. Eddie's cut at this quote was not superior to that of his father. The way the son recorded it, approvingly, on page 72 of his little 1917 book about Thoreau,<sup>58</sup> was:

Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. The sin that God hates is fear: he thinks Atheism innocent in comparison.

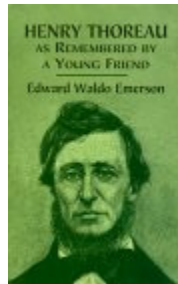
Now it is readily seen, this is nothing like what Thoreau had written. In fact it is more like the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)'s famous Unitarian sermon of Sunday, January 27, 1856 in [Washington DC](#), "The One Path, or, The Duties of The North and South" <sup>59</sup>. The changes in wording which Dr. Emerson originated have created a metaphysic which is utterly wrong and inappropriate for Thoreau. He made Thoreau out to be writing a comment about some sort of daddy-in-the-sky deity of Eddie's own perfervid imagination — and Thoreau's distancing himself from such trivial and cute self-reflexive remarks and Thoreau's total sarcasm about such religious creations were apparently quite as opaque to the Emerson son as they had been to the Emerson father.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



If you want an apposite remark about fear, you'll have to look to Eleanor Roosevelt rather than to her husband.

- 
58. [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#), HENRY THOREAU AS REMEMBERED BY A YOUNG FRIEND, EDWARD WALDO EMERSON. 1917



HENRY DAVID THOREAU AS REMEMBERED BY A YOUNG FRIEND

(Note: When the son [Edward Waldo Emerson](#) here wrote of his father [Waldo Emerson](#) that “when the Thoreau family, after Henry’s death, submitted the journals to his friend’s consideration, he, coming from his study, day by day, would tell his children his joyful surprise at the merit and the beauty which he found everywhere in those daily chronicles of Nature and of thought,” presumably he wasn’t exactly making this up out of whole cloth but also he wasn’t recounting anything he personally experienced: he had left Concord shortly after [Thoreau](#)’s burial on an overland trip to California, and was nowhere near the Emerson home while his father was doing this telling about the reading of Thoreau’s journal.)

59. The Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) announced that although he did not agree that the North should leave the Union, he also did not believe that the North should be paying any attention to the South’s threats to leave the Union: “Let us, with Montaigne, fear nothing so much as fear.”

1580: “*The thing I fear most is fear.*”

The Washington [Evening Star](#) reported that “this city was thrown into a state of unusual excitement.” The sermon would be promptly printed in full in [The National Era](#), [The National Anti-Slavery Standard](#), and [The Liberator](#). Horace Greeley would report, in the [Tribune](#), that the Reverend Conway “expects to lose his pastorate on account of it.”



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Here's one:

***“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”***

Or, if you want an apposite remark about fear, you might look to former president George Herbert Walker Bush, who would parody his own ineptitude in 1997 after completing a geriatric parachute jump:

The only fear I felt was fear itself.

Well, anyway, here's what [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) had to say to the American people on March 4th, 1933, with the relevant pseudo-Thoreauvian passage in rubric font:

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

## **INAUGURAL SPEECH OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT**

**GIVEN IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**MARCH 4TH, 1933**

**PRESIDENT HOOVER, MR. CHIEF JUSTICE, MY FRIENDS:**

**THIS IS A DAY OF NATIONAL CONSECRATION, AND I AM CERTAIN  
THAT MY FELLOW-AMERICANS EXPECT THAT ON MY INDUCTION INTO THE  
PRESIDENCY I WILL ADDRESS THEM WITH A CANDOR AND A DECISION WHICH  
THE PRESENT SITUATION OF OUR NATION IMPELS.**

**THIS IS PRE-EMINENTLY THE TIME TO SPEAK THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH,  
FRANKLY AND BOLDLY. NOR NEED WE SHRINK FROM HONESTLY FACING CONDITIONS  
IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY. THIS GREAT NATION WILL ENDURE AS IT HAS ENDURED,  
WILL REVIVE AND WILL PROSPER.**

**SO FIRST OF ALL LET ME ASSERT MY FIRM BELIEF THAT  
THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR...IS FEAR ITSELF...  
NAMELESS, UNREASONING, UNJUSTIFIED TERROR WHICH PARALYZES  
NEEDED EFFORTS TO CONVERT RETREAT INTO ADVANCE.**

**IN EVERY DARK HOUR OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE A LEADERSHIP**

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

OF FRANKNESS AND VIGOR HAS MET WITH THAT UNDERSTANDING  
AND SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO VICTORY.  
I AM CONVINCED THAT YOU WILL AGAIN GIVE THAT SUPPORT TO LEADERSHIP  
IN THESE CRITICAL DAYS.  
IN SUCH A SPIRIT ON MY PART AND ON YOURS WE FACE OUR  
COMMON DIFFICULTIES. THEY CONCERN, THANK GOD, ONLY MATERIAL THINGS.  
VALUES HAVE SHRUNKEN TO FANTASTIC LEVELS: TAXES HAVE RISEN,  
OUR ABILITY TO PAY HAS FALLEN, GOVERNMENT OF ALL KINDS IS FACED BY  
SERIOUS CURTAILMENT OF INCOME, THE MEANS OF EXCHANGE ARE FROZEN  
IN THE CURRENTS OF TRADE, THE WITHERED LEAVES OF INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE  
LIE ON EVERY SIDE, FARMERS FIND NO MARKETS FOR THEIR PRODUCE,  
THE SAVINGS OF MANY YEARS IN THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES ARE GONE.  
MORE IMPORTANT, A HOST OF UNEMPLOYED CITIZENS FACE THE GRIM PROBLEM  
OF EXISTENCE, AND AN EQUALLY GREAT NUMBER TOIL WITH LITTLE RETURN.  
ONLY A FOOLISH OPTIMIST CAN DENY THE DARK REALITIES OF THE MOMENT.  
YET OUR DISTRESS COMES FROM NO FAILURE OF SUBSTANCE.  
WE ARE STRICKEN BY NO PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS. COMPARED WITH  
THE PERILS WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS CONQUERED BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED  
AND WERE NOT AFRAID, WE HAVE STILL MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.  
NATURE STILL OFFERS HER BOUNTY AND HUMAN EFFORTS HAVE MULTIPLIED IT.  
PLENTY IS AT OUR DOORSTEP, BUT A GENEROUS USE OF IT LANGUISHES

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

IN THE VERY SIGHT OF THE SUPPLY.

PRIMARILY, THIS IS BECAUSE THE RULERS OF THE EXCHANGE OF MANKIND'S GOODS  
HAVE FAILED THROUGH THEIR OWN STUBBORNNESS AND THEIR OWN INCOMPETENCE,  
HAVE ADMITTED THEIR FAILURES AND ABDICATED. PRACTICES OF THE  
UNSCRUPULOUS MONEY CHANGERS STAND INDICTED IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION,  
REJECTED BY THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF MEN.

TRUE, THEY HAVE TRIED, BUT THEIR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN CAST  
IN THE PATTERN OF AN OUTWORN TRADITION. FACED BY FAILURE  
OF CREDIT, THEY HAVE PROPOSED ONLY THE LENDING OF MORE MONEY.

STRIPPED OF THE LURE OF PROFIT BY WHICH TO INDUCE OUR PEOPLE  
TO FOLLOW THEIR FALSE LEADERSHIP, THEY HAVE RESORTED TO EXHORTATIONS,  
PLEADING TEARFULLY FOR RESTORED CONDITIONS. THEY KNOW ONLY THE RULES  
OF A GENERATION OF SELF-SEEKERS.

THEY HAVE NO VISION, AND WHEN THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH.

THE MONEY CHANGERS HAVE FLED THEIR HIGH SEATS IN THE TEMPLE  
OF OUR CIVILIZATION. WE MAY NOW RESTORE THAT TEMPLE  
TO THE ANCIENT TRUTHS.

THE MEASURE OF THE RESTORATION LIES IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH  
WE APPLY SOCIAL VALUES MORE NOBLE THAN MERE MONETARY PROFIT.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

HAPPINESS LIES NOT IN THE MERE POSSESSION OF MONEY, IT LIES  
IN THE JOY OF ACHIEVEMENT, IN THE THRILL OF CREATIVE EFFORT.

THE JOY AND MORAL STIMULATION OF WORK NO LONGER  
MUST BE FORGOTTEN IN THE MAD CHASE OF EVANESCENT PROFITS.  
THESE DARK DAYS WILL BE WORTH ALL THEY COST US IF THEY  
TEACH US THAT OUR TRUE DESTINY IS NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO  
BUT TO MINISTER TO OURSELVES AND TO OUR FELLOW-MEN.

RECOGNITION OF THE FALSITY OF MATERIAL WEALTH AS THE STANDARD  
OF SUCCESS GOES HAND IN HAND WITH THE ABANDONMENT OF THE FALSE  
BELIEF THAT PUBLIC OFFICE AND HIGH POLITICAL POSITION ARE TO BE VALUES  
ONLY BY THE STANDARDS OF PRIDE OF PLACE AND PERSONAL PROFIT,  
AND THERE MUST BE AN END TO A CONDUCT IN BANKING AND IN BUSINESS  
WHICH TOO OFTEN HAS GIVEN TO A SACRED TRUST THE LIKENESS  
OF CALLOUS AND SELFISH WRONGDOING.

SMALL WONDER THAT CONFIDENCE LANGUISHES, FOR IT THRIVES ONLY ON HONESTY,  
ON HONOR, ON THE SACREDNESS OF OBLIGATIONS, ON FAITHFUL PROTECTION,  
ON UNSELFISH PERFORMANCE. WITHOUT THEM IT CANNOT LIVE.

RESTORATION CALLS, HOWEVER, NOT FOR CHANGES IN ETHICS ALONE.  
THIS NATION ASKS FOR ACTION, AND ACTION NOW.

OUR GREATEST PRIMARY TASK IS TO PUT PEOPLE TO WORK. THIS IS

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

NO UNSOLVABLE PROBLEM IF WE FACE IT WISELY AND COURAGEOUSLY.

IT CAN BE ACCOMPANIED IN PART BY DIRECT RECRUITING BY THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, TREATING THE TASK AS WE WOULD TREAT THE EMERGENCY OF A WAR, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THROUGH THIS EMPLOYMENT, ACCOMPLISHING GREATLY NEEDED PROJECTS TO STIMULATE AND REORGANIZE THE USE OF OUR NATIONAL RESOURCES.

HAND IN HAND WITH THIS, WE MUST FRANKLY RECOGNIZE THE OVER-BALANCE OF POPULATION IN OUR INDUSTRIAL CENTERS AND, BY ENGAGING ON A NATIONAL SCALE IN A REDISTRIBUTION, ENDEAVOR TO PROVIDE A BETTER USE OF THE LAND FOR THOSE BEST FITTED FOR THE LAND.

THE TASK CAN BE HELPED BY DEFINITE EFFORTS TO RAISE THE VALUES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND WITH THIS THE POWER TO PURCHASE THE OUTPUT OF OUR CITIES.

IT CAN BE HELPED BY PREVENTING REALISTICALLY THE TRAGEDY OF THE GROWING LOSS, THROUGH FORECLOSURE, OF OUR SMALL HOMES AND OUR FARMS.

IT CAN BE HELPED BY INSISTENCE THAT THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACT FORTHWITH ON THE DEMAND THAT THEIR COST BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

IT CAN BE HELPED BY THE UNIFYING OF RELIEF ACTIVITIES WHICH TODAY ARE OFTEN SCATTERED, UNECONOMICAL AND UNEQUAL. IT CAN BE HELPED BY NATIONAL PLANNING FOR AND SUPERVISION OF ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION AND OF COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER UTILITIES WHICH HAVE A DEFINITELY PUBLIC CHARACTER.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS IN WHICH IT CAN BE HELPED, BUT IT CAN NEVER BE HELPED MERELY BY TALKING ABOUT IT. WE MUST ACT, AND ACT QUICKLY.

FINALLY, IN OUR PROGRESS TOWARD A RESUMPTION OF WORK WE REQUIRE TWO SAFEGUARDS AGAINST A RETURN OF THE EVILS OF THE OLD ORDER:

THERE MUST BE A STRICT SUPERVISION OF ALL BANKING AND CREDITS AND INVESTMENTS; THERE MUST BE AN END TO SPECULATION WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY, AND THERE MUST BE PROVISION FOR AN ADEQUATE BUT SOUND CURRENCY.

THESE ARE THE LINES OF ATTACK. I SHALL PRESENTLY URGE UPON A NEW CONGRESS IN SPECIAL SESSION DETAILED MEASURES FOR THEIR FULFILLMENT, AND I SHALL SEEK THE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE OF THE SEVERAL STATES.

THROUGH THIS PROGRAM OF ACTION WE ADDRESS OURSELVES TO PUTTING OUR OWN NATIONAL HOUSE IN ORDER AND MAKING INCOME BALANCE OUTGO.

OUR INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS, THOUGH VASTLY IMPORTANT, ARE, TO POINT IN TIME AND NECESSITY, SECONDARY TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOUND NATIONAL ECONOMY.

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

I FAVOR AS A PRACTICAL POLICY THE PUTTING OF FIRST THINGS FIRST.

I SHALL SPARE NO EFFORT TO RESTORE WORLD TRADE BY INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
READJUSTMENT, BUT THE EMERGENCY AT HOME CANNOT WAIT ON THAT ACCOMPLISHMENT.

THE BASIC THOUGHT THAT GUIDES THESE SPECIFIC MEANS OF NATIONAL RECOVERY  
IS NOT NARROWLY NATIONALISTIC.

IT IS THE INSISTENCE, AS A FIRST CONSIDERATION, UPON THE INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN AND PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES...

A RECOGNITION OF THE OLD AND PERMANENTLY IMPORTANT MANIFESTATION  
OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER.

IT IS THE WAY TO RECOVERY. IT IS THE IMMEDIATE WAY. IT IS THE STRONGEST  
ASSURANCE THAT THE RECOVERY WILL ENDURE.

IN THE FIELD OF WORLD POLICY I WOULD DEDICATE THIS NATION TO THE POLICY  
OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR...THE NEIGHBOR WHO RESOLUTELY RESPECTS HIMSELF AND,  
BECAUSE HE DOES SO, RESPECTS THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS...THE NEIGHBOR  
WHO RESPECTS HIS OBLIGATIONS AND RESPECTS THE SANCTITY OF HIS AGREEMENTS  
IN AND WITH A WORLD OF NEIGHBORS.

IF I READ THE TEMPER OF OUR PEOPLE CORRECTLY, WE NOW REALIZE,  
AS WE HAVE NEVER REALIZED BEFORE, OUR INTERDEPENDENCE ON EACH OTHER:  
THAT WE CANNOT MERELY TAKE, BUT WE MUST GIVE AS WELL,

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

THAT IF WE ARE TO GO FORWARD WE MUST MOVE AS A TRAINED AND LOYAL  
ARMY WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR THE GOOD OF A COMMON DISCIPLINE,  
BECAUSE, WITHOUT SUCH DISCIPLINE, NO PROGRESS IS MADE,  
NO LEADERSHIP BECOMES EFFECTIVE.

WE ARE, I KNOW, READY AND WILLING TO SUBMIT OUR LIVES AND PROPERTY  
TO SUCH DISCIPLINE BECAUSE IT MAKES POSSIBLY A LEADERSHIP WHICH AIMS  
AT A LARGER GOOD.

THIS I PROPOSE TO OFFER, PLEDGING THAT THE LARGER PURPOSES  
WILL HIND UPON US ALL AS A SACRED OBLIGATION WITH A UNITY  
OF DUTY HITHERTO EVOKED ONLY IN TIME OF ARMED STRIFE.

WITH THIS PLEDGE TAKEN, I ASSUME UNHESITATINGLY THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS GREAT  
ARMY OF OUR PEOPLE, DEDICATED TO A DISCIPLINED ATTACK UPON OUR COMMON PROBLEMS.

ACTION IN THIS IMAGE AND TO THIS END IS FEASIBLE UNDER THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT  
WHICH WE HAVE INHERITED FROM OUR ANCESTORS.

OUR CONSTITUTION IS SO SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL THAT IT IS POSSIBLE  
ALWAYS TO MEET EXTRAORDINARY NEEDS BY CHANGES IN EMPHASIS  
AND ARRANGEMENT WITHOUT LOSS OF ESSENTIAL FORM.

THAT IS WHY OUR CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM HAS PROVED ITSELF  
THE MOST SUPERBLY ENDURING POLITICAL MECHANISM THE MODERN WORLD

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

HAS PRODUCED. IT HAS MET EVERY STRESS OF VAST EXPANSION OF TERRITORY,  
OF FOREIGN WARS, OF BITTER INTERNAL STRIFE, OF WORLD RELATIONS.

IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THE NORMAL BALANCE OF EXECUTIVE  
AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY MAY BE WHOLLY ADEQUATE TO MEET  
THE UNPRECEDENTED TASK BEFORE US. BUT IT MAY BE THAT AN  
UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND AND NEED FOR UNDELAYED ACTION MAY CALL  
FOR TEMPORARY DEPARTURE FROM THAT NORMAL BALANCE OF PUBLIC PROCEDURE.

I AM PREPARED UNDER MY CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO RECOMMEND THE MEASURES  
THAT A STRICKEN NATION IN THE MIDST OF A STRICKEN WORLD MAY REQUIRE.

BUT IN THE EVENT THAT THE CONGRESS SHALL FAIL TO TAKE ONE OF THESE COURSES,  
AND IN THE EVENT THAT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY IS STILL CRITICAL,  
I SHALL NOT EVADE THE CLEAR COURSE OF DUTY THAT WILL THEN CONFRONT ME.

I SHALL ASK THE CONGRESS FOR THE ONE REMAINING INSTRUMENT  
TO MEET THE CRISIS...BROAD EXECUTIVE POWER TO WAGE A WAR  
AGAINST THE EMERGENCY AS GREAT AS THE POWER THAT WOULD BE GIVEN  
TO ME IF WE WERE IN FACT INVADED BY A FOREIGN FOE.

FOR THE TRUST REPOSED IN ME I WILL RETURN THE COURAGE  
AND THE DEVOTION THAT BEFIT THE TIME. I CAN DO NO LESS.

WE FACE THE ARDUOUS DAYS THAT LIE BEFORE US IN THE WARM  
COURAGE OF NATIONAL UNITY, WITH THE CLEAR CONSCIOUSNESS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

OF SEEKING OLD AND PRECIOUS MORAL VALUES, WITH THE CLEAN  
SATISFACTION THAT COMES FROM THE STERN PERFORMANCE OF DUTY  
BY OLD AND YOUNG ALIKE.

WE AIM AT THE ASSURANCE OF A ROUNDED AND PERMANENT NATIONAL LIFE.

WE DO NOT DISTRUST THE FUTURE OF ESSENTIAL DEMOCRACY.

THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE NOT FAILED.

IN THEIR NEED THEY HAVE REGISTERED A MANDATE

THAT THEY WANT DIRECT, VIGOROUS ACTION.

THEY HAVE ASKED FOR DISCIPLINE AND DIRECTION UNDER LEADERSHIP.

THEY HAVE MADE ME THE PRESENT INSTRUMENT OF THEIR WISHES.

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GIFT I WILL TAKE IT.

IN THIS DEDICATION OF A NATION WE HUMBLY ASK THE BLESSING OF GOD.

MAY HE PROTECT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US! MAY HE GUIDE ME IN THE

DAYS TO COME!

Soon after his inauguration President [Roosevelt](#) would begin radio broadcasts to the nation from the [White House](#) that would be known as “fireside chats.” A heated indoor swimming pool would be built in the west terrace for the President’s therapy, as he had been disabled by poliomyelitis (the pool would be covered in 1974 and the space converted into a room for press briefings).

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

(In his “First 100 Days,” FDR would initiate New Deal programs to provide immediate relief, create jobs, and foster economic recovery. In next few years, he would lead reform efforts in civil rights, labor relations, banking, and civil service, creating a Social Security Administration in 1935.)



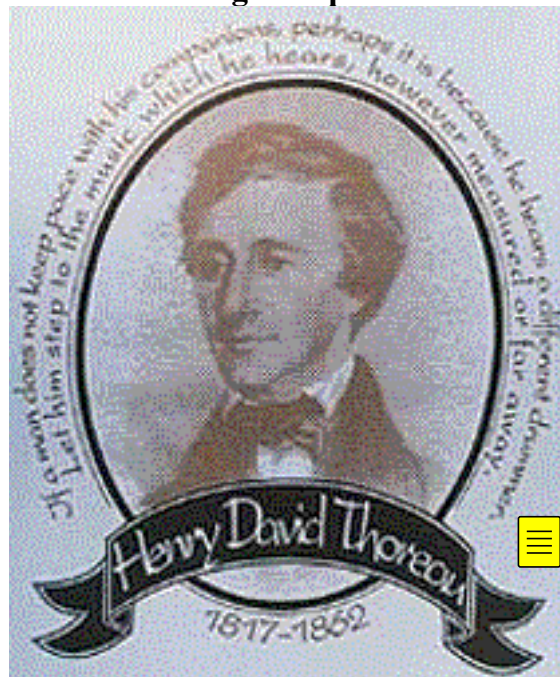
1959

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s THE SIRENS OF TITAN was published by Delacorte Press of New York, and in paperback by Dell.



Following the death of Jesus Christ there was a period of readjustment that lasted for approximately one million years.  
-Kurt Vonnegut, THE SIRENS OF TITAN

A Thought Experiment



What would the world be like, if it were perfected and everyone would be able to step in unison to the beat of the same drummer? Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., a graduate of the University of Hard Knocks (Dresden branch), has made an attempt to conceive what such a perfected world would feel like, and has encapsulated this thought experiment as Chapter Four of his out-of-print science fiction masterwork THE SIRENS OF TITAN. I urge you to peruse that masterwork in its entirety, if you can at this late date secure in a used-bookstore a paperback copy to grace



ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

your personal shelf:

### TENT RENTALS

Rented a tent, a tent, a tent;  
Rented a tent, a tent, a tent.  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a, rented a tent.

— SNARE DRUM ON MARS 

The men had marched to the parade ground to the sound of a snare drum. The snare drum had this to say to them:

*Rented a tent, a tent, a tent;  
Rented a tent, a tent, a tent.  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a, rented a tent.*

They were an infantry division of ten thousand men, formed in a hollow square on a natural parade ground of solid iron one mile thick. The soldiers stood at attention on orange rust. They shivered rigidly, being as much like iron as they could be — both officers and men. Their uniforms were a rough-textured, frosty green — the color of lichens.

The army had come to attention in utter silence. No audible or visible signal had been given. They had come to attention as a man, as though through a stupendous coincidence.

The third man in the second squad of the first platoon of the second company of the third battalion of the second regiment of the First Martian Assault Infantry Division was a private who had been broken from lieutenant-colonel three years before. He had been on Mars for eight years.

When a man in a modern army is broken from field grade to private, it is likely that he will be old for a private, and that his comrades in arms, once they get used to the fact that he isn't an officer any more, will, out of respect for his failing legs, eyes, and wind, call him something like **Pops**, or **Gramps**, or **Unk**.

The third man in the second squad of the first platoon of the second company in the third battalion of the second regiment of the First Martian Assault Infantry Division was called **Unk**. Unk was forty years old. Unk was a well-made man — a light heavyweight, dark-skinned, with poet's lips, with soft brown eyes in the shaded caves of a Cro-Magnon brow ridge. Incipient baldness had isolated a dramatic scalplock.

An illustrative anecdote about Unk:

One time, when Unk's platoon was taking a shower, Henry Brackman, Unk's platoon sergeant, asked a sergeant from another regiment to pick out the best soldier in the platoon. The visiting sergeant, without any hesitation, picked Unk, because Unk was a compact, nicely muscled, intelligent man among boys.

Brackman rolled his eyes. "Jesus — you'd think so, wouldn't you?" he said. "That's the platoon f-kup."

"You kidding me?" said the visiting sergeant.

"Hell no, I ain't kidding you," said Brackman. "Look at him — been standing there for ten minutes, and hasn't touched a piece of soap yet. Unk! Wake up, Unk!"

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Unk shuddered, stopped dreaming under the tepid drizzle of the shower head. He looked questioningly at Brackman, bleakly co-operative.

“Use some soap, Unk!” said Brackman. “For Chrissakes, use some soap!”

Now, on the iron parade ground, Unk stood at attention in the hollow square like all the rest.

In the middle of the hollow square was a stone post with iron rings fixed to it. Chains had been drawn rattling through the rings — had been drawn tight around a red-haired soldier standing against a post. The soldier was a clean soldier — but he was not a neat soldier, for all the badges and decorations had been stripped off his uniform, and he had no belt, no necktie, no snow-white puttees.

Everybody else, including Unk, was all spiffed up. Everybody else looked very nice indeed.

Something painful was going to happen to the man at the stake — something from which the man would want to escape very much, something from which he was not going to escape, because of the chains.

And all the soldiers were going to watch.

The event was being given great importance.

Even the man at the stake was standing at attention, being the best soldier he knew how to be, under the circumstances.

Again — no audible or visible order was given, but the ten thousand soldiers executed the movement of **parade rest** as a man.

So did the man at the stake.

Then the soldiers relaxed in ranks, as though given the order **at ease**. Their obligations under this order were to relax, but to keep their feet in place, and to keep silent. The soldiers were free to think a little now, and to look around and to send messages with their eyes, if they had messages and could find receivers.

The man at the stake tugged against his chains, craned his neck to judge the height of the stake to which he was chained. It was as though he thought he might escape by use of the scientific method, if only he could find out how high the stake was and what it was made of.

The stake was nineteen feet, six and five thirty-seconds inches high, not counting the twelve feet, two and one-eighth inches of it embedded in the iron. The stake had a mean diameter of two feet, five and eleven third-seconds inches, varying from this mean, however, by as much as seven and one thirty-second inches. The stake was composed of quartz, alkali, feldspar, mica, and traces of tourmaline and hornblende. For the information of the man at the stake: He was one hundred and forty-two million, three hundred and forty-six thousand, nine hundred and eleven miles from the Sun, and help was not on its way.

The red-haired man at the stake made no sound, because soldiers at ease were not permitted to make sounds. He sent a message with his eyes, however, to the effect that he would like to scream. He sent the message to anyone whose eyes would meet his. He was hoping to get the message to one person in particular, to his best friend — to Unk. He was looking for Unk.

He couldn't find Unk's face.

If he had found Unk's face, there wouldn't have been any blooming of recognition and pity on Unk's face. Unk had just come out of the base hospital, where he had been treated for mental illness, and Unk's mind was almost a blank. Unk didn't recognize his best friend at the stake. Unk didn't recognize anybody. Unk wouldn't have even known his own name was Unk, wouldn't even have known he was a soldier, if they hadn't told him so when they discharged him from the hospital.

He had gone straight from the hospital to the formation he was in now.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

At the hospital they told him again and again and again that he was the best soldier in the best squad in the best platoon in the best company in the best battalion in the best regiment in the best division in the best army.

Unk guessed that was something to be proud of.

At the hospital they told him he had been a pretty sick boy, but he was fully recovered now.

That seemed like good news.

At the hospital they told him what his sergeant's name was, and what a sergeant was, and what all the symbols of ranks and grades and specialties were.

They had blanked out so much of Unk's memory that they even had to teach him the foot movements and the manual of arms all over again.

At the hospital they even had to explain to Unk what Combat Respiratory Rations or CRR's or goofballs were — had to tell him to take one every six hours or suffocate. These were oxygen pills that made up for the fact that there wasn't any oxygen in the Martian atmosphere.

At the hospital they even had to explain to Unk that there was a radio antenna under the crown of his skull, and that it would hurt him whenever he did something a good soldier wouldn't ever do. The antenna also would give him orders and furnish drum music to march to. They said that not just Unk but everybody had an antenna like that — doctors and nurses and four-star generals included. It was a very democratic army, they said.

Unk guessed that was a good way for an army to be.

At the hospital they gave Unk a small sample of the pain his antenna would stick him with if he ever did anything wrong.

The pain was horrible.

Unk was bound to admit that a soldier would be crazy not to do his duty at all times.

At the hospital they had said the most important rule of all was this one: Always obey a direct order without a moment's hesitation.

Standing there in formation on the iron parade ground, Unk realized that he had a lot to relearn. At the hospital they hadn't taught him everything there was to know about living.

The antenna in his head brought him to attention again and his mind went blank. Then the antenna put Unk at parade rest again, then at attention again, then made him give a rifle salute, then put him at ease again.

His thinking began again. He caught another glimpse of the world around him.

Life was like that, Unk told himself tentatively — blanks and glimpses, and now and then maybe that awful flash of pain for doing something wrong.

A small, low-flying, fast-flying moon sailed in the violet sky overhead. Unk didn't know why he thought so, but he thought the moon was moving too fast. It didn't seem right. And the sky, he thought, should be blue instead of violet.

Unk felt cold, too, and he longed for more warmth.

The unending cold seemed as wrong, as unfair, somehow, as the fast moon and the violet sky.

Unk's divisional commander was now talking to Unk's regimental commander. Unk's regimental commander spoke to Unk's battalion commander. Unk's battalion commander spoke to Unk's company commander. Unk's company commander spoke to Unk's platoon leader, who was Sergeant Brackman.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Brackman came up to Unk and ordered him to march up to the man at the stake in a military manner and strangle him until he was dead.

Brackman told Unk it was a direct order.

So Unk did it.

He marched up to the man at the stake. He marched in time to the dry, tinny music of one snare drum. The sound of the snare drum was really just in his head, coming from his antenna:

*Rented a tent, a tent, a tent;  
Rented a tent, a tent, a tent.  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a, rented a tent.*

When Unk got to the man at the stake, Unk hesitated for just a second — because the red-haired man at the stake looked so unhappy. Then there was a tiny warning pain in Unk’s head, like the first deep nip of a dentist’s drill.

Unk put his thumbs on the red-haired man’s windpipe, and the pain stopped right away. Unk didn’t press with his thumbs, because the man was trying to tell him something. Unk was puzzled by the man’s silence — and then realized that the man’s antenna must be keeping him silent, just as antennas were keeping all of the soldiers silent.

Heroically, the man at the stake now overcame the will of his antenna, spoke rapidly, writhingly. “Unk ... Unk ... Unk ...” he said, and the spasms of the fight between his own will and the will of the antenna made him repeat the name idiotically. “**Blue stone, Unk,**” he said. “**Barrack twelve ... letter.**”

The warning pain nagged in Unk’s head again. Dutifully, Unk strangled the man at the stake — choked him until the man’s face was purple and his tongue stuck out.

Unk stepped back, came to attention, did a smart about-face and returned to his place in ranks — again accompanied by the snare drum in his head:

*Rented a tent, a tent, a tent;  
Rented a tent, a tent, a tent.  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a, rented a tent.*

Sergeant Brackman nodded at Unk, winked affectionately.

Again the ten thousand came to attention.

Horribly, the dead man at the stake struggled to come to attention, too, rattling his chains. He failed — failed to be a perfect soldier — not because he didn’t want to be one but because he was dead.

Now the great formation broke up into rectangular components. These marched mindlessly away, each man hearing a snare drum in his head. An observer would have heard nothing but the tread of boots.

An observer would have been at a loss as to who was really in charge, since even the generals moved like marionettes, keeping time to the idiotic words:

*Rented a tent, a tent, a tent;  
Rented a tent, a tent, a tent.  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a tent!  
Rented a, rented a tent.*





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1962

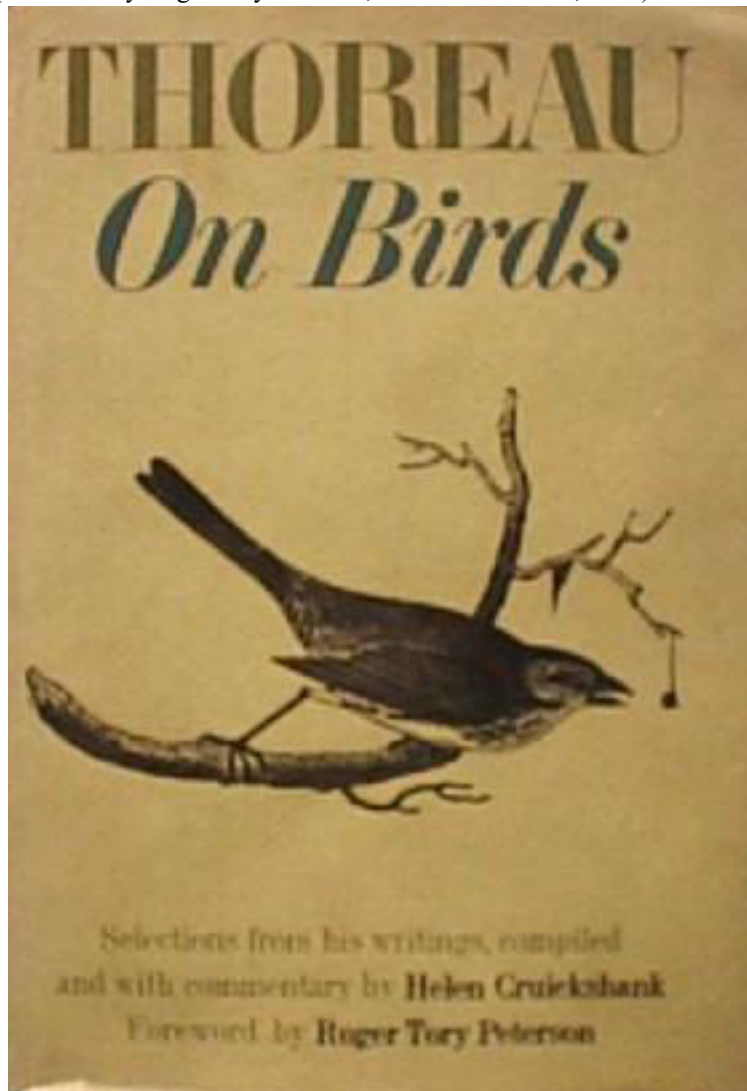
A DIFFERENT DRUMMER, still regarded as William Melvin Kelley’s best novel, imagined the impact on the whites of a southern state of an imagined sudden exodus in 1959 of all the blacks. Beginning in 1994, W. Lawrence Hogue has been working at a CELEBRATING AFRICAN AMERICAN (MALE) DIFFERENCES project, the 4th chapter of which focuses on this novel in order to explore “how the instinctive, Thoreauvian concept of radical individualism posits a social space where the African American can exist as a non-victim.” His objective in doing this work was to recreate the African American not as victim or as devalued Other any longer, in the cultural, social, and psychological narratives of the West, not as people seeking to latch onto the middle-class American stereotypical life — but instead as a fully differentiated and authentic and originative influence on our shared culture.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



1964

Yet another in the series of repetitive, derivative, and incomplete “Thoreau on Birds” publications put out by this, that, and the other trade publisher, in the tradition of THOREAU’S BIRD-LORE; BEING NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND BIRDS FROM THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU; arranged and edited by Francis Henry Allen (1866-1947) (n.p. Houghton, 1925): THOREAU ON BIRDS. Compiled and with commentary by [Helen Gere Cruickshank](#). (Foreword by Roger Tory Peterson; NY: McGraw-Hill, 1964).



Here for instance is what Helen has to say about [Thoreau](#)’s observations of the Ruffed Grouse [Bonasa umbellus](#) that was then in New England being termed the “partridge”: “Thoreau quite naturally found most



ALPHABETICAL BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

interesting those birds which he could easily observe.” –Wow, doesn’t that lead sentence help you infer how very deeply she intends to dive into this topic?

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### HELEN GERE CRUICKSHANK

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Thoreau quite naturally found most interesting those birds which he could easily observe. Ruffed grouse were common in the varied habitat around Concord. Moreover, they could be approached close enough for good observation.

Not only do the young leave the nest as soon as they are dry, but by the time they are twelve days old they can fly from twenty to thirty feet. Thoreau’s experiences with this species are enjoyed by all readers. Moreover, they can be duplicated to-day by observant bird watchers in the very same places where Thoreau watched the grouse.

Not until slow-motion moving pictures were made of ruffed grouse drumming was it definitely proved that the sound was made by fanning the air with the wings, not by striking the body or perch. The pulsing throb is produced by gradually increased speed until the movements of the wings are too fast for the eye to count them, and thumps merge into a whirl. The movements tilt the grouse backward until his tail is pressed tightly against the log on which he stands and when the drumming stops, he springs upward as if by recoil.

Many creatures, including man, sometimes take refuge from cold by digging a shelter in the snow. Grouse have learned to fly into loose snow, or push their way backward into firm snow, for protection against severe cold. On rare occasions the snug shelter of the snow has turned into a death trap when sleet or freezing rain have formed a strong crust which the grouse cannot break so that they are held captive by the snow.

The reader must have become aware of Thoreau’s habit of naming the places which he frequently visited. Often the name given was for a bird or plant characteristic of an area. Some of these names were Tanager Woods, Owl Swamp, Orchis Swamp, Bittern Cliff, Nut Meadow, Pink Azalea Woods, Trillium Woods, and Andromeda Ponds. His *S. tristis* Path in the section which follows might have more general appeal had he called it Dwarf Gray Willow Path instead of using the scientific name for the small shrub which grew beside this trail and at times sheltered the ruffed grouse.

And, in regard to Thoreau’s more than 40 journal comments about the red-winged blackbird  *Agelaius phoeniceus* over almost a decade of observation, she had the following to offer:

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### HELEN GERE CRUICKSHANK

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It was an exciting moment for Thoreau, as it is for all who watch for early spring movements of birds, when the first lively flock of red-winged blackbirds arrived in Concord and began to sing loudly in a group, each singing lustily and independently of the others. Long before the plain brown females arrived, the males began to display their shoulder epaulets of glowing red. Using their voices and the display of their red shoulder patches, they attempted to claim and protect territories on which they would nest later. While their nesting places are usually in or near marshes, they may find their food in grain fields, orchards, and pastures a mile away, and as they feed, their brilliant red shoulder patches may be hidden or almost hidden behind their black feathers.

## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1967

Edward Wagenknecht, in his biography of [John Greenleaf Whittier](#), on page 90, as part of his examination of why Friend John never married, opined that Whittier had “marched to a far-away music.”

DIFFERENT  
DRUMMER

Well, if he had marched, he certainly hadn't marched far (despite the fact that his statue is in southern California). In fact it is interesting to compare a map of the travels of [Henry Thoreau](#) (whose statue is in Concord, Massachusetts and is thought never to have gone anywhere but did in fact travel to such locales as Canada and [Minnesota](#)) with the stay-at-home Friend John, who was also an avid consumer of travel literature but never got any farther north than the White Mountains or any farther west than Chambersburg PA — even after a [California](#) town had been named in his honor and had donated to him a plot of land at its center:



“Munich, the Louvre, and the Vatican are doubtless well worth seeing, but I fancy I see all and much more in my own painted woodlands.”<sup>60</sup>

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60. This in a letter to [Waldo Emerson](#). –You'd never guess from [Whittier](#)'s writing that he was so colorblind that he was quite unable to distinguish red from green! But then he also was capable of writing, apparently knowingly, of the appearance of Strausburg Cathedral — and of the feeling of the air of the southern region of Spain!



# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**1983**

 Michael Noonan’s A DIFFERENT DRUMMER: THE STORY OF E.J. BANFIELD, BEACHCOMBER OF DUNK ISLAND was issued in Brisbane, Australia by the University of Queensland Press.

**EDMUND JAMES BANFIELD**

## CABIN ESCAPISM AND HOW IT GREW:

“We went to the wilderness because 100 years ago a man wrote a book.”



YEAR	PERSON	BOOK	PLACE
1889	Philip G. Herbert, Jr.	LIBERTY AND A LIVING	Long Island
1951	Vena Angier and Bradford Angier	AT HOME IN THE WOODS: LIVING THE LIFE OF THOREAU TODAY	Hudson Hope, British Columbia
1968	Edward Abby	DESERT SOLITAIRE	Utah
1971	Charles Seib	THE WOODS: ONE MAN’S ESCAPE TO NATURE	North Carolina
1974	Annie Dillard	PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK	Virginia
1978	George Sibley	PART OF A WINTER	mountains of Colorado
1983	Gilbert Byron	COVE DWELLER	Maryland’s eastern shore
1987	Anne LaBastille	BEYOND BLACK BEAR LAKE	Adirondack Mountains

**ALPHABETICAL BIRDS**





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1984

[Walter Roy Harding](#) edited [Thoreau](#)'s JOURNAL in the 1906 edition, which he had previously re-edited as two big volumes by Dover in 1963, for republication by Peregrine-Smith. In this year Professor Emeritus Harding became the first faculty member of the SUNY system to be awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree.



Isaac Oelgart laid out a very nicely prepared book or booklet of quotations from the 1906 edition of the JOURNAL, entitled H.D. THOREAU ON [PARTRIDGES](#): SELECTIONS FROM HIS JOURNAL 1851-1860. Copy #26 of this oeuvre is in the special collections of the Library of the University of California – Santa Barbara. It is difficult for me to imagine why Mr. Oelgart limited himself to the JOURNAL, and to imagine why he began his excerpts as late as 1851, and to imagine why the excerpts he selected missed so many of Thoreau's interesting comments — perhaps he considered that the collector's world of rich bored people trying to impress other rich bored people needed one more beautifully produced book but that the customers for such a genre wouldn't be much involved with the concepts lurking behind by the beautifully shaped letters?



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Victor Carl Friesen, in his THE SPIRIT OF THE HUCKLEBERRY, described the passage in [A WEEK](#) about [Thoreau](#) wanting to lead a “**purely** sensuous life”:



The emphasis on “purely” seems to suggest that his life be whole sensuous, not necessarily excluding the rational life but plainly giving it a sensuous basis. “Purely” also seems to suggest “purity,” so that a “purely sensuous life” would be one where the senses are undefiled by dissipation, a life where crystalline senses are extensively used in a wholesome appreciation of nature. A third suggested meaning could point to a life where one has a kind of supersensory perception, capable of hearing “celestial” sounds and capable of learning “that there is a nature behind the ordinary.”



Since, in [A WEEK](#), [Thoreau](#) imagines the color of his soul to be “bright invisible green,” it is possible that this talk about a “purely sensuous” life is a **synesthesia**, a shift of words from one framework to another, a use of the words pertaining to the body and to the senses within the framework of the discourse of the soul and of the mind. Examples of Thoreau’s use of synesthesia: the crackling of hemlock boughs in a fire was like mustard to his ears ([February 20, 1854](#)), a sparrow’s song was as distinct as a spark of fire shot into the forest ([July 26, 1857](#)), the chinking note of the shrike sounded like much ice in the stream ([March 7, 1859](#)), the trills of the bluebird were curls of sound ([March 18, 1853](#)) and were so many corkscrews assaulting and thawing the torpid mass of winter ([March 18, 1853](#)), etc. Here is Friesen about synesthesia, on page 74:



A study of a writer’s synesthetic transfers, the shift of words from the vocabulary of one sense to another, tells us something about how his imagination works. With Thoreau, in a sample of forty synesthetic images, the subject in about two-thirds of them has to do with sounds, and two-thirds of that number derive their vocabulary from the sense of sight. Most of the remaining subjects are concerned with sight, while the sense of touch, thermal and tactile, provides a vocabulary for about one-third of the total transfers. In any literary synesthesia it is usual for the majority of transfers between two senses to have the vocabulary taken from the higher level of the sensorium. Thoreau’s many examples of visual audition are “conventional” in this regard, since sight is at a higher level than sound... [V]isual terminology [is] richer than acoustic terminology ... sight is Thoreau’s dominant sense.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1985

After having taught for more than four decades at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Reverend Doctor [William J. Wolf](#) retired as Howard Chandler Robbins Professor.

[Jane Wagner](#)'s THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT [*sic*] LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE (to be filmed with [Mary Jean "Lily" Tomlin](#) in 1991).



"I used to be proud  
I stuck out from the crowd  
now everyone's marching  
to a different drummer  
what a bummer!  
But I don't mind it..."



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1990

David Cowart assimilated the spirits of Henry Thoreau (WALDEN), of Thomas Pynchon (THE CRYING OF LOT 49), and of [Kurt Vonnegut](#) (PALM SUNDAY) by declaring the three authors capable of “heteroclitic patriotism,” which he defined as condemning one’s country’s faults yet communicating “an abiding love.” Cowart cited Vonnegut’s offhand admission that “This county has fulfilled more of the requirements of the Communist Manifesto than any avowedly Communist nation ever did.”

[Frederick W. Turner](#), on page 26 of SPIRIT OF PLACE: THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN LITERARY LANDSCAPE, informed us that “While teaching school, doing odd jobs, and engaging in the appropriate activities of his self-styled career, Thoreau was beset by an insistent drumbeat of doubt.” From the context in which this phrase “his self-styled career” appears, it would be plausible to infer that the phrase amounts to something similar to the sneering description “country scholar” that was popular in Thoreau’s day among the clubbable Harvard graduates of downtown Boston, and is short for something of the order of: “the self-styled career of a self-appointed autodidact solitary scholar.”



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1991

January: [Austin Meredith](#) placed an article “Spring Thunder Stills Concord’s Desperate Enterprise” in the Thoreau Research Newsletter 2:1:



*Austin Meredith*

I have been re-editing Henry David Thoreau’s various references to birds in order to re-create them on a computer disk along with drawings, Audubon paintings, photographs, and recordings of their calls; and while doing this piece of detailed work I have discovered something of great interest. What I found is that, all along, Thoreau literary scholars have been misunderstanding the remark immediately after the “Spring” chapter at the end of WALDEN about hearing “a different drummer”! Here is the remark, which Thoreau first included in 1853 in the 7th draft of WALDEN and finished before the spring of 1854:

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**WALDEN:** Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

THE INNER LIGHT

Like everyone else, I had assumed that the drummer in this passage was a military one, like the drummer-boys of the militia that marched on the common at the center of Concord, Massachusetts, whacking away on their snare drums as rows of local farm-boys practiced their manual of arms with smoothbore muskets left over from earlier wars. Concord is in fact surrounded by nearby little towns like Lexington, Lincoln, Bedford, Sudbury, Acton, and Carlisle, each having its own common and its own militia and its own drummer-boys and its own tradition of military heroism. All these youths within earshot of each other, so they could easily march to the beat of the wrong snare drum and get out of step. Recently, though, I have felt compelled to change my understanding of the "different drummer" in WALDEN from a militaristic understanding to a natural understanding. The following remark about "distant drumming" from Thoreau's journal of May 11, 1853 has caused me to change my understanding:



I hear the distant drumming of a partridge. Its beat, however distant and low, falls still with a remarkably forcible, almost painful, impulse on the ear, like veritable little drumsticks on our tympanum, as if it were a throbbing or fluttering in our veins or brows or the chambers of the ear, and belonging to ourselves — as if it were produced by some little insect which had made its way up into the passages of the ear, so penetrating is it. It is as palpable to the ear as the sharpest note of a fife. Of course, that bird can drum with its wings on a log which can go off with such a powerful whirl, beating the air. I have seen a thoroughly frightened hen and cockerel fly almost as powerfully, but neither can sustain it long. Beginning slowly and deliberately, the partridges beat sounds faster and faster from far away under the boughs and through the aisles of the wood until it becomes a regular roll, but is speedily concluded. How many things shall we not see and be and do, when we walk there where the partridge drums!

You will notice that the "G" draft of WALDEN in which the words about the distant drummer is first included is quite close in time to Thoreau's journal entry for May 11, 1853 — not more than a year later, at the very most. Searching a bit further, I found that Thoreau had written the following sometime after July 4, 1845 when he moved to his

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

new shanty at Walden Pond, about the drumming of the ruffed grouse:



After July 4: {one-fifth page blank} When I behold an infant I am impressed with a sense of antiquity, and reminded of the sphinx or Sybil. It seems older than Nestor or Jove himself, and wears the wrinkles of Saturn.

Why should the present impose upon us so much! I sit now upon a stump whose rings number centuries of growth— If I look around me I see that the very soil is composed of just such stumps — ancestors to this. I thrust this stick many aeons deep into the surface — and with my heel scratch a deeper furrow than the elements have ploughed here for a thousand years— If I listen I hear the peep of frogs which is older than the slime of Egypt — or a distant partridge [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] drumming on a log — as if it were the pulse-beat of the summer air.



CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

I raise my fairest and freshest flowers in the old mould.  
 –Why, what we call new is not skin deep — the earth is not yet stained by it. It is not the fertile ground we walk upon but the leaves that flutter over our head  
 The newest is but the oldest made visible to our eyes. We dig up the soil from a thousand feet below the surface and call it new, and the plants which spring from it.



Thus, when Thoreau mentions the association between drums and the timeless territorial/sexual urgencies of the ruffed grouse in his journal on May 11, 1853, he is returning to an association which had occurred to him at least once before, some eight years earlier. Turning to my concordance of WALDEN, I found that among nine references to partridges [Ruffed Grouse **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)], such as comparing the rattle of railroad coaches as they convey Boston people into the countryside to the beat of the partridge, the only other references to “drum” are one reference to bird drumsticks and one reference to the natural booming of ice on the surface of Walden Pond under certain changing conditions of weather, a phenomenon that Thoreau first noted in his first winter at the pond (1845/1846). The reference to bird drumsticks is interesting because in Thoreau’s day people assumed the bird produced its “spring thunder” by thumping on its drumming log. They had not observed that the drumming is produced by air passing between the primaries and the secondaries as the bird fans its wings so fast they become a blur. The comparison of partridge drumming to quasi-regular railroad noises is interesting because it compares a sound of natural urgency to a sound generated by a time-conscious human enterprise. The reference to Walden’s “ice drum” is similarly interesting because the vast Walden Pond “drum,” which booms only annually, only at a certain icy season of the year, is in no way related to humans. Therefore, in the context of WALDEN, may we not anticipate that a final reference to a drumbeat will also contrast a sound of human urgency with a sound of nonhuman urgency? “How many things shall we not see and be and do, when we walk there where the partridge drums!”

One might imagine, at first imagination, that in the context of military music, “measured” can only mean “regular.” And of course the drumming of the ruffed grouse is anything but regular, is in fact not



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

the sort of beat to which any covey of human heroes could stamp their feet in unison. However, Thoreau was not a marcher but a Rambler, even a saunterer, and we must pay attention to the important modifying adverb "however." Although "measured" military music is nothing but regular, "however measured" may very well indicate that our devious author was hinting at a secondary meaning that is quite the opposite - "irregular" or "having a regular irregularity" - and at a secondary kind of marching that is quite different from military maneuvers - his sneaky back-fence "sauntering," in which the prime ingredient is an unfocused absolute attention that devotes one's complete attentiveness to absolutely everything in the world. Here is a contemporary Catholic nun expressing the essence of the message about attentiveness that Thoreau embedded in his talk about "sauntering":



The reason we live life so dimly and with such divided hearts is that we have never really learned how to be present with quality to God, to self, to others, to experiences and events, to all created things. We have never learned to gather up the crumbs of whatever appears in our path at every moment. We meet all of these lovely gifts only half there. Presence is what we are all starving for. Real presence! We are too busy to be present, too blind to see the nourishment and salvation in the crumbs of life, the experiences of each moment. Yet the secret of daily life is this: There are no leftovers!

We can infer the secondary meaning "irregular" here because in some better music than military music the "measure" (that is, the time signature: 2/4 time, 4/4 time, 3/8 time, etc.) often alters from "measure" to "measure" (that is, from bar to bar). We can imagine that although the local drummer, the snare drummer of the militia, is hitting a regular hay-foot straw-foot stride for the farm boy marchers on the common, our Henry is out in the woods again, sauntering along where he merely hears in the remote distance what is going on in the center of the town, hitting no stride but his own stride, paying absolute attention to wild life and ignoring the urgent demands of his society, in fact heeding nothing but the natural urgencies so manifest in the spring thunder of the back fields and woodlands. A regular birder, he; in the eyes of his fellows, a desperate character indeed. Thus my contention becomes that this image of a natural drummer was what Thoreau had in his mind for us when he wrote this important paragraph in WALDEN. You will note that what the paragraph is about is human desperation! "Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises?" Try thinking about our human desperations in the context of the single-minded, bold, even insolent self-confidence of a drumming grouse, on its stand under God's blue heaven, and you'll have to laugh.

My track record at discovering things, to date, is that I'm usually the last person to notice what has been obvious to everybody else. And yet, I was surprised to find in this case, when I offered my new understanding to a series of Thoreau scholars, it was as new to them as it had been to me. To seriously study Thoreau materials is to constantly be surprised in this way.



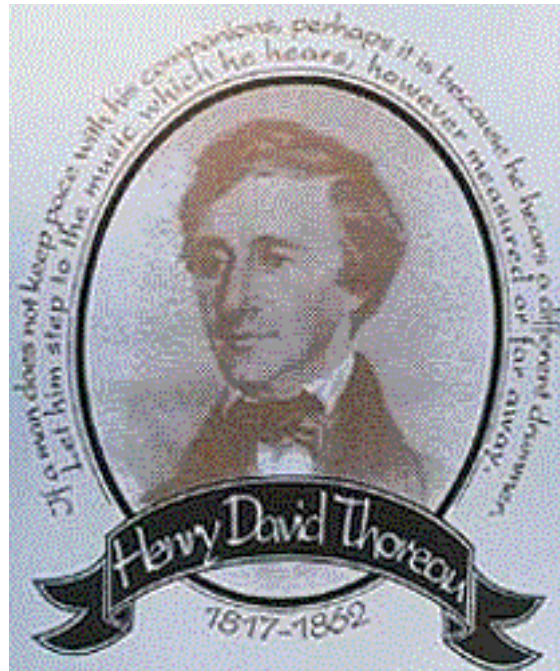


## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER



Now the image of the drummer can mean a lot more because we can imagine that Thoreau was not talking up any minor treason of preferring some one military unit over some other military unit, any minor treason of giving one's loyalty to a political entity other than the political entity that supposes it owns one's loyalty, but was rather talking up a really radical, major treason: the racial treason of honoring the natural urgencies of nonhumans over the rational urgencies of ones own conspecifics. In the 19th Century Thoreau was censored and his protests were ignored when he attempted to say such things in an article for The Atlantic Monthly – but we no longer live in the 19th Century and such thoughts about ourselves no longer frighten us.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

October 16, Wednesday: From an advertisement in the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) journal:

**Let Thoreau step to the beat of a different drummer.  
He wanted to go it alone. You don't have to.**



The sponsor of this advertisement, which was approximately as relevant to [Henry Thoreau](#) as a murder mystery by the British author Clive Egleton entitled A DIFFERENT DRUMMER, was Information Associates (a subsidiary of Dun & Bradstreet Software, provider of software that's so user-friendly it reaches right out of your computer and grasps you by the hand).

At 12:35PM in Killeen, Texas, unemployed George "Jo Jo" Pierre Hennard, like Henry Thoreau, stepped to the beat of a different drummer. He wanted to go it alone. Mad as hell, he wasn't going to take it anymore. – And so, he crashed his blue 1987 Ford Ranger pickup through the front window of Luby's Cafeteria. When Michael Griffith, a local veterinarian, jumped to the driver's window of the pickup truck to render assistance, Jo Jo cried out "This is what Bell County did to me! and opened fire, executing the helpful veterinarian. There happened to be approximately 139 others in the cafeteria during this lunch hour and he stalked, shot, and killed 23 of them and wounded another 20 with two pistols, a Glock 17 and a Ruger P89, reloading as necessary. At 12:51PM, wounded by an approaching policeman, Jo Jo took refuge in the cafeteria restroom and shot himself in the head.<sup>61</sup>

November 15, Friday: Preparing for serving Thanksgiving Dinner, the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center in New York City advertised in the [New York Times](#):

**This Thanksgiving march to a different drumstick.**



A 100-billion-ton block of ice designated as "A-24," melting to a different drumstick between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia Island, ventured into the shipping lanes of the South Atlantic Ocean. When this block of ice had broken off the Antarctic ice shelf in 1986 it had measured 70 miles by 50 miles, larger than Long Island, and at this point it still a mouthful, showing up in satellite photos as about 55 by 35 miles.

Marching to a different drumstick, a federal appeals court in Washington overturned the convictions of John Poindexter, national security advisor to Ronald, on a technicality (this wasn't because he wasn't guilty as charged).

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61. One of the lunchroom guests who happened to survive was Suzanna Hupp. She would campaign for "concealed carry" and be elected to the Texas House of Representatives. Governor George W. Bush would sign Suzanna's "concealed carry" bill into law so that now, in Texas even schoolteachers in the classroom can be seen to be wearing firearms strapped to their ankles (as yet, we don't know of school massacres this has prevented). Luby's Cafeteria would after struggling go out of business and the location is now occupied by Yank Sing, a Chinese/American buffet.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Former assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams, who had during the Iran/Contra coverup neglected to march to a different drumstick, was sentenced to 2 years probation and 100 hours “community service.”

The US Justice Department brought criminal charges against the Bank of Credit and Commerce International and 3 individuals. It seems they should have been marching to a different drumstick.

String Trio by Krzysztof Penderecki was performed completely for initial time, in Metz.

At the National Academy of Sciences in Washington DC, Two4 for violin and piano or sho by John Cage was performed for the initial time (this performance was on piano).



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1992

The “Different Drummer” restaurant at the railroad depot in [Concord](#) became the “Aigo Bistro.”

America’s strategic thinkers schemed a radically new foreign-policy doctrine for the post-Cold War world. They were intending to cause America to step to the beat of a different drummer. Their work product was a Defense Planning Guidance tract that’s since been termed “Dick Cheney’s masterwork.” In this curious document the most important of America’s exceptional qualities, which entitle [Washington DC](#) to be the capitol city of the world, rather than being its old-style [American-Exceptionalist](#) Chosen-of-God status, or its melting-pot virtue, or its democratic values, or its wise capitalist system for the mobilization of economic energies, was its sheer military dominance. Might, it would seem, in the mind of Mr. Cheney, made right. Cheney called for the preservation of a US nuclear arsenal strong enough to prevent the development of nuclear capabilities by any more 3d-world nations. Clearly this was intended to be a 1st-strike capability, for he demanded a doctrine of unilateral military action, one of the preemptive use of force, which amounted to a major departure from anything that had been schemed before in our nation’s puzzle palace on the Potomac. America was to be, and was to remain, and was to preserve itself and [privilege itself](#), as the world’s sole superpower. These new exceptionalists at the Pentagon argued for liberating the United States of America from any constraints imposed by our having other nations as our allies, and from any constraints imposed by our having entered into binding international treaties. To their way of thinking the US Constitution outlawed any such bowing and scraping to any superior authority such as international law, and outlawed any transfer, any pooling, any delegation of sovereignty, to any international entity such as the United Nations. Until the events of September 11th, Cheney’s new exceptionalism would be a doctrine in search of a cause. It lacked, its proponents continually moaned, the necessity and legitimacy that could be obtained only through the trauma of another Pearl Harbor sneak attack. Its proponents would long for such a legitimization. They would bide their time. They would function as a “sleeper cell” inside the Pentagon, ready to spring to life in the hour of the nation’s need. They did not plan September the 11th, but they longed for it as such an occasion was to be their great releasant.<sup>62</sup>



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62. Update: Dick Cheney now has a heartbeat.



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

1994

A facsimile of the 1st (1908) edition of [Edmund James Banfield](#)'s THE CONFESSIONS OF A BEACHCOMBER was issued in Brisbane, Australia by the University of Queensland Press.

The Concord Saunterer has presented a couple of articles on Edmund James Banfield, "Australia's Literary Beachcomber," who sometimes signed himself "The Different Drummer" and is commonly understood to have been influenced by the life and/or the writings of Henry David Thoreau. While I was at the University of Queensland, since that university press has been reprinting the works of Banfield for their historical and local interest, I took the occasion to ask around in Brisbane about this fellow Banfield. In **what sense**, I asked any number of people, might Banfield be considered to have been "an Australian Thoreau"? I got no good answers. It turned out not to be possible to recover anything, either from Banfield's writings, or from records of his personal life, which might suggest to us that this Banfield had ever been influenced by anything that Thoreau wrote, or had ever been influenced in his life or in his attitudes by anything that Thoreau has come to **represent** to us. Allow me to make a ready distinction here between various superficial similarities and misunderstandings, on the one hand, and significant ones, on the other. As an example of a superficial similarity, both Thoreau and Banfield were missing a body part: Thoreau a big toe (having chopped it off in an early childhood accident with the family hatchet). Banfield an eye (having gouged it out in a late childhood accident with an early model of "bonecrusher" bicycle). I'm sure we can all agree that this is not the sort of soul sympathy that renders one a Thoreauvian. Another of these superficial similarities would be that there is a cairn of rocks at Walden Pond and the grave monument to Banfield on Dunk Island erected in 1923 also is in the form of a rock cairn.

The best argument anyone offered me in Brisbane, that their Banfield had been as they proclaimed a Down-Under Thoreau, was along the lines "Well, Thoreau wrote escapist literature, didn't he, going off to a cabin in the woods like that, and Banfield wrote escapist literature too, going off to a tropical island and then describing for us what a nice life he had there.... So they were both escapists, right, and that's the similarity, see, and since Banfield (1852-1923) lived later than Thoreau and seems to quote from WALDEN, we say he'd been a Thoreauvian." The proof text for this is what Banfield had instructed be inscribed on his tomb:

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

**WALDEN:** If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**  
**EDMUND JAMES BANFIELD**

(omitting the final clause "however measured or far away"). A close reading of his life trajectory indicates that Banfield clearly was what they indicate, an escapist – he was on Dunk Island off their coast in order to get away from them. As an example of a total misunderstanding which can only spring from ignorance or inability to read, therefore, we can consider the conceit that this marked a similarity with Thoreau – Thoreau also having been such a person, an escapist. I considered, however, that these Aussie folks must have had their hat-bands too tight. In 1911 Banfield's 2d major effort in the escapist literature genre, MY TROPIC ISLE, had been reviewed in the following interesting manner by the Sydney Daily Telegraph:

Mr Banfield strikes us as being really as fond of solitude as Thoreau pretended to be. And he has one qualification which Thoreau lacked most emphatically, namely, a gentle and unaggressive humor, which colors and brightens all the records of his observations upon the aboriginals of the Queensland coast, and the plants, birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes of his tropic isle.

So we have Thoreau being sniffed at in an Aussie newspaper, because this newspaper has learned that Thoreau emphatically lacked a gentle and unaggressive humor. –And this newspaper **liked** what Banfield has had to say about "the aboriginals of the Queensland coast," despite the fact that Banfield was just about as condescending in his evaluation of these dark people, as any stone racist might ever hope to be. (For instance, the newspaper made no objection to Banfield's referring to aboriginal women by the contemptuous term "gin," which if translated into American English would need to be rendered as something like "n\*\*\*\*r gal.") –And this newspaper **liked** what Banfield has had to say about "the plants, birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes of his tropic isle," despite the fact that one of Banfield's amusements happened to have been taking potshots at any raptor species he could get into his rifle sights, considering birds

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**




## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

that ate other birds to be beneath his contempt.

Our sea-girt hermitage is a sanctuary for all manner of birds save those of murderous and cannibalistic instincts.

This uninformed attitude toward natural predation explains passages such as the following, in which he fancied that his target practice was "avenging" a lesser "tragedy of the bush":



A bold falcon ... swooped down upon a wood-swallow ... and bore it bleeding to a tree-top, while I stood shocked at the audacity of the cannibal. A bullet dropped the murderous bird with its dead victim fast in its talons.

Banfield's militancy extended beyond the shooting of avian culprits out of their trees. He was also in the habit, it seems, of correcting the morals of the more earthbound predator culprits:

Cutting firewood in the forest one morning, I came across a carpet snake, 12 feet long, laid out and asleep in a series of easy curves, with the sun revealing unexpected beauty in the tints and in the patterns of the skin. Midway of its length was a tell-tale bulge, and before the axe shortened it by a head, I was convinced that here was a serpent that had waylaid and surprised or beguiled a fowl. Post-mortem examination, however, proved once more the unreliability of uncorroborated circumstantial evidence. The snake had done good and friendly service instead of ill, for it had swallowed a white-tailed rat - the only specimen that I have seen on the island.

To say that this was jejune is to put a good face on it. Here is what Banfield's biographer Michael Noonan has had to offer in regard to intellectual influences: "He began to delve into the philosophical writings of the leading naturalists of the day -Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau- with whom he found himself instantly in accord." To characterize Emerson and Whitman as having been leading naturalists is to signal to us all, how little such a term has come to represent in the trade press!

In certain significant respects Banfield was not Thoreauvian at all, in fact revealed himself as quite clueless. He spoke for instance very frankly of the tactics and strategies by which he obtained labor from the local abos (an island on which he was "isolated," actually, only if one agrees to neglect to consider non-white persons such as his laborers and non-male persons such

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

as his housemaid and his wife), for such various repetitive or dirty chores as he was reluctant himself to perform. He spoke of the Chinese as the "alien race" that "does the hard work" while white owners, who are "mere idlers" such as himself, settle back, knowing how unsuited they are to tropic toil, to enjoy the status of "resident landlords." -And yet he feared a very different future:



[T]he minor departments of rural enterprise in North Queensland are in a peculiar stage - a stage of transition and uncertainty. Coloured labour has been depended upon to a large extent. Even the poorest settler has had the aid of aboriginals. But with the passing of that race, and prohibition against the employment of any sort of coloured labour, the question is to be asked, Can tropical products be grown profitably unless consumers are willing to pay a largely increased price - a price equivalent to the difference between the earnings of those who toil in other tropical countries and the living wage of a white man in Australia? Fruit of many acceptable varieties can be grown to perfection with little labour in immense quantities. Coffee is one of the most prolific of crops ... a plentiful supply of cheap labour is essential to success. Those who by judicious treatment of the aboriginals command their services have so far made profit. A coffee plantation suggests pleasant, picturesque and spicy things. The orderly lines of the plants, in glossy green adorned for a brief space with white, frail, fugitive flowers distilling a sweet and grateful odour, the branches crowded with gleaming berries, green, pink and red, present pleasing aspect. As a change to the scenery of the jungle, a coffee estate has a garden-like relief. But picking berry by berry is slow and monotonous work, vexatious, too, to those mortals whose skin is sensitive to the attacks of green ants. Then comes the various processes of the removal of the pulp, first by machinery, finally by the fermentation of the still adhering slimy residuum; then the drying and saving by exposure to the sun on trays or on tarpaulins until all moisture is expelled; and the hulling which disintegrates the parchment from the twin berries; then winnowing, and finally the polishing. Do drinkers of the fragrant and exhilarating beverage realise the amount of labour and care involved before the crop is taken off and preserved from deterioration and decay?

Edmund James Banfield turns out upon inspection to have been an unabashed white supremacist. In today's Australia such a person





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

would be a charter member of Pauline Hanson's shameful "One Nation" local political grouping:



The world is not so vast that any part of it –still less a part so situated and so highly favoured as this– can be left unpeopled. If not peopled by Australians or those of British blood, it will assuredly be by people for whom the average Australian entertains but scant respect.

In sum it would seem that we need to be much more selective than this, in determining whether a given person's life and thought have been influenced by our Thoreau. Let us consider, while we are considering folks such as Banfield who flee to a tropic isle and write bios for escapist readers, <Humor Alert!> also our movie stars such as Errol Flynn, a Australian (well, Tasmanian, that's pretty close) who while residing in Hollywood during WWII has been suspected to have been a Nazi sympathizer. He also must have been influenced by our Thoreau? –for he wrote in 1933 for his autobiography, which he desired to title IN LIKE FLYNN, that:



I am going to China because I wish to live deliberately. New Guinea offers me, it is true, satisfaction for the tastes I have acquired which only leisure can satisfy. I am leaving economic security and I am leaving it deliberately.

By going off to China with a paltry few pounds and no knowledge of what life has in store for me there, I believe that I am going to front the essentials of life to see if I can learn what it has to teach and above all not to discover, when I come to die, that I have not lived.

We fritter our lives away in detail but I am not going to do this. I am going to live deeply, to acknowledge not one of the so-called social forces which hold our lives in thrall and reduce us to economic dependency. The best part of life is spent in earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it. To hell with money! Pursuit of it is not going to mould my life for me. I am going to live sturdily and Spartan like; to drive life into a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if I find it mean, then I'll know its meanness, and if I find it sublime I shall know it by experience, and not make wistful conjectures about it, conjured up by illustrated magazines. I refuse to accept the ideology of a business world which believes that man at hard labour is the noblest work of God. Leisure to use as I think fit!



**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

**2001**

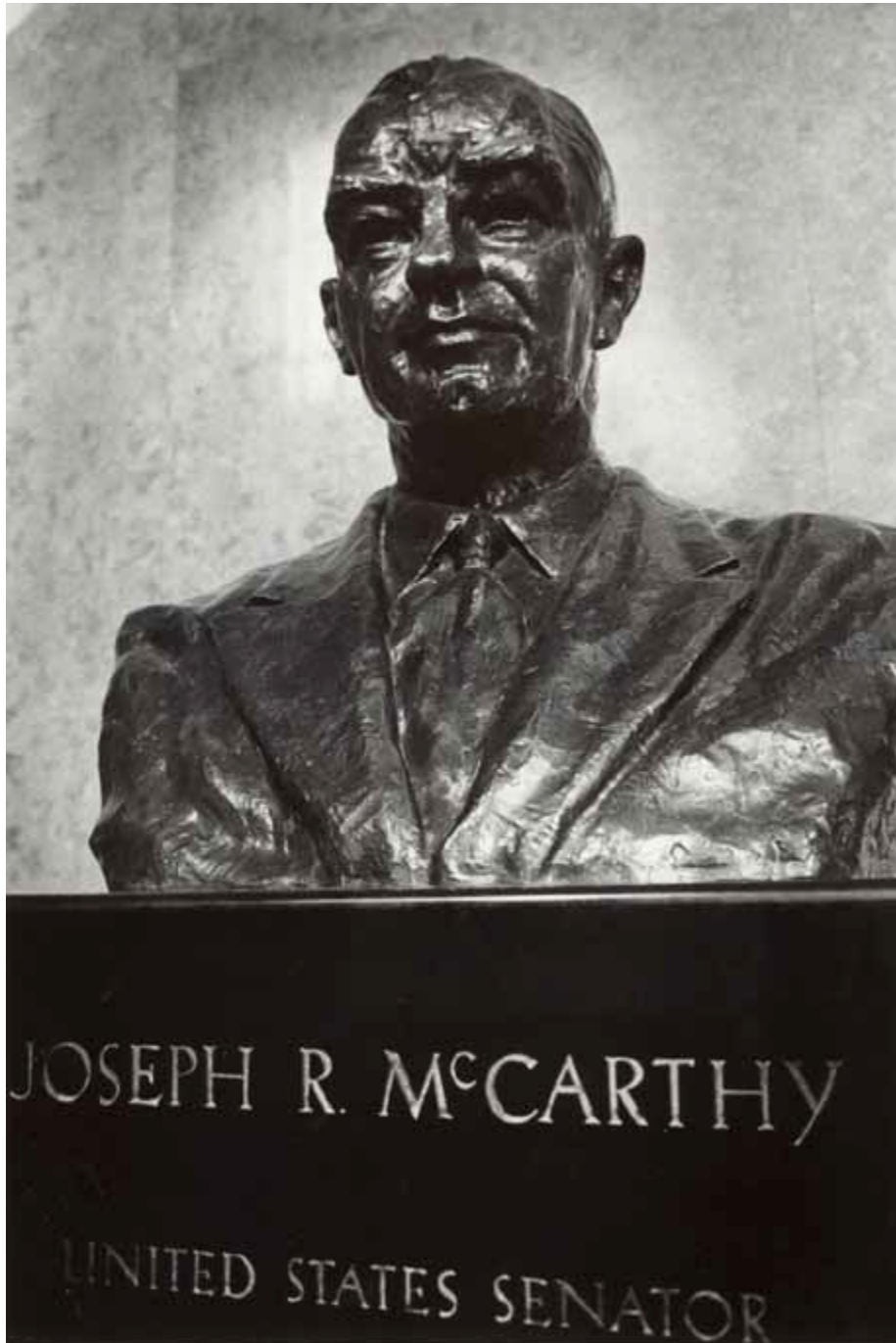
The bust of Senator [Joseph R. McCarthy](#) in the Outagamie County Courthouse, Wisconsin was moved to the

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

**RUFFED GROUSE**

**DIFFERENT DRUMMER**

Outagamie Museum.





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

[Henry Thoreau](#)'s "different drummer" trope in [WALDEN](#) provided the pull-them-in thought for a spiritual self-help book titled SOUL-ESTEEM: THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL CONFIDENCE by a motivational speaker named Phylis Clay Sparks (why am I reminded of my father Benjamin Bearl Smith and his boxes upon boxes of THE POWER OF SUCCESSFUL SELF-CYBERNETICS stashed out in the back of the garage?).



[WALDEN](#): Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

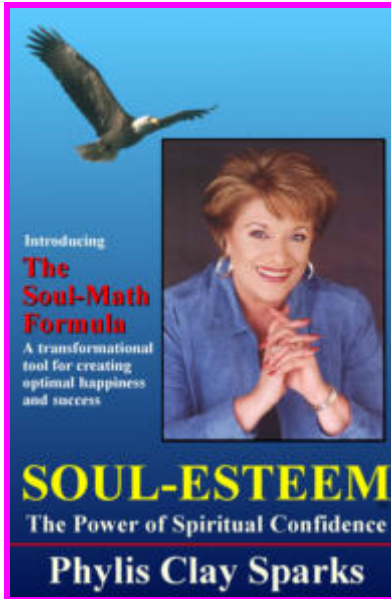
DIFFERENT DRUMMER  
THE INNER LIGHT

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS

# RUFFED GROUSE

# DIFFERENT DRUMMER

In the book, the author conceives of the “drummer” as being the wise, loving voice of one’s spiritual soul speaking to, or trying to speak to, one’s human self/brain — perhaps this tout for insufferable spiritual confidence is somewhat conflating this “drummer” with the “still, small voice” concept/image/phrase from scripture while allowing that nowadays it is less divisive to quote from WALDEN than it would be to try to quote from the BIBLE.



It turns out not to be correct, however, that the name “Thoreau” appears only once and only in this introductory paragraph to her book, for in addition to this lead-in, her motivational literature also turns out to contain the following from Thoreau’s JOURNAL: “We check and repress the divinity that stirs within us to fall down and worship the divinity that is dead without us.”

“Different Drummer” Trope



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

2004

June 5, Saturday: Dwight Mackerron commented in regard to the hypothesis that the primary “drummer” intended by [Henry Thoreau](#)’s distant or different drummer trope was the ruffed grouse [Bonasa umbellus](#):

Austin, After two readings of your article and one review of the music and plow lines from “A Week” I think that your point about the partridge’s drumming being the source and focus of the lines from Walden makes a lot of sense. Apparently, he took elements from the ’45 journal entry and used it in both books, taking the plow furrow image and combining it with the “skylight” ion “A Week” to give us another outburst of real or possibly mock humility. Obviously, he COULD have made the partridge connection explicit in “A Week” if it happened to be true, but I think that he still recalls that music as coming from a human drummer, but layers in some of the insights and images from the journal entry because he likes the images. Whereas in Walden, he is under no compunction to identify the source of the “distant drummer” and he leaves it ambiguous, but your evidence leads me to buy your theory for that book.

It seems that an obvious subtext for you is to keep all his positive military connections to a minimum. He mocks the military sounds coming from the village in Walden, making him ready to “spit a Mexican” but I believe that in other places, the journals and “A Week” that he can be positive about them. Certainly in “A Week” he waxes rhapsodic in his hero-battle fantasy and at some point in his journal he regrets that he is not living the heroic life of which he had dreamed.

I haven’t yet explored his journal that were relating to any of the bloody Civil War battles, but didn’t he make some comment on Shiloh?

Anyway, neat point about the connection between the ’45 journal and the Walden passage, but unless you are implying that he refused to correctly identify the partridge as the true source of the drumming in “A Week” because he was wary of being criticized (unlikely since he does not spare Christianity, which likely got him a much worse drubbing) it seems to me that he stays with the human drummer in “A Week” because it WAS a human drummer, no matter how measured or far away.

But I will sleep on it.



ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS



## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"  
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: April 29, 2016

**ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS**

RUFFED GROUSE

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

# ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

## GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.

ALPHABETICAL  
BIRDS





## RUFFED GROUSE

## DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.

