

Henry David Thoreau's  
"The moon now rises to  
her absolute rule"

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Victor Ordaz



## Facts:

Born in Concord, MA on July 12, 1817; died on May 6, 1862.

Lived and worked as an essayist, poet, philosopher, and naturalist.

Most known works are “Walden” (1854) and “Civil Disobedience” (1849). Influencers include Nathaniel Hawthorne and Aristotle.



The moon now rises to her  
absolute rule:  
The moon now rises to her  
absolute rule,  
And the husbandman and  
hunter  
Acknowledge her for their  
mistress.  
Asters and golden reign in the  
fields  
And the life everlasting  
withers not.



The fields are reaped and  
shorn of their pride  
But an inward verdure still  
crowns them;  
The thistle scatters its down  
on the pool  
And yellow leaves clothe the  
river—  
And nought disturbs the  
serious life of men.



But behind the sheaves and  
under the sod  
There lurks a ripe fruit which  
the reapers have not gathered,  
The true harvest of the year—  
the boreal fruit  
Which it bears forever,  
With fondness annually  
watering and maturing it.



But man never severs the stalk  
Which bears this palatable  
fruit.



### My interpretation:

What drew me to this poem was the title, “The moon now rises to her absolute rule,” because I thought it sounded mysterious and interesting. When I first read it, what was clear to me was that Thoreau was talking about nature, but his choice of words, such as “Asters,” “verdure,” and “nought,” were a bit confusing. When I looked up the definitions, the poem became much clearer, and I understood that, not only was it about nature, but it was also about harvesting nature. From what I was able to find about Thoreau, and understood, he loved nature, which was what his work revolved around, which I thought was clear in this poem. But with words like “reaped,” “reapers,” and “severs,” Thoreau almost painted a grim, if not violent, picture of harvesting nature. It made me think that when man takes from the earth, he also takes away the beauty of nature, leaving empty lands and lifeless trees. Being that he cared about nature, and was also an environmentalist, it made sense that Thoreau would write about harvesting, if not destroying, nature, but he ended his poem in a hopeful way by, as I understood it, implying that man can take all that he needs and wants from nature, but he cannot take everything because nature lives deep within the earth and all around us.

