

1867

BRAHMA

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882) - American poet, essayist, and promoter of Transcendentalism who embodied the American faith in creative individualism. Educated at Harvard, Emerson taught for a time, and was minister of the Old North Church in Boston for three years before developing his own philosophy. **Brahma** (1867) - One of Emerson's well-known poems. Brahma, one of the trinity of Hindu gods (with Vishnu and Shiva), was the creator of the universe. Opening line: If the red slayer think he slays, ...

BRAHMA

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

THE END