FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

More Day to Dawn: Thoreau's Walden for the Twenty-first Century
Laura Dassow Walls, editor
Sandra Harbert Petrulionis, editor
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Thoreau's two-year experiment "to live deliberately" on Walden Pond consecrated that body of water as America's most famous literary landmark. To observe the sesquicentennial of *Walden's* publication, a group of new and eminent scholars convened in 2004 to reconsider Thoreau's life and work in light of twenty-first century concerns. That conference session has now resulted in the publication of this remarkable collection of essays. The editors (Petrulionis is from Penn State, Altoona; Walls is from the University of South Carolina); propose a new Thoreau for a new century, recasting the iconoclast beyond the framework by which he has been traditionally understood.

Walden has been continuously in print since 1862, but despite Thoreau's popularity he has generally been perceived as a hot ember emitted by Emerson's flame, a secondary Transcendental firebrand snuffed out by a premature death. Nevertheless, the main stream of Thoreau interpretation has consistently maintained his place as the sharpest critic of mid-nineteenth-century American culture. Perhaps more importantly, twentieth-century readers found Thoreau an ally in their anti-war, anti-conformity, and emergent environmentalist concerns.

More Day to Dawn updates that estimate with fresh accounts not just of *Walden* but other works as well, including manuscripts recently published for the first time, such as *Wild Fruits*. Assessing the change after his friendship with Emerson had cooled, one contributor describes Thoreau's "traverse from idealism and individualism to materialism and communalism." Interesting essays grapple with the troubling violence of Thoreau's rhetoric, his debt to Homer, the legacy of pre-Darwinian evolutionary theory, Thoreau's proto-conservationism, and his canny capacity to see in "facts" the social conventions they mask. Other contributors offer new perspectives on *Walden* as satire, as comedy, and as exemplary of the georgic mode rather than the more often cited pastoral.

"Men esteem truth remote," Thoreau asserts in *Walden*, "in the outskirts of the system,

behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here." *This* Thoreau too is amply evident in *More Day to Dawn*—Thoreau the relentless advocate of the here and now reminding readers that the essential activity of life is living.

In the still little-known manuscript published as *Wild Fruits* in 2000, Thoreau suggests, "You cannot buy that pleasure which [a huckleberry] yields to him who truly plucks it. You cannot buy a good appetite, even. In short you may buy a servant or a slave, but you cannot buy a friend." Gathering up a basket of shrewd and readable essays, *More Day to Dawn* bears good fruit to readers of Thoreau who truly pluck it.