

# The Tonic of Wildness

We need the tonic of wildness – to wade sometime in marshes  
where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe;  
to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl  
builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground.

At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things,  
we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable,  
that land and sea be infinitely wild,  
unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable.

We can never have enough of nature.

We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor,  
vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks,  
the wilderness with its living and decaying trees, the thunder-cloud,  
and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets.

We need to witness our own limits transgressed,  
and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

- from Walden by Henry David Thoreau