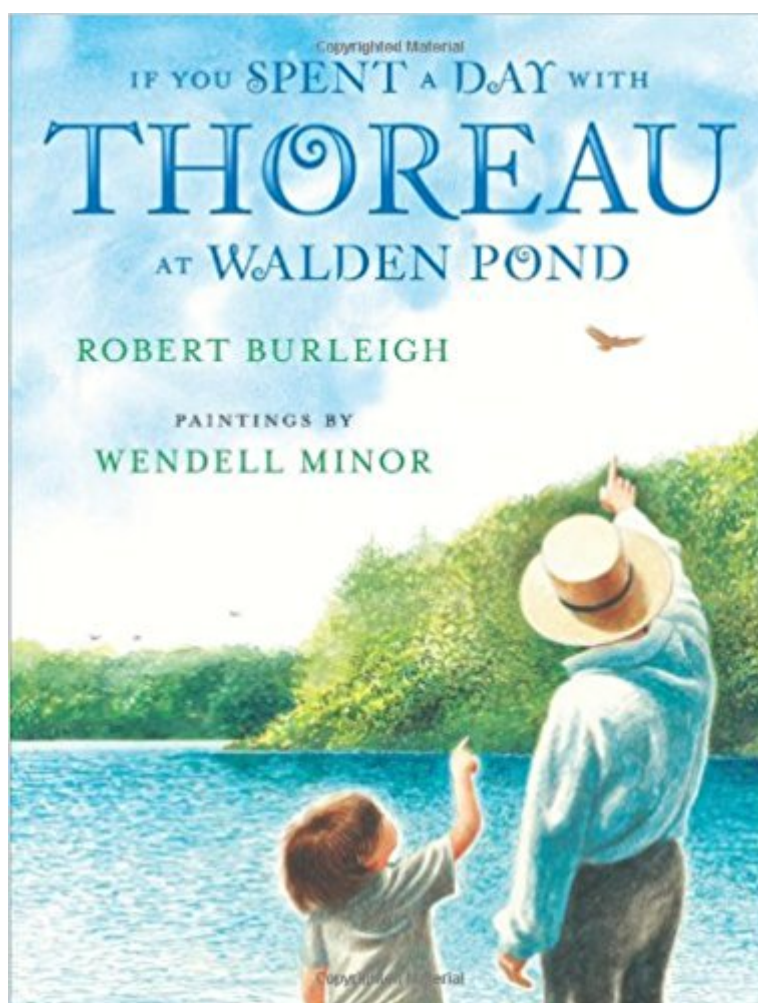


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# If You Spent A Day With Thoreau At Walden Pond (Christy Ottaviano Books)



## Synopsis

In 1845 in Concord, Massachusetts, Henry David Thoreau began a radical experiment: he built a cabin in the woods and lived there, alone, examining the world around him. He spent his days walking the shores of Walden Pond, growing beans, observing plants and animals, and recording his reflections in his notebook. These reflections eventually became his seminal work *Walden*. In this lovely picture book, Robert Burleigh and Wendell Minor imagine a special day spent with the celebrated writer and naturalist through the eyes of a child. Together Thoreau and the young boy watch small but significant wonders such as swimming fish, fighting ants, and clouds in the sky. It is a day full of splendor and appreciation of the outdoor world.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 900L (What's this?)

Series: Christy Ottaviano Books

Hardcover: 36 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (BYR); 1 edition (October 16, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805091378

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Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 0.4 x 293.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #384,292 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #134 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Literary](#) #431 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #470 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature > Environment](#)

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

A young boy in jeans and a T-shirt knocks at the door of a small wooden cabin. This is where Henry David Thoreau lives, and if you want to spend a day with him, you have to arrive early, because he is up with the sun. Burleigh, in his compact but elegant text directed at the reader, never really introduces Thoreau, but he gives kids a sense of him through his actions. As they sit at the pond, for instance, Thoreau tells the boy, Living a simple life is the best way to be happy. Minor

spreads are impressive in their depiction of the outdoors and in the way they capture tinier moments, like watching ants. Yet, the pictures only marginally extend the text and take few chances. As a piece of bookmaking, however, this is quite handsome, starting with the endpapers that show a simple map of Walden Pond, and ending with a comprehensive conclusion, which features a two-page Thoreau biography and a list of observations he made about life (after each quote, a more modern explanation follows). A solid introduction to someone kids should know. Grades 1-3. --Ilene Cooper

“Minor’s sweet, verdant watercolors shine in this tale of a straw-hatted old-fashioned Thoreau spending a day with a contemporary boy (complete with running sneakers) by the shores of his beloved Walden Pond. Burleigh interprets Thoreau’s own words to create the imaginary day. Henry “wakes with the sun,” Burleigh tells us. His tiny house contains “nothing but three chairs, a table, a desk, and an old bed. Yet Henry has just what he needs.” Together the two friends row, walk, and weed. They recognize the calls of various birds, wade in Sandy Pond, study ants at war. Now and then, Thoreau’s own voice sings out: “I like to make the earth say ‘beans’ instead of ‘grass.’ ” Admittedly, the book takes a soft view of this flinty figure. (“If you spent a day with Henry David Thoreau, you would hike past Fair Haven Hill, where the huckleberries grow . . . Yum!”) But as a young child’s introduction to the thoughts and work of Thoreau, this captures many essentials. “Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity,” Henry wrote 150 years ago. It’s still good advice for makers of picture books. “Burleigh and Minor (the team behind *Night Flight* and other historical profiles) focus on the unconventional way Thoreau uses language (‘From here the pond is like a wide-open eye staring up at the sky’), the magic of everyday observation, and the implicit anticonsumerist message of his pared-down life. Publishers Weekly “a glimpse of Thoreau’s philosophy that young children can understand. School Library Journal “Evocative prose replete with memorable images gives readers a child’s-eye view of Thoreau’s days... Kirkus “A solid introduction to someone kids should know. Booklist “Lincoln’s funeral train took 13 days between Washington, D.C., and Springfield, Ill., and drew 30 million mourners along the way. *Abraham Lincoln Comes Home* by Robert Burleigh, illustrated by Wendell Minor, poignantly imagines a father and son paying their respects on the prairie. USA Today on *Abraham Lincoln Comes Home* “Moving prose and dramatic night scenes show them as part of a grieving yet grateful nation, paying homage to a fallen hero. San Francisco Chronicle on *Abraham*

Lincoln Comes Home – “This quiet, lovely book sensitively communicates a sense of the magnitude of loss felt by so many.” – Kirkus Reviews on Abraham Lincoln Comes Home – “A moving portrait of a cultural moment, before the age of 24/7 electronic media, when tribute was paid to the slain president by those who turned out to see the train pass. Text and pictures convey the watchers’ sense of solemnity.” – Chicago Tribune on Abraham Lincoln Comes Home – “Minor’s luminous, occasionally almost photographic, paintings portray the adult narrator as a boy, surrounded by a ghostly haze as he walks along the tracks. . . . There’s little doubt that railroad aficionados will pore over the crisply rendered railroad memorabilia.” – Publishers Weekly, starred review on *The Last Train*

Nice book.

Great introduction into the mind of one of America’s great philosophers. We see, hear, and experience life in ways we would normally rush by, marching to a drummer intent on us living lives of quiet desperation.

This is a beautiful book. It is done so simply and elegantly. I bought it for my grandchildren, however, I am keeping it at my house. I just couldn’t let this book go. Buy it. You’ll love it. This is a classic.

Love the illustrations. Purchased it for my daughter’s children...gave her Thoreau’s *Walden Pond* and the painting of *Walden Pond* by Richard Brady

The person this gift was for loved it!

*Walden Pond* is one of my sister-in-laws favorite places in the world. She adored this book as a gift from me to her.

My daughter threw this one out. To begin with there is nothing written about Thoreau spending time with anyone other than himself. But there is something kind of creepy about an unsupervised boy spending the day with a reclusive man who lives alone in the forest. Read *Walden* but don’t illustrate it into something that it is not. It has probably by now found a home in the land fill outside Washington DC (a great place for a Dump).

Henry David Thoreau dedicated his life to living simply and exploring nature, and in 1845 he built a simple cabin in the woods in Concord, Massachusetts so he could study and enjoy the beauty of nature around him. In this beautiful book, the author and illustrator collaborate about what spending a day at that cabin in the woods with Thoreau might have been like for a young child. Through gorgeous illustrations, and a story about nature, children and adults alike should enjoy this book, and be able to engage in meaningful conversation afterward. The reader witnesses a young boy arriving early at the cabin on the shore of a gorgeous pond. Once inside we see how, for at least this man, (1) bed, (1) table and (3) chairs and a kerosene lamp, was all that was needed to be content living alone in the woods with nature, contending "living a simple life is the best way to be happy." Thoreau and the young boy spend their day, going out on the boat and studying the fish in the clear water of the pond. They listen to the different birds and even see a hawk, as well as other critters as they walk in the woods, pick huckleberries and just enjoying nature. When day is done the young boy waves goodbye and Thoreau writes in his journal about all the two had experienced together. If reader allows their imagination travel back to the time when Thoreau inhabited a similar simple cabin, a message about living simply and enjoying the beauty around us will make for good parent/child conversation. A great message for young children today who often spend too much time indoors, in front of a television or video games. What makes this lovely story all the more special is the beautiful illustrations; I especially loved the map of the pond on the end boards. I've had the pleasure of enjoying other books by this illustrator that, like this book are truly one of a kind. If gorgeous illustrations are as important to you as the story itself, I suggest you check out other books illustrated by Wendell Minor. Another thing I loved about this book was that at the back of the book was a biography of Thoreau (1817-1862) as well as some famous quotes and observations. Here is one of that is probably one of his most famous, and happens to be a favorite of mine as well. "If man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away." Highly Recommended for children (5 or over)

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