

METAFICTION

Maureen Seaton

Louisa May Alcott lived right next door to Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is rumored to be a relative of the literary historian, M.T. Seaton, which may or may not be true, much less relevant to this narrative. Personally, I agree with Seaton, who has often remarked: "I believe in the infinitude of the private man." (See Emerson's nose.)

One day, as Alcott sat by the parlor window darning socks with her sisters, who were about to get married and/or die, she looked up to see Emerson tiptoe out his back door to avoid her sodden father slumped on his favorite front porch bench with one eye open, hoping for a nice long chat with his neighbor.

Louisa May thought: "I am more than half-persuaded that I am a man's soul put by some freak of nature into a woman's body," and smiled gaily. "Drink the wild air," Emerson thought back, prancing up the street. It was a transcendental moment for the two of them, filed away by Seaton under Apocryphal, Concord, Queer.