

AND ME

speaking. I was confronted with the vastitude of the universe at once, without the ingratiating introduction of the fairy tale. I had early made the not so inane decision that I would not read a book until I really wanted to. One of the rarest women in the world, having listened to my remark, said she had a book she knew I would like because it was so different, and forthwith presented me with Emerson's Essays, the first book that I have any knowledge of reading, and it was in my eighteenth year. Until then I had been wholly absorbed with the terrors and the majestic inferences of the moment, the hour, and the day. I was alone with them, and they were wonderful and excessively baffling in their splendors; then, after filling my mind and soul with the legendary splendors of Friendship, and The Oversoul-Circles, and Compensation, each of these words of exciting largeness in themselves, I turned to the dramatic unrealities of Zarathustra, which, of course, was in no way to be believed because it did not exist. And then came expansion and release into the outer world again through interpretation of Plato, and of Leaves of Grass itself.

I have saved myself from the disaster of beliefs through these magical books, and am free once more as in my early childhood to indulge myself in the iridescent idea of life, as Idea.

But the fairy story is nothing after all but a means whereby we, as children, may arrive at some clue as to the significance of things around us, and