Walden, or Life in the Woods (1854)
From *Solitude*
By Henry David Thoreau
Retold by Sara Simpson

My favorite times during my stay in the woods were rainy days in the spring or fall. I stayed inside my cabin all day and listened to the calming sound of the raindrops on the roof. The long, lazy days gave me time to think, and I had many great ideas during these times.

During one big storm, lightning hit a big pine tree on the other side of the pond. When the storm was over, I went to look at the tree. The lightning made a burned mark around the tree trunk in a deep spiral; it looked magical. I was amazed, once again, by the power of nature. That was eight years ago. I went for a walk recently and saw the tree again, and the deep mark is still there.

When I talk about my time alone at Walden pond, people always ask if I was lonely, especially on rainy or snowy days when I had to stay inside by myself. I want to tell them that I could never feel lonely when I know that I am part of the universe. I am never alone when nature is there to keep me company.

I want to tell them that a person can be surrounded by other people but still feel lonely. Just because you are standing next to someone does not mean that you are sharing your thoughts with him. We see other people every day at school or the grocery store or the post office or the bar, but we don't really connect with them.

Nature is different. Whenever you are in the woods, you are connected in a very intimate way with the world around you. You can never feel lonely in nature.

Explain what Thoreau likes about rainy days.

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Explain why Thoreau says he never feels lonely when he is in nature.

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Paraphrase Thoreau's thoughts about loneliness when a person is around other people.

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Explain why you agree or disagree with Thoreau's thoughts about loneliness. Describe a personal example to support your opinion.

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