

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society
ALA 2027

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society invites proposals for a panel on “Emerson and Poetry” at the American Literature Association’s 38th Annual Conference, to be held May 26–29, 2027, in Boston at the Westin Copley Place, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02116.

In “Circles” (1841), Emerson describes “the poet” as a representative seer who breaks the reader’s “whole chain of habits” while opening up new possibilities. This liberating effect of poetry reappears throughout Emerson’s writing: in “The Poet” (1844), “Shakespeare, or The Poet” (1850), and especially “Poetry and Imagination” (1876) where he describes poetry as “the little chamber in the brain where is generated the explosive force which, by gentle shocks, sets in action the intellectual world.”

For the panel “Emerson and Poetry,” the Emerson Society invites abstracts that explore the potential of this explosive Emersonian poetics. Topics may include readings of Emerson’s poetry, his theory of poetry in the essays and lectures, and comparative pieces that bring Emerson into conversation with other poets from the nineteenth century and beyond.

Please send 300-word abstracts by email to Bill Scalia (bill.scalia@outlook.com) and John B. Min (john.min@csn.edu) by Friday, January 15, 2027.