WALDEN, REVISITED

ARTIST	Sam "S.B." Walker '10
TITLE	*Target bag, ice melt*
MEDIUM	Archival Pigment Print
SIZE	16" x 20"
CREATED	March 2011

On Walden Pond, when the ice just begins to melt, a layer of water about an inch deep forms above the solid block below. On a waning, overcast day, the pond takes on a mirror effect, echoing the encircling tree line. Fog rises from the banks, shrouding the scene in an ephemeral beauty. Drifting on the surface, a cast-off plastic Target bag punctuates just how transitory Henry David Thoreau's idyllic forest home is—and perhaps always was.

Photographer Sam "S.B." Walker '10 captured this haunting moment during his four-year project chronicling the present-day state of the iconic area for *Walden*, a series of 58 black-and-white photographs. Kehrer Verlag published the images last spring in a book by the same name, commemorating the bicentennial of Thoreau's birth.

Target bag, ice melt is representative of this series, which examines human impact on a sacred space. "There are, without a doubt, sacred spaces, even with evidence of society," Walker says. "Thoreau was open about the fact that Walden was a fairly humble place, and it continues to be today. The Target bag is—among other things—a reminder of that, in effect bringing the place back down to earth."

Almost 200 years after Thoreau published his seminal work, Walden now teems with area residents who flock to it as the local swimming hole. Walker, who grew up two miles away, turned his lens on visitors, the memories they were making, and the footprints they left behind as a way to continue Thoreau's dialogue. "This series wasn't an act of activism," Walker says. "I want the pictures to stand on their own, politics removed." *–Patti Harmon*