

# Bulletin

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*"The Only News I know / Is Bulletins all Day / From Immortality."*

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**Translating Emily Dickinson in Language, Culture, and the Arts****EDIS International Conference: An Update**

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You are cordially invited to attend the October 1992 conference "Translating Emily Dickinson in Language, Culture, and the Arts" at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. This is the first major Dickinson conference of the 1990s, and it will bring together translators, scholars, teachers, and readers of Dickinson from around the world.

As you can see from the list of speakers and the descriptions of sessions and workshops (pages 8-9), the program promises to be intellectually stimulating and to encourage a fresh understanding of Dickinson's life and work. The conference has been planned to allow participants time to continue discussions and to make informal connections during lunch breaks and receptions and at the Friday evening program.

Other featured conference activities include the book exhibition and silent auction being coordinated by EDIS board member Walter Powell (see page 11). Since the annual business meeting of the Society is scheduled on the final afternoon of the conference, the membership also will have an opportunity to learn about projects the Board of Directors currently has under way and to have a voice in shaping the Society's agenda for the next few years.

I am pleased to report an even wider range of international participation than I announced in the last *Bulletin*. We are expecting Dickinsonians from Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Japan, the People's Re-

public of China, Poland, Sweden, and Thailand to take active roles in the conference sessions. Additionally, United States scholars from twenty-two states will participate, including some who have been involved in translations of Dickinson's work into other languages.

We are especially fortunate to have added to our list of speakers Stanislaw Baranczak, Alfred Jurzykowski Professor of Polish Language and Literature at Harvard, whose translation of 100 Dickinson poems was published in Poland in 1990. The Japanese and Scandinavian delegations will be bringing Emily Dickinson material published in their countries for display at the conference. If other international groups are interested in displaying materials, please let me know.

I would appreciate hearing from any members currently engaged in or planning creative projects related to the life and work of Emily Dickinson for possible participation in the application forum on artistic representations.

Also I am looking for members to moderate the special sessions of work in progress and several of the translation workshops. To date, no one has come forward to participate in the translation workshop on "There came a Day at Summer's full," and I also need another speaker or two for the translation workshop on "Split the Lark—and you'll find the Music." Anyone interested in applying for one of these roles should write to me at Mount Vernon College, 2100

Foxhall Road NW, Washington, D.C. 20007, USA.

Several United States members have written to tell me they did not receive their conference brochures and hotel registration forms, which were mailed in February. For your convenience, a conference registration form is included in this issue of the *Bulletin* (page 15).

To accommodate those members who may not have received their materials on time, I am extending the registration deadline until July 1, 1992. *Until that date the \$75.00 conference fee will be in effect for EDIS members.* Hotel reservations may be made directly with the Mayflower Hotel, 1127 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, or via phone: 202-347-3000; TELEX: 89-2324; or FAX: 202-466-9083. Be sure to mention the conference by name to ensure discounted rates. The Mayflower will honor the conference rate from October 19 through October 27, depending on availability. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to make your reservations soon.

Thanks to all members who sent in their conference registration materials by April 10. Confirmation of registration will take place at the conference. If you have questions about your registration, please write to me or contact me directly by phone at 703-276-9612 or by FAX at 202-337-0259.

I very much look forward to welcoming you to Washington in October.

Jonnie Guerra, Conference Director

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*There is still time to register for the conference!* See the registration form on page 15. The conference schedule appears on pages 8-9. And for more on the conference, see pages 2, 3, 10, and 11.

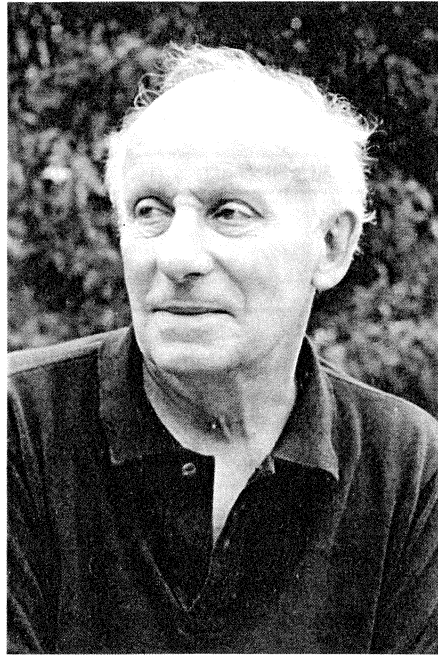
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## Richard B. Sewall: A Biographer's Vision

This article is the first in a series focusing on leading Dickinson scholars, to appear in at least one issue of the *Bulletin* annually. The inaugural article is by Benjamin Lease, who has also graciously agreed to serve as series editor.

Lease is professor emeritus of English at Northeastern Illinois University, where he conducted seminars on Dickinson for many years. His articles on nineteenth-century American culture have appeared in numerous journals; his books include *Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature* and *Emily Dickinson's Readings of Men and Books: Sacred Soundings*.

Richard B. Sewall, professor emeritus of English at Yale University, will be the recipient of the first EDIS Distinguished Service Award, to be presented



Richard B. Sewall

Emily Dickinson read biographies in faces she encountered near and far. "The Hollows round His eager eyes," her persona observes about one such face, are pages to be read, "Biography to All who passed / Of Unobtrusive Pain" (P 955). In a more playful vein, after her young nephew helped himself to one of her pies, she wrote him a note (which she signed "Thief") consisting of a four-line poem opening "His Cheek is His Biographer—" (P 1460).

When she sent J.W. Cross's newly published biography of George Eliot to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, she observed in her accompanying letter that "Biography first convinces us of the fleeing of the Biographied—" (L 972). She was speaking not about the futility of biography but about its power—its power to persuade us about something we know but cannot accept: that someone we profoundly care about is really dead. She had written in a similar way about George Eliot's death to her Norcross cousins [L 710]. Dickinson was deeply involved with George Eliot as a literary artist and as a person—and did not separate the novelist's vocation from her personhood.

A century later, the challenge to modern biographers of Emily Dickinson is to persuade us that someone who died long years ago was once a living person in a real world. In bringing the poet and the poet's world back to life in a biography true to her time and meaningful to ours, Richard B. Sewall responded magnificently to that challenge.

Denis Donoghue, in his review of Sewall's *The Life of Emily Dickinson* (1974), proclaimed that "The work is superb" and "sure to stand as the most authoritative version of Emily Dickinson's life." More recently, Cynthia Griffin Wolff's massive *Emily Dickinson* (1986) has provided a wealth of new data and perspectives. But what seems clear to many readers of Dickinson in 1992—especially those whose memories reach back to the electrifying impact of Thomas H. Johnson's extraordinary editions of the poems and letters in 1955 and 1958—is that Sewall's biography is a pivotal event in the history of our expanding understanding of the person and the poet.

In the midst of the current flood of valuable new studies of Dickinson's life

and art, it is useful to take pause, to reconsider the special sources of strength in Sewall's monumental work: its vision, its innovative organization, its voice.

The vision was shaped by Sewall's lifelong involvement with the concept of tragedy as manifested in literary expression—from the Book of Job to twentieth-century works of fiction and drama. An important feature of his long and distinguished teaching career at Yale was Sewall's "English 61: Tragedy," a course that inspired generations of students and contributed to the making of *The Vision of Tragedy*, first published in 1959 and followed by new editions in 1980 and 1990. In the opening paragraph of its first chapter, Sewall calls attention to the interdependence of the truths of comedy and tragedy: Lacking a sense of the tragic, comedy becomes brittle; lacking a sense of the comic, tragedy becomes bleak.

In the opening page of his Preface to *The Life of Emily Dickinson*, Sewall suggests that the poet's approach to exploring the limits of experience is not dissimilar to that of Sophocles and Shakespeare—though Dickinson's vision, dispersed and fragmented in hundreds of short lyrics, "comes to us with none of the massive wholeness of the plays." Sewall brings to his vast undertaking an awareness of Dickinson's probing eye—and the need to set forth *her* tragic vision: "She knew what horror was, and exultation, and the power of humor."

Sewall's grasp of Dickinson's larger concerns animates his elaborate reconstruction of her village world, her family history, her early life, her friendships, her larger world. His gift for archival research—and skillful exposition of startling findings—was earlier demonstrated in *The Lyman Letters: New Light on Emily Dickinson and Her Family* (1966).

The wealth of detail in *The Life*, some of it involving surprising, newly discovered revelations about the Dickinson family, is presented by Sewall with an innovative organizational plan aptly summed up by Donoghue: In place of chronological narrative, "he presents the life in its

## New Song Cycles to Be Heard at Conference

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One indication of the continuing fascination of Emily Dickinson's work is the number of recent musical settings of her poems. Note, for example, the Cleveland performance of a new cycle by Leo Smit (see page 6), the formation of the Emily Dickinson Music Society (page 5) and the forthcoming publication of Carlton Lowenberg's book *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere* (page 12).

Those attending the EDIS International Conference in October can look forward to hearing two new cycles of Dickinson songs. "Of Great Men and Death" by Robert Chauls, commissioned by EDIS, will include nine songs: "Let Down the Bars, Oh Death—," "It always felt to me—a wrong," "How the Waters closed above Him," "I took my Power in my Hand," "Death is the supple Suitor," "Tell as a Marksman—were forgotten," "Because I could not stop for Death—," "Wolfe demanded during dying," and "To the stanch Dust." This performance will be the world premiere of the work.

The second group of songs, four settings for viola da gamba and soprano, is by Carol Herman. For this group, Herman has chosen "I'm Nobody! Who are You?" "Wild Nights—Wild Nights!," "He fumbles at your Soul," and "The Name—of it—is 'Autumn'—." Soprano soloist

for this performance will be Suzanne Waldo, with Herman accompanying. For more background on these unusual settings, see Herman's article, below.

Robert Chauls chose the songs for his new cycle, particularly those focusing on "great men"—Moses, David, Tell, and Wolfe—with the male singer in mind, possibly a first. They will be sung at the conference by tenor Bill Wallis, with Chauls as piano accompanist. Both are on the music faculty at Los Angeles Valley College.

Chauls, a native of suburban New York, has been at LAVC since 1973. He studied at Antioch College and the Royal College of Music in London, earned his M.A. at the University of Michigan, and holds a doctorate from the University of Southern California.

Among Chauls's many compositions are four operas for children, a new version of "The Phantom of the Opera" (recently performed in Los Angeles), chamber music, and many songs. He is music director of Valley Opera of Los Angeles and conducts opera "whenever I can," frequently accompanies singers, and does occasional piano recitals. His other professional activities include being on the board of Opera for Youth and vice president of the National Opera

Association. He is author of *Piano for Adults: An Aural Approach*.

Carol Herman is a freelance performer on both viola da gamba and baroque cello. She graduated from Pomona College and did graduate work at Drake University. Her increasing interest in early music led to studies in viola da gamba at Yale and in Belgium. She has performed and taught throughout the United States and in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

Herman is co-director of the Southern California chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America, coaches viols at the University of California, Riverside, and the University of Southern California, plays cello with the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, and is a member of several early music ensembles. She has published a primer for viol tablature and is currently working on additional Dickinson poem settings for soprano and recorder, to be published this spring.

In a follow-up to their Friday evening performance, Herman, Chauls, and Wallis will be participants in a Saturday morning session on the arts. We look forward to meeting them and to hearing the results of their musical "wrestling" with Dickinson's poems.

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## New Music for an Old Instrument

Carol Herman

I wish I were an expert on Emily Dickinson's poems or that I could impress you with a long list of my musical compositions. And, although I might fabricate an imposing story of my arduous search for the perfect poems to set, the truth is somewhat more prosaic. Dickinson's poems have delighted me since I was a kid but I still find many of them bewildering and must rely on others for enlightenment.

I'm primarily a performer, teacher, and workshop clinician on both viola da gamba and Baroque cello. Although

through the years I've whipped off page after page of musical snippets to fill workshop needs and I've recently published a collection of specialized pedagogical materials, most of what I've written has leaned heavily on musical styles of earlier times.

The whole Dickinson project began as a challenge and as a new venture for me. Being cautious, I began this new venture with a couple of old friends. I chose the viola da gamba—and the second poem I ever memorized. Then I walked out on my own personal musical limb, mixed

up several centuries, and placed my friends in contemporary settings.

Violas da gamba have been an important part of my life through years of professional involvement. These "viols of the leg" are members of one of the two important string families of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Today most of us are more familiar with violins, violas, and celli, all of which belong to the viola da braccio family, or "viols of the arm."

Although the families are similar visually, they have distinct and important

differences. Gambas—or viols, as they are called in England—come in several sizes, all of which are held upright between the knees. They are lightly constructed and have wide flat necks tied with frets, and six or seven strings instead of four. These strings are gut or wound gut—as were all early strings—and are at low tension.

Gut-strung instruments are soft to modern ears. The frets contribute to the clear and somewhat nasal sound of viols, and the instruments are capable of enormous subtleties, partly because they are played with arched bows held underhand. Such bows are designed to produce swells and sighs easily, so it is not surprising to learn that the viol sound was often equated to that of the human voice.

The term “viola da gamba” usually refers to the bass instrument of the family, and this size enjoyed the longest and most important history in several countries. Viols went out of fashion with the ascendancy of the violin family, whose dynamic abilities could match the increasing demand for more sound to fill larger concert halls. The softer instruments lost out, and the course of music changed.

The course of music is always changing, however. It isn’t surprising to realize that composing “new music for old instruments” is popular. For although gambas, along with many other historic instruments, have reveled in the ongoing early music revival, most performers agree with music historians, musicologists, and even audiences that this revival has peaked in many areas. Early music specialists all search for new ideas, and we all embrace any new directions.

The National Viola da Gamba Society of America holds a yearly workshop that often includes a popular contemporary music class. During the past five years the society has also sponsored two international competitions for contemporary viol consort music, and these have drawn impressive entries. Naturally I’ve been aware of what is happening, and a few years ago I decided the time had come for me to go in my own new direction.

Why did I decide on poems? Why didn’t I stick to instrumental music? Here’s where years of fascination with

words conspired with years of early music involvement. Those of us passionate about what is called “authentic performance practice” think vocally about much music of earlier periods. We become fanatics when we work with singers, insisting on text translations and strict attention to the rhythms and inflections of language, which we then try to duplicate with our instruments.

We also approach instrumental music vocally, arguing over “what a phrase says” or what “articulation” we should include. We “talk out” our music, and we’ll put words where there are none to get our points across. We strive to match the polyphony of a Renaissance motet—we study the rhetoric and word painting in a Bach cantata. Bass-line players feel especially fortunate because they work so often with singers and words. I’ve given more than one workshop class entitled “working with words.”

So choosing words for my new project seemed logical, and I turned to the easiest source—poetry. To be honest, I borrowed our son’s college anthology because it was more comprehensive than mine. Reading that Dickinson poem of early memory “took me back.” I’m sure we agree on the timelessness of Dickinson’s poems—the perfect choice for my venture into contemporary music.

Setting her words for soprano voice was expedient. I’m a soprano, and I found composing easier when I could play and sing at the same time: besides, I’d planned to con a soprano friend into being a guinea pig for my fledgling efforts. I was intrigued by the idea of weaving together two solo voices—one human and one instrumental yet historically considered voicelike. And so I set to work.

I wonder how many thousands of school kids have been asked to memorize “I’m Nobody! Who are You?”—that second poem from my long-ago junior high English class? I chose “Wild Nights—Wild Nights!” because it was new to me, I hoped I could write some “boat rocking measures,” and it afforded a complete contrast. Cristanne Miller suggested “He fumbles at your Soul” because of its music imagery.

When I decided to add a fourth poem to

the collection, I searched again for contrast and was challenged by the “great globules” in “The Name—of it—is ‘Autumn—.’” When I shared this choice with Cris, she launched into an analysis that left me feeling awkwardly naive. Why hadn’t I heard what she heard?

I remembered this when writing the preface to my musical score. In it I suggest that performers first read the poems out loud, experimenting with rhythms and emphases, and that my own choices for tempi and dynamics do not have to be strictly followed. I should also have added that the interpretation of poetry is never static. Time passes and new layers of meaning unfold: all musicians realize they will rarely perform the same music in exactly the same way twice! How satisfying to know that each of us—from school kids to musicians to Dickinson scholars—has equal access to experimentation, to discovery, and to a start in any new direction we choose to take.

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## Dickinson Music Society Formed

In the century since Emily Dickinson’s poetry first reached the public, more than 270 composers have set her poems to music, producing some 1,600 scores, mostly songs but also operas, choral works, works for instrumental ensembles, and incidental music. As one composer has said, “Emily Dickinson’s poems have been an important literary staple of the musical world. I suspect that a sizable amount of American vocal music would not exist but for her poetry.”

In view of this corpus of work, Carlton Lowenberg has established the Emily Dickinson Music Society. Its purpose is to gather as many as possible of these scores as well as performance tapes in a single location that will serve as a resource for readers, scholars, and musicians.

Membership in the society is open to any interested person. There is no membership fee. For further information or to join, write to Carlton Lowenberg, 737 St. Mary’s Rd., Lafayette, CA 94549.

## The Todd-Bingham Archive, Yale University Library

This, the fourth article in our series on Dickinson libraries, is by Judith Ann Schiff, Chief Research Archivist in Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University Library.

Daniel Lombardo, Series Editor

The collected papers of Mabel Loomis Todd (1856-1932) and her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham (1880-1968), constitute the major portion of what has been popularly known for many years as the Todd-Bingham Archive. In 1964, Mrs. Bingham donated to the Yale University Library her vast collection of family letters, papers, photographs, printed matter, artifacts, and memorabilia documenting 175 years of American history.

To process the hundreds of thousands of items effectively, it was necessary to divide the collection into separate groups. The papers relating to Emily Dickinson are filed mainly in the Mabel Loomis Todd Papers and the Millicent Todd Bingham Papers. Photographs and pictorial material are in the Todd-Bingham Picture Collection. The rest of the original collection has been divided into the Loomis-Wilder Family Papers, the David Peck Todd Papers, and the Todd-Bingham Memorabilia Collection.

In regard to Emily Dickinson, the Todd family papers are the primary resource for the study of the editing and publication of her poems and letters and biographical research through the early 1960s. As an entity, the more than 260 linear feet of collected papers, in 659 containers, provide extensive and largely untapped documentation for research projects on the history of astronomy, air and space exploration, travel, geography, African American troops in the Civil War, environmental studies, women's studies, and the history of Amherst.

The Mabel Loomis Todd Papers consist of 51 linear feet of papers in 125 containers. Of principal importance are the 42 volumes of her daily diaries cov-



Millicent Todd Bingham

ering the period 1879-1932 and retrospective journals covering the period 1871-1932, which provide commentaries on Emily Dickinson and members of her family, Mrs. Todd's relationship with Austin Dickinson, and her editorial work on the poems and letters. The diaries and journals are available as a microfilm publication on nine reels.

Amherst social life is vividly described in the voluminous family correspondence. A special William Austin Dickinson subject file contains a variety of archival materials including 400 love letters from Austin to Mabel, 1882-1891, and a similar number from Mabel to Austin, 1882-1895; two letters to Mabel from Lavinia Dickinson; eight volumes of Austin's diaries, 1880-1890; various notes and legal documents; and a statement on Emily Dickinson's poetry and Austin's marriage to Susan Gilbert Dickinson.

Most of the editorial and historical documentation related to Emily Dickinson retained by Mabel Loomis Todd was passed on to her daughter and is filed in the Millicent Todd Bingham Papers with her own Dickinson research files. These materials were the basis of her

four books: *Bolts of Melody: New Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited with Mabel Loomis Todd (1945); *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Début of Emily Dickinson* (1945); *Emily Dickinson: A Revelation* (1954); and *Emily Dickinson's Home: Letters of Edward Dickinson and His Family* (1955).

The correspondence in the series includes letters from literary figures, scholars engaged in Dickinson research, and close friends interested in Emily Dickinson. Of special importance are letters from Wallace Keep concerning his memories of visits with Lavinia Dickinson and letters from Clara Carleton Pearl about her aunt's reminiscences of Emily Dickinson. Source documents include photostatic copies of the Dickinson poems in Mrs. Todd's possession and typed copies of letters relating to the publication of the poems and letters.

In the large group of scrapbooks, there are albums kept by Elizabeth Dickinson Currier and Annie Dickinson Currier Brown, two volumes containing the first reviews of Emily Dickinson's poems and letters, and albums of clippings relating to books by others. The books about Emily Dickinson contain annotations mainly by Millicent Todd Bingham. Mrs. Bingham followed her mother's example in keeping a detailed diary which provides a continuing record of Dickinson associational history from 1888 to 1968.

The Todd-Bingham Picture Collection includes photographs and printed pictures of most of the principal figures in the Dickinson and Todd families, Amherst notables, groups, homes, and scenes of the town and college, and associates of the Dickinsons and Todds, many of which have been reproduced in books by Mrs. Bingham and others. Copy prints of the photographs may be ordered.

A perusal of these papers affords interested researchers the opportunity to share Mrs. Bingham's literary legacy, one which brought both anguish and enrichment to her life. As she concluded in the

# Performances, Et Cetera

## Cleveland Hears New Dickinson Song Cycle

On June 19, 1991, the Cleveland Museum of Art served as venue for the first performance of a new cycle of Emily Dickinson poetry set for voice and piano by Leo Smit. The occasion was the recital appearance of Rosalind Rees, soprano, in the museum's Gartner Auditorium. Ms Rees coupled the Smit settings of Dickinson poems with songs by other American composers, notably Ives, Fine, Bernstein, Copland, and Porter.

Leo Smit chose fourteen Dickinson poems and employed them to forge a cycle he entitled "Child Emilie: Memories and Fantasies of Childhood" (1989). The cycle forms an integral part of a larger work (1989-1991), *The Ecstatic Pilgrimage*. The poems largely fall into Dickinson's productive years 1862-1865, with two earlier poems. The choices and the musical settings worked for the most part to form a cohesive unit.

Poems chosen for the cycle were "I was the slightest in the House," "Through lane it lay—thro' bramble," "It troubled me as once I was—," "The Child's faith is new—," "Softened by Time's consummate plush," "Papa above!," "We talked as Girls do—," "They shut me up in Prose—," "I cried at Pity—not at Pain—," "Let Us play Yesterday—," "A loss of something ever felt I—," "Good Morning—Midnight—," "Up Life's Hill with my little Bundle," and "I'm ceded—I've stopped being Theirs—."

The problem with setting Dickinson, when the listener has only one hearing, is that poetry requires analysis. It is beyond the ability of many singers to provide textual interpretation in a matter of a few collective moments. "I cried at Pity" worked effectively, as did the sonorous "Softened by Time's consummate plush." Others such as "A loss of something ever felt I—" did not come off so well. Admittedly, some poems do not sing any more easily than they read.

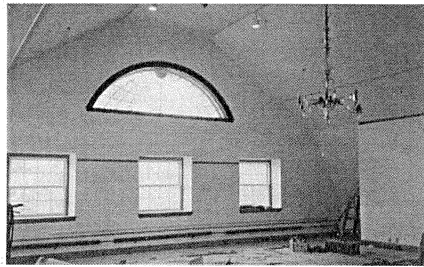
Ms. Rees's expert musicianship was put to good service. What we have come to know as Emily Dickinson's pliantly keen insight into childhood came through

in her performance of Mr. Smit's new settings.

Ralph Drake

*Mr. Drake is a member of the Art Song Festival Committee of the Cleveland Institute of Music.*

## Jones Library Exhibit to Open



Dickinson display area at the Jones Library (under construction)

Amherst's Jones Library will open its new Emily Dickinson exhibit some time in the coming summer. The exhibit will be a permanent tribute to the poet's life and work installed in a new wing of the library. Designed for both the general public and scholars, it will be a lively addition to our research collections.

Mark Mitchell Associates has designed a dramatic exhibit room using traditional New England windows (antique and reproduced) and hardwood floors. The space combines a homelike atmosphere and the latest in museum environmental controls, security, and lighting. Conservator Mark Karnett of Hatfield, Mass., is the principal designer of the exhibit. Fine furniture maker Nolan Anaya of Leverett, Mass., will do woodworking. Among our advisors are Polly Longworth and David Porter.

EDIS continues to be supportive, for which we are most grateful. We heartily encourage donations, large and small, for sound and video equipment and specially designed display panels. Contributions should be sent to The Jones Library, 43 Amity St., Amherst, MA 01002.

Daniel Lombardo  
Curator of Special Collections

## A Belle that Rings True

Michael H. Arvé of the Cobblestone Arts Center in Victor, New York, has every reason to be proud of his production of *The Belle of Amherst*, which won the 1991 competition for Best Play held by the American Association of Community Theatres. And he is especially fortunate in his Emily, Vicki Casarett, who walked away with Best Actress honors. The production, which has been given a number of times in the past two years, is staged in a cobblestone mansion of the 1830s, a home of roughly the same vintage as the Dickinson Homestead in Amherst.

Playgoers can relax in one of the mansion's several first-floor parlors while partaking of mulled wine and ED's famous black cake. Then it is a short distance up the stairs, a longer way winding through a maze of old hallways, and past the steep back stairs to the poet's bedroom, where the play will be performed.

The audience enters from backstage, as it were, filing past Emily's bed, neatly made up, past her writing desk with its inkwell, steel pen, and blotter, past the sitting area furnished with Eastlake chairs upholstered in rose and bureaus holding framed photographs of Squire Dickinson, Austin, and Lavinia.

At center stage is an Eastlake writing table covered with a paisley spread, where much of the action will take place. The ambience of the room (fashioned by combining a modest ballroom with an adjacent bedroom) is genuine nineteenth century. The intimacy of the staging demands authentic props.

Intimacy, in fact, is the keynote. No more than twenty-eight persons can be accommodated. They sit on folding chairs at the far end of the "bedroom," while the lights black out and then rise again, slowly, as Emily opens the door and sweeps in wearing a white gown patterned after the dress exhibited in the Homestead. She approaches from the back, just to the audience; those in front seats could reach out and touch her if they dared. There is instant recognition,

for this Emily bears a close resemblance to the girl in the famous daguerreotype, dark hair drawn back and pinned in a bun, skin pale but radiant, and eyes lighted up (they are "more like espresso," says Vicki Casarett, than the sherry left in the glass). Emily introduces herself and the play is on.

There are highlights: Emily writing at her table (you can hear the pen scratch on paper) and holding up the word to pronounce it—"Cir-cum-fer-ence—. Now, there's a word to tip you hat to!" Emily peering excitedly out of the old, wavy panes of the window, seeing Wadsworth's coach come down her street. Emily seated not four feet from a front-row spectator, peering directly into his eyes as she says "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" so intently he is almost impelled to respond. Emily reciting her self-description while pressing to her breast a copy of the daguerreotype, the resemblance uncanny.

"Emily and I have grown together," says Casarett, who, like her heroine, attended Mount Holyoke College. "She's such an intimate character, fascinating and mysterious. The more I know about her the more I know I don't know." One thing she does know is that Dickinson is not the withdrawn neurotic some critics would have her, and she cuts through everything that has been written to locate *her* Emily Dickinson, "an engaging, witty, charming woman. She wasn't that weird; the white dress, the seclusion, they were all deliberate—her choice, not her fear. What surprised me was how normal, within her sphere, she was."

In November 1990 the production swept the New York Theatre Festival in Corning. Then in April 1991 it was on to the regional competition in Erie, Pennsylvania, for a second win. In June came the triumph at the national competition in Overland Park, Kansas, over winners from the ten U.S. regions. Now the troupe is preparing to fly to Ireland in late May for the 1992 Theatre Festival in Dunkalk, where, with luck, this *Belle of Amherst* may become the International Champion. Now, there's a production to tip your hat to!

Philip Gerber  
State University of New York  
College at Brockport

## Folger Celebrates Dickinson Birthday

Emily Dickinson's birthday is celebrated yearly at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., with a poetry reading in honor of the poet, followed by a reception featuring Dickinson's black cake.



Photo by Julie Ainsworth

Some of the celebrants at last year's Emily Dickinson Birthday Celebration at the Folger. Left to right: Gigi Bradford, Elise Paschen of the Poetry Society of America, Charles Wright, Linda Pastan, Jean Nordhaus, and pastry chef Marge Friedman.

The programs, which are part of the Folger's Evening Poetry Series, are co-sponsored by the Poetry Society of America and have featured a diversity of contemporary American poets over the years. Sharon Olds, Linda Pastan, June Jordan, Cynthia MacDonald, Erica Jong, Marilyn Hacker, Josephine Jacobsen, and Jean Valentine are among the poets who have read their poetry or offered commentary for the occasion. While many of these writers may seem to have little in common, it is testimony to Dickinson's compelling influence that all have claimed Dickinson as an important literary forebear.

The first Emily Dickinson Birthday Celebration at the Folger was held in 1982 (as an award ceremony for the Emily Dickinson Prize) and included remarks by O.B. Hardison, Jr., a poet and late director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, and William Meredith, who was then Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress. The Poetry Society's Emily Dickinson Prize is no longer awarded at the Folger Birth-

day Celebration, and the programs since have presented one or two poets speaking directly and through their poems of Dickinson's importance for their own work.

At the 1991 celebration, held December 9, the distinguished poet and translator Charles Wright read from his latest collection, *The World of Ten Thousand*

*Things*. As "program," the Folger distributed a broadside of Wright's poem "Visiting Emily Dickinson."

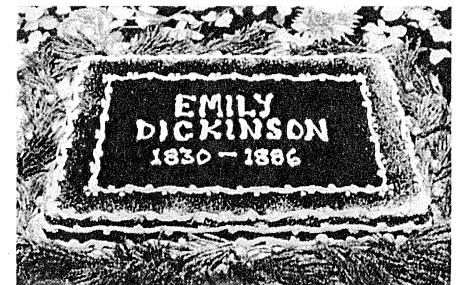


Photo by Julie Ainsworth

The black cakes for the readings have been prepared by Margery K. Friedman, a freelance pastry chef in the Washington area, since 1986, when Katharine Zadravec, a poet and organizer of the Folger's Dickinson Centennial conference, approached her with a book of Dickinson's recipes. Friedman has adapted the recipe to modern ingredients and methods. The original recipe suggested baking the cake in a milk pail.

Jean Nordhaus  
Acting Poetry Coordinator  
The Folger Shakespeare Library

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22**

*5:00-7:00 P.M. Conference Check-in*

*7:00-9:00 Opening Plenary Session*

**“Issues of Translation in  
Dickinson Studies”**

*Moderator:* Barbara Mossberg, VIA International

*Participants:* Roland Hagenbüchle, Catholic Univ. of Eichstätt, Germany; Diane Middlebrook, Stanford Univ.; Sandra Gilbert, Univ. of California, Davis

Panelists representing each of the three areas—language, culture, and the arts—will address issues arising in the process of “translating” Emily Dickinson.

*9:00-11:00 P.M. Cash Bar Reception*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23**

*8:00-8:30 A.M. Coffee and Tea Set-Up*

*Conference Check-in/Registration*

*8:30-10:15 Dialogue/Conversation Sessions*

**Language I**

*Moderator:* Gary Lee Stonum, Case Western Reserve Univ.

*Participants:* Jerome McGann, Univ. of Virginia; Agnieszka Salska, Univ. of Łódź, Poland; Beth Olivares, Fordham Univ.

Panelists will examine how Dickinson’s writings have been edited, arranged, printed, anthologized, and transmitted, and how these material translations affect the reception of her work.

**Culture I**

*Moderator:* Polly Longworth, Biographer

*Participants:* Benjamin Lease, Northeastern Illinois Univ.; Dorothy Huff Oberhaus, Mercy College; Paula Bennett, S. Illinois Univ., Carbondale

This panel situates Dickinson in her historical time and place and explores the relevance/irrelevance of such historical knowledge to understanding Dickinson’s work. Lease will talk on Dickinson, Amherst, and “the local conditions of the soul,” with emphasis on Dickinson’s poetics of sacred play. Oberhaus will explore how Dickinson experienced and transcended

her time and place through reading, creating a friendship with books that is critical to understanding her poetry. Bennett will examine Dickinson and late-nineteenth-century women’s culture, with particular reference to the explosion of poetry by women in the major literary periodicals after 1858.

**Arts I**

*Moderator:* Jonathan Morse, Univ. of Hawaii, Manoa

*Participants:* Judith Farr, Georgetown Univ.; Barton St. Armand, Brown Univ.

Participants will address how Emily Dickinson’s own aesthetic experiences of art, music, and literature get translated into her poetry. Farr will focus on Dickinson’s knowledge of the visual arts and her allusions to some famous paintings of her day—by Frederic E. Church, Thomas Cole, and William Holman Hunt. St. Armand will speak about Dickinson’s responses to the popular and folk cultures of her day.

*10:15-10:45 BREAK*

*10:45-12:30 Dialogue/Conversation Sessions*

**Language II**

*Moderator:* Cristanne Miller, Pomona College

*Participants:* Roland Hagenbüchle, Catholic Univ. of Eichstätt, Germany; Alice Fulton, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor

A discussion of the foreignness of Dickinson’s language, with focus primarily on problems of reading Dickinson through the lens of another language (because of translation difficulties and differing cultural idioms) and on how these apparent problems may be used to illuminate Dickinson’s poetry by both native English-speaking and foreign readers. This dialogue will also discuss how “foreign” Dickinson’s language is even for native speakers of English. Her coined words, grammatical experiments, syntactic deletions, and dense metaphors prevent any reader from feeling fully “at home” with her poetry.

**Culture II**

*Moderator:* Jane Eberwein, Oakland Univ.

*Participants:* George Monteiro, Brown Univ.; Dorothea Steiner, Univ. of Salzburg, Austria; Yoko Shimazaki, Univ. of the Sa-

cred Heart, Japan; Marcella Taylor, St. Olaf College

Most of those now reading Dickinson—even in the United States—have only the vaguest sense of the historical realities of her culture, so that her admirers must inevitably engage in cross-cultural translation. Panelists will discuss the challenges of communicating their understanding of the poetry to wholly different audiences than the one Dickinson addressed. Monteiro will offer a brief presentation about his teaching experiences in Brazil. Steiner will indicate what European cultural connections originally made Dickinson accessible and appealing to her and talk about experiences teaching the poems in Salzburg and Minnesota. Shimazaki will offer a perspective on reading Dickinson in Japan. Finally, Taylor will talk about ways of making the poems understandable to Americans who reflect the multicultural disparities of today’s United States.

**Arts II**

*Moderator:* Jonnie Guerra, Mt. Vernon College

*Participants:* Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.; Maravene Loeschke, Towson State Univ.; Agneta Bjørn, Odense Theatre, Denmark; Ludmila Marjanska, Poet and Translator, Poland

This session will focus on translations of Dickinson’s life and work into other art forms. Wolff will open with a discussion of how our construct “Emily Dickinson” influences our reading of the poetry. Then attention will be given to William Luce’s *The Belle of Amherst*, with which the other participants have been involved as translator (Marjanska) or actress (Loeschke and Bjørn), and its impact on the popular reception and understanding of Dickinson in the United States, Denmark, and Poland. Panelists also will discuss how they have personally “translated” Dickinson in their own creative work—in biography, performance, and literary representations.

*12:30-2:00 P.M. LUNCH*

*2:00-3:45 P.M. Six Simultaneous Translation Workshops: Poems #322, 341, 712, 861, 1068, 1247*

*Participants:* Stanislaw Baranczak, Dorothy Zayatz Baker, Wendy Barker, Chan-



thana Chaichit, Anne-Marie Christensen, Carlos Daghljan, Karen Dandurand, Takao Furakawa, Kaarina Halonen, Sirkka Heiskanen-Makela, Michiko Iwata, Lennart Nyberg, Susanna Lippoczy Rich, Yoko Shimazaki, Dorothea Steiner, Masako Takeda, Dali Tan, and Zsuzsanna Ujzszazi

Panelists reflecting the range of language groups (Asian, Teutonic, Slavic, and Latin) will each arrive at the conference with a draft translation of a particular poem and a set of questions that can be dealt with by those attending.

**3:45-4:15 BREAK**

**4:15-5:30 Panels of Papers on Topics Related to the Conference Themes** (Selection will take place in May 1992.)

**8:00 P.M. "A Dickinson Celebration"**

*World Premiere: Musical Settings of Dickinson Poems for the Tenor Voice*  
Robert Chauls, Composer; Bill Wallis, Tenor

*Washington, D.C., Premiere: Musical Settings of Dickinson Poems for Viola da Gamba and Soprano Voice*

Carol Herman, Composer; Suzanne Waldo, Soprano

*Emily Dickinson: A Celebration for Readers.* A Concerted Reading of Poems  
Suzanne Juhasz, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, Director

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24**

**8:00-8:30 A.M. Coffee and Tea Set-Up**

**8:30-10:15 Dialogue/Conversation Sessions**

**Language III**

*Moderator:* Margaret Freeman, Los Angeles Valley College

*Participants:* Stanislaw Baranczak, Harvard Univ.; David Porter, Univ. of Mass., Amherst; Masako Takeda, Osaka Shoin Women's College, Japan

This session will explore strategies for redescribing the conditions of understanding Dickinson's language, with respect to such aspects as semantics, syntax, and punctuation. The panelists will focus on the difficulties of Dickinson texts in selected poems and will discuss the chal-

lenges faced in translating them into other languages, such as Japanese and Polish.

**Culture III**

*Moderator:* Martha Nell Smith, Univ. of Maryland, College Park

*Participants:* Lucille Clifton, Poet; Susan Howe, SUNY, Buffalo; Alicia Ostriker, Rutgers Univ.

The panelists, all women poets, will talk about Dickinson as influence and force in American literary culture. This panel will include not only their contextualizing of their lives as poets by looking to their foremother, Emily Dickinson, but also poetry readings by each poet.

**Arts III**

*Moderator:* Judy Jo Small, North Carolina State Univ.

*Participants:* Maryann Sewell, Montgomery College; Carol Herman, Composer; Robert Chauls, Los Angeles Valley College; Bill Wallis, Los Angeles Valley College

A follow-up to the evening musical performance. Participants will discuss their experiences in translating Dickinson's poems into musical form, focusing on features of her language that lend themselves to musical interpretation. Particular attention will be given to the history of musical settings for her poems, to contrasting settings of individual poems, and to the significance of settings that use unusual instrumentation.

**10:15-10:45 BREAK**

**10:45-12:30 Application Forums**

**Teaching**

*Moderator:* Vivian Pollak, Univ. of Washington

*Participants:* Margaret Dickie, Univ. of Georgia; Cheryl Walker, Scripps College; Jonathan Morse, Univ. of Hawaii, Manoa

This workshop will focus on the challenges of teaching Emily Dickinson. The panel of speakers will both consider their past teaching experiences and discuss new ways and approaches that have been suggested by the conference.

**Editing/Publication**

*Moderator:* Martha Nell Smith, Univ. of Maryland, College Park

*Participants:* Ellen Louise Hart, Univ. of California, Santa Cruz; Marta Werner, SUNY, Buffalo; Rachel DuPlessis, Temple Univ.

Participants in this workshop will set an agenda for new ventures in editing Dickinson's poetry and letters.

**Translating**

*Moderator:* Margaret Freeman, Los Angeles Valley College

In this workshop, plans for a multilingual volume of selected Dickinson poems will be outlined: poems chosen, languages identified, contributors determined, and annotations discussed. Specific problems in translation for different languages, such as how to deal with the dash, gender references, and ambiguous syntax, will also be discussed.

**Artistic Representations**

*Moderators:* Jonnie Guerra, Mt. Vernon College; Barbara Mossberg, VIA International

This workshop will provide an opportunity for conference participants interested in artistic representations of Dickinson's life and work to share projects already underway and to explore ideas—individual and collaborative—that will further the Society's goal to encourage the appreciation of Dickinson throughout the world.

**12:30-2:00 LUNCH (on own)**

**2:00-5:00 Closing Plenary Session**

**2:00-3:15 "Summing Up"**

*Moderator:* Barbara Mossberg, VIA International

*Participants:* Gudrun M. Grabher, Univ. of Innsbruck, Austria; Charles Altieri, Univ. of Washington; Suzanne Juhasz, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder

Participants on the closing panel will act as conference reporters and evaluators. They will offer observations on conference activities, discuss implications of the conference for Dickinson studies and, more generally, for translation, and engage the audience in an evaluation of the conference experience.

**3:15-5:00 Tea in Honor of International Participants and EDIS Annual Business Meeting**

## Members' News

### EDIS Annual Meeting

The 1992 annual meeting of EDIS will be our International Conference, October 22-24, in Washington, D.C. We urge members to attend the conference—a chance for all of us to establish ties with other Dickinsonians and to share our knowledge of and enthusiasm for Dickinson's work.

For more details on the conference, see the program on pages 8-9 and other articles in this issue. A registration form

appears on page 15. There is still time to register.

The Society's annual business meeting will held on Saturday, October 24, following the concluding conference session. This is an opportunity to raise issues and share your concerns. Again, we hope all members at the conference will attend.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington in October.

### News from the Homestead

In 1915 the Reverend Hervey Parke, rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Amherst, purchased the Homestead from Martha Dickinson Bianchi. This was just one year after Martha had published *The Single Hound*, her first collection of Dickinson poems. With the growing interest in Dickinson's poetry, the Parke family soon found themselves extending their hospitality to travelers who wished to see the home in which Emily had written the majority of her poems. After Mr. Parke died, Mrs. Parke sold the home to Amherst College in 1965, with the understanding that the Homestead would remain accessible to interested visitors. Amherst purchased the Homestead to honor Emily as well as her grandfather, father, and brother, all of whom were active leaders in the early years of the college.

Today we are all the beneficiaries of Mrs. Parke's desire that the home be preserved, that it not be converted into apartments or offices, and that it remain open to the public. We must also recognize Amherst College for its willingness to maintain the Homestead so beautifully and to provide access to scholars, pilgrims, and casual visitors alike. In recent years, the guiding staff has taken pleasure in welcoming an increasing number of visitors annually.

For those planning a visit to Amherst, our tour schedule is as follows: Selected rooms are open for tours from 1:30 to 3:45 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays from early May through October; Wednesdays and Saturdays only in early spring and late fall. Admission is \$3.00 per person. Reservations are recommended: call 413-542-8161 or write well in advance to the Emily Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main Street, Amherst, MA 01002.

Carol Birtwistle  
Resident Curator

EDIS Bulletin

### Two ED Sessions Scheduled for ALA

EDIS will sponsor two panels devoted to Emily Dickinson at this year's meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held in San Diego in late May. This will be the third annual meeting of ALA, a coalition of societies devoted to the study of American authors.

#### "Emily Dickinson and Feminist Criticism: A Review"

Chair: Margaret Dickie, Univ. of Georgia

Participants: Suzanne Juhasz, Univ. of Colorado; Joyce Warren, Queens College; Mary Loeffelholz, Northeastern Univ.; and Lissa Attaway-Holloway, Univ. of Georgia.

#### "Emily Dickinson and Influence"

Chair: Martha Nell Smith, Univ. of Maryland

"Inebriate of Air": My Emily Dickinson" Alicia Ostriker, Rutgers Univ.

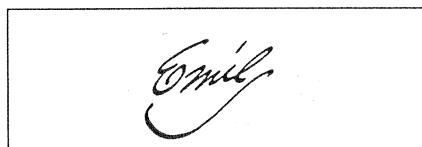
"The Plight of a Serious Poet Who Happens to Be a Woman" Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Inst. of Technology

For further information about the panels, contact Margaret Dickie at 404-548-8969 or 404-542-2186. General information about the ALA meeting can be obtained from Alfred Bendixen by phone, 213-343-4291, or by fax, 213-343-2670.

### New EDIS Logos

EDIS (see above) and the *Emily Dickinson Journal* have new logos, thanks to Glenda King, who last year designed the logo for the *Bulletin*. A designer for the University Press of Kentucky, Glenda is also a quilt artist whose elegant contemporary quilts have appeared in several national juried exhibits.

To recreate Dickinson's handwriting in reproducible form, Glenda worked from samples in the Amherst College Library (supplied through the courtesy of Deborah Peletier) and from the Franklin edition of the fascicles. The signature was designed from separate examples of "Emily" and "Dickinson," since apparently no full signature exists. "International" and "Journal" are composites of several words. "Society" is, of course, thoroughly Dickinsonian.



### Editor's Note

For the spring 1993 issue, I'm looking for articles (of up to 500 words) by or about contemporary poets who have been influenced by Emily Dickinson. If you would like to contribute, please contact me at the address on the opposite page.

Georgiana Strickland

## Conference Notes

### Silent Auction

A "silent auction" will be held at the conference, with all proceeds to benefit EDIS. Please consider donating books, journals, audio-visuals, or anything else relating to Dickinson, her associates, or her "world." All donors will be acknowledged, and donations can be considered tax deductible.

Please send donations to Walter Powell, 201 Ewell Ave., Gettysburg, PA 17325, or bring items to the conference and call them to the attention of Powell or anyone else on the EDIS Board.

### Book Display Tables Available

A limited number of six-foot display tables will be available for EDIS members wanting to sell books or other Dickinson-related items or for promoting new publications or special exhibits/collections. Tables are available on a first come, first served basis for \$100 each (one table per applicant). EDIS members will be given first consideration. For further information or to reserve a table, contact Walter Powell (address above) or call 717-334-1160 daytime.

### International Bibliography

A committee will meet at the conference to begin planning for publication of an international Dickinson bibliography. To assure its success we will need the help of scholars from many countries.

If you would like to participate or discuss the project's goals and editorial policies, join us at the conference. A meeting time will be announced in the program. If you will not be at the conference but would like to participate, write Georgiana Strickland at 133 Lackawanna Rd., Lexington, KY 40503.

### Reporters Needed

The fall issue of the *Bulletin* is planned to include brief summaries of all conference sessions. To put these reports together in time for our deadline, we need the help of several volunteers. If you are willing to write a short report on one or two sessions, please contact Georgiana Strickland (see address above) or call at 606-277-7613 or 606-257-8438.

## Membership Report

This winter's membership renewal campaign has brought a good response. As of April 1, the Society enrolled 333 members, and conference plans have spurred interest among Dickinson admirers just learning about our activities.

We remain a decidedly international organization, with members on four continents and in sixteen countries: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and Thailand. Thirty-eight of the United States are represented, along with the District of Columbia.

One frustration I experience in maintaining contact with our members is that mail gets returned because of inaccurate addresses. The U.S. Postal Service now

forwards mail for only six months, so it is important that you report address changes promptly to avoid missing *Bulletins* and other society mailings.

If you have friends who might be interested in EDIS, I would appreciate your sending me names and addresses so that I could provide them with information. Consider a gift membership for your poetry-loving friends.

Would you be interested in serving on the Membership Committee to help spread word about EDIS? Or are you thinking of establishing a local affiliate to develop programs in your area? If so, please write to let me know of your interest: Department of English, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401.

Jane Donahue Eberwein  
Membership Committee Chair

## Evergreens Preservation Plan Initiated

Readers of the *Bulletin* will be happy to know that plans are moving forward for restoration of the "Evergreens," the home of Austin and Susan Gilbert Dickinson. The trustees of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust have appointed Gregory Farmer, a preservation and museum consultant from Springfield, Massachusetts, to coordinate a structural study of the house and an assessment of its contents.

The study, to be completed this spring, will outline a plan for structural repair and restoration and offer recommendations for conservation of the furniture, paintings, prints, and documents remaining in the house.

The 1855 Italianate mansion, located next door to the Emily Dickinson Homestead, is now being evaluated for potential use as a museum and research center. It was threatened with demolition under the terms of an earlier bequest but is now protected by the charitable trust established in 1988 by the will of Mrs. Mary L. Hampson, who inherited the property from Martha Dickinson Bianchi.

Barton St. Armand  
Brown University

## ED Society of Japan Addresses Translation

The Emily Dickinson Society of Japan held its Seventh General Meeting on September 28, 1991, at the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo. Following the opening papers, entitled "On Dickinson's 'despair'" and "Behind the Mask of the Cherub: Women in Dickinson's Day," presented by Saeko Kishino and Reiko Ano, the main program was a symposium entitled "What Is Translation? Emily Dickinson in Japanese Culture." The theme was inspired by the coming EDIS International Conference, but has also been a focus for several recent symposiums in Japan.

Keynote speaker was Tamaaki Yamakawa, who outlined the four aspects of translation to be addressed by subsequent speakers: 1) translation in/by Japanese (literary translation and translation in the arts), 2) translation in culture, 3) ED's reception in Japan, and 4) ED scholarship in Japan/by Japanese. Item 4 was further explained with reference to mistakes in designating Japanese names in some American bibliographies.

Item 1 was treated by Masako Takeda, who had contributed an essay on literary translation to *After a Hundred Years*.

# New Publications

## Books

**Farr, Judith.** *The Passion of Emily Dickinson.* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, Spring 1992. 400 pp., illustrated. ISBN 0-674-65665-2. \$29.95.

An analysis of the poems and letters, especially the love poems. Farr "explores the desire, suffering, exultation, spiritual rapture, and intense dedication to art that characterize Dickinson's poems, and deciphers their many complex and witty references to texts and paintings of the day." The poet emerges "as a cultivated mid-Victorian in whom the romanticism of Emerson and the American landscape painters found bold expression." [From catalog listing.]

**Herreshoff, David Sprague.** *Labor into Art: The Theme of Work in Nineteenth-Century American Literature.* 170 pp. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8143-2081-3. \$24.95.

Using the premise that work defines a civilization and its literary output, Herreshoff examines the writings of five major nineteenth-century figures (Thoreau, Melville, Dickinson, Douglass, and Whitman) to discover how they developed the theme of work and how they show work giving shape to life. [From listing.]

Further information on **Joan Kirkby**, *Emily Dickinson* (reviewed in the fall 1991 issue). The book is available in the United States from St. Martin's Press (cloth only) for \$24.95, ISBN 0-312-05793-8. There is at present no paperback edition in the U.S. Also available from Macmillan, London, ISBN 0-333-42067-5 (price not available).

**Lowenberg, Carlton.** *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere: Emily Dickinson and Music.* Foreword by Richard B. Sewall. Berkeley, Cal.: Fallen Leaf Press, June 1992. 238 pp., ISBN 0-914913-20-4. \$39.50.

A detailed inventory of more than 1,600 musical settings of Dickinson poems and letters, written between 1896 and 1991. Includes information on publication, performances, and recordings, as well as comments by the composers and a survey

of the importance of music in Dickinson's life.

**Smith, Martha Nell.** *Rowing in Eden: Rereading Emily Dickinson.* Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, fall 1992.

Unravels one of the paradoxes of Dickinson's life and work by "boldly recasting two of the oldest and still most frequently asked questions.... Why didn't she publish more poems while she was alive? and Who was her most important contemporary audience?" Smith argues that Dickinson published her work in her letters and through circulation of her forty manuscript books. She reexamines the passionate bond between Dickinson and her sister-in-law, Susan Gilbert Dickinson, and probes the extent of Sue's collaboration in the production of the poems. [From catalog listing.]

## Reviews

**Walsh, John Evangelist.** *This Brief Tragedy: Unraveling the Todd-Dickinson Affair.* New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991. 240 pp., illustrations. ISBN 0-8021-1119-X, \$18.95.

In *The Hidden Life of Emily Dickinson*, John Evangelist Walsh argued that the poet's work was so heavily indebted to the work of others that it constitutes a case of plagiarism. Twenty years later, he would bring us news about the poet's death, the love affair between Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd, and the character of Susan and Austin's marriage, Lavinia Dickinson's suit against the Todds, the facts surrounding Mabel's editing of Dickinson's poetry, and the campaign conducted by Mabel, her daughter, Millicent, and the poet's early biographers to denigrate Sue's character and promote Mabel's importance.

Walsh takes these positions: The ailing poet helped her death along by taking strychnine or some other poison. Mabel flirted with Austin's son Ned, then set her cap successfully for Austin, who was especially vulnerable to her charms after the death of his youngest child, Gib. For many years Sue and

Austin's marriage functioned perfectly well—despite what Mabel said about it in her diary. Mabel, hardly the prime mover in the editing of the poetry, was enlisted to carry out the task, barely more than menial, of copying out poems and making a preliminary selection to be submitted to the consideration of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who had no wish to do this basic spadework. It was Higginson, after seeing that Mabel could be of further use to him, and contrary to Lavinia's expressed wishes, who insisted on listing Mabel as co-editor.

Walsh also argues that Lavinia never intended to make over the small piece of land adjoining the lot (given to the Todds by Austin) on which the Todds had built their cottage. It is probable that both Lavinia and Mabel perjured themselves during the 1898 trial. Scholars such as Pollitt, Taggard, and Whicher, ignoring Martha Dickinson Bianchi's undeniable access to the poet and conveniently forgetting that Mabel never saw the poet, too readily sought out Mabel for information about the poet, the poet's falling-out with Sue, and especially Sue's character—information that she was not only eager to provide but that she slanted to support her own largely distorted construction of the facts.

Not all the details Walsh provides or the positions he takes are new, but to his credit he has tried in every instance to build a fair and logical case. He takes fresh looks at materials (Mabel's diaries, for example) that one would have thought long since exhausted by scholars such as Sewall and Longworth. He has read carefully the transcript of the 1898 trial proceedings prepared for the Todds' unsuccessful appeal. He has made much of his looks around "The Evergreens," coming upon Martha's diary and finding his way back out along the second floor to the children's room, with its century-old toys.

At his best the ratiocinative author of *Poe the Detective* and *The Hidden Life of Emily Dickinson* builds an engaging case. True, he has never persuaded Dickinsonians that plagiarism is the word for the form of intertextuality the poet prac-

ticed. But in *This Brief Tragedy* there is argument enough to provoke any open-minded scholar to a reexamination of scholarship's commonplace truths regarding all that accrues to what Walsh calls the Todd-Dickinson "affair." Walsh has earned his day in court.

George Monteiro  
Brown University

## Article

**Norbert Hirschhorn. "A Bandaged Secret: Emily Dickinson and Incest."** *Journal of Psychohistory* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1991): 251-81.

In 1858, Joseph Lyman comments to his fiancée that "Emily Dickinson...is rather morbid and unnatural" (*The Lyman Letters*, 65). John Cody's *After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson*, Maryanne Garbowsky's *The House without the Door: A Study of Emily Dickinson and the Illness of Agoraphobia*, and—in a somewhat different vein—Vivian Pollak's "Thirst and Starvation in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" are but three of the many critical works since then that view Dickinson's poetry in a similar light. A new contributor to Dickinson studies, Norbert Hirschhorn, a public health physician and poet, explores with objectivity and sensitivity the possibility that incest may have prompted the poet's long withdrawal from the world and her intensity.

Defining incest (following Judith Herman) as "'any sexual relationship between a child and an adult, in a position of paternal authority' and '...a sexual relationship (with) any physical contact that had to be kept a secret'" (252), Hirschhorn examines several profiles of incestuous families in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are striking similarities between these profiles and most reconstructions of Dickinson family life.

The incestuous family tends to include close family ties; strict moral and religious observation and the practice of traditional gender roles; a sick, depressed, or withdrawn mother; mother-daughter separation; a tyrannical or violent father who assumes no responsibility for ordinary child care; and a sufferer who be-

comes a "little mother" within the family and adores yet fears her father. Child victims, he tells us, "are preoccupied with food and other metaphors of nurture" (254). Moreover, to remind readers that such an event is not unthinkable, Hirschhorn cites contemporary studies indicating that between 10 and 33 percent of women in the United States and Canada experience incest.

The reader may at this point object that matching any family to a profile is like finding one's private history in a newspaper horoscope: the generalizations are broad enough to accommodate most individual differences. Hirschhorn, too, admits the "fundamental weakness" in attempting such a match and keeps his conclusions speculative: "The thread I have tracked shows a young woman increasingly sad, phobic, and withdrawn, beginning as early as at age sixteen. I cannot say for certain that this intimates incest; but if such a woman came for counselling today, the responsible psychotherapist would soon explore the possibility" (263).

Turning next to the poems, Hirschhorn relies heavily on the readings of Cody, Pollak (from *The Anxiety of Gender*), and biographers Cynthia Griffin Wolff and (as contrasting reader) Richard Sewall, using their interpretations that certain poems suggest sexual anxiety or even "sexual molestation" as authorization for his own speculation along this line.

While Hirschhorn's essay provides no new readings of Dickinson's poetry and no new perception of the poet (others have suggested earlier the possibility of incest in the Dickinson family, and biographical interpretation has dominated criticism of the poet's work since its earliest publication), it is nonetheless a thoughtful, provocative addition to studies of the poet's life and poetry.

Cristanne Miller  
Pomona College

## Audio Tapes

**Emily Dickinson: Poems and Letters.** Prince Frederick, Md.: Recorded Books Productions, 1990. 2 cassettes, 2 1/4 hours. \$16.95.

Emily Dickinson knew that a word "Be-

gins to live" only "When it is said." Poetry is meant to be performed, even if the performance takes place only in the privacy of one's own mind. All the more important it is then that oral performance convey the spirit of the written text, enlivening and enhancing experience of the poetic word.

The new Recorded Books production of Dickinson's poems and letters gives listeners a pleasant overview of her life and work but only partly succeeds in fulfilling that more stringent requirement. The two-cassette set combines biographical and background information with readings of Dickinson's letters and poems to provide an agreeably balanced view of her career.

Stage, film, and television actress Alexandra O'Karma reads the poems and letters in a slightly husky, mellow, beautifully cultivated voice. The commentator is George Guidall, veteran actor of stage and television, who has recorded hundreds of books for the Library of Congress through the American Foundation for the Blind.

The tapes offer an abundant sampling of Dickinson's output—about thirty letters, only very slightly condensed, and over seventy-five poems. Judicious selection has resulted in the inclusion of most of the best-known poems as well as a generous variety of others. The organization is intelligent without being rigid, and narration about Dickinson's life alternates naturally with reading of her works.

O'Karma's performance is brisk, bland, understated. It avoids histrionic excess and the arch quaintness that dominates some interpretations of Dickinson; it allows Dickinson's language almost to speak for itself. The minimalist approach works to advantage with the letters and with some of the poems, notably "I started Early—Took my Dog" and "The Soul selects her own Society." But when O'Karma delivers, in precisely the same tone, poems like "Pain—has an Element of Blank—" and "I taste a liquor never brewed," her reading seems merely uncomprehending. Further, the poems follow one another so fast that occasionally it is hard to tell where one ends and the next one begins. There is no

time to absorb them.

Intended for the general listener-reader, this recording has other flaws doomed to arouse the specialist's lament. To protest the error in the repeated statement that "only seven of her poems were published in her lifetime" possibly is to quibble. But it is surely right to regret the producers' failure to make use of the standard texts edited by Thomas H. Johnson. The tamperings of earlier editors grate on the ears of those who know better, and the unknowledgeable should be able to expect that what they are buying represents the most accurate text available.

It is also unfortunate that the tapes are unaccompanied by a printed list of the poems and letters in the order of presentation; the lack of such a list may not matter to the commuter whizzing down the freeway, but it presents a real obstacle for the serious student or classroom teacher. (The company did cheerfully comply with my request for a written list, however, and offered to do so for others who write them at 140 West 22nd St., 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011.)

A delight of this recording is its leisurely treatment of Dickinson's long relationship with Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The final third of the tape, reproducing extracts from Higginson's 1891 *Atlantic Monthly* article, presents chronologically his recollections of the poet, the full text of her first five letters to him, several letters she wrote him later, and his account of their meeting and conversation. This narrative, strange and tender, makes wonderful listening.

Judy Jo Small  
North Carolina State University

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**Sewall, continued from page 2**

major relationships, taken one at a time, and trusts that an impartial portrait will gradually emerge from the partiality of many glimpses."

An impartial and living portrait does indeed emerge for many readers, though it has been challenged by some. What gives Sewall's biography an enduring importance is its authorial voice. It is a voice both authoritative and questioning that takes into account the fragmentari-

ness of the documentary evidence (only a very small fraction of the thousands of letters Dickinson wrote and received has survived) without dismissing as unimportant these surviving fragments. And it is a voice that states its position clearly and forcefully while taking into account differing points of view and the need for further study.

In *The Vision of Tragedy*, Sewall makes a telling observation about the special place of *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby-Dick* in American cultural history: "Together the two books are witness to the vitality of the tragic vision, which pierces beneath the 'official view' of any culture to the dark realities that can never be permanently hidden." A note to this passage calls attention to the fact that Melville (shortly after he started to write *Moby-Dick*) scored and underscored in a newly acquired Bible a passage from Job (13:15): "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him: *but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*" This passage and Melville's underscoring clarify Emily Dickinson's mission—sacred and rebellious—as a poet. Richard Sewall's vision has helped us understand why Dickinson's legacy, her book of poems, has taken its own special place in our cultural history—in the cultural histories of peoples around the world.

Benjamin Lease

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**Yale Library, continued from page 5**

prologue to *Ancestors' Brocades*:

An account of the literary labors preceding the publication of the poetry and letters has historic value. It gives to the reader a glimpse of the task of editing troublesome manuscripts—glimpses also of a poet's workshop. But the story would be a mere collector's item were it not for the fact that interwoven with it is a drama of elemental intensity—a clash of conflicting personalities so insistent and so prolonged that no account of the literary activity can be extricated from the emotional strain in the midst of which it took place. The objective factual account of the literary debut of Emily Dickinson is inseparable from

the characters and interrelationships of the persons who were closest to it, but who in some cases were obstacles to bringing it about.

The Todd-Bingham Papers and Collections may be examined in the Manuscripts and Archives Reading Room in accordance with the rules on the use of archival material and on presentation of two pieces of identification, including one with a photograph. Manuscripts and Archives is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:45 P.M., with the exception of major holidays and the Christmas holiday period. While advance notification is not required for admission, researchers are advised to write or call the Reference Archivist at Manuscripts and Archives, 150 Sterling Memorial Library, 120 High St., New Haven, CT 06520, or call 203-432-1744, for further information on hours and retrieval schedules.

Judith Ann Schiff

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**Japan Society, continued from page 11**

Item 2 was addressed by Philip Williams, whose observations on American and Japanese cultures are well respected.

Item 3 was discussed by Tsuyoshi Ohmoto, who has compiled a Dickinson bibliography of Japan. Professor Ohmoto focused in the early years (1920s-1930s) and the introduction of ED's works to Japan and their subsequent reception. As early as 1927 ED had already been studied. During the period, Ohmoto stated, three scholars mentioned ED and translated some of her works. The poems most popularly translated around that time were "The Soul selects her own Society—," "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church," and "This is my letter to the World," each translated by more than ten people.

Some cultural hurdles on the course for Japanese translation were pointed out by Williams, who touched such aspects as religious contrasts, Amherst/New England and Japan in the nineteenth century, and feminism in Japan and the United States. Williams, however, judged the most formidable gap to be the very nature of language: much of the magic of

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English language and poetry is the music, whereas Japanese poetry stresses visual imagery and ambiguity; sound effects can only be lost. Thus, if translation in general is the "impossible possibility," translation of ED may well border on the "impossible." Yet, filling an obvious need, it has succeeded here by the hundreds. As seen in Ohmoto's examples, early translators often used a syllable-counting technique, which does give a poetic flavor but has been almost

entirely eliminated in modern Japanese poetry.

Professor Takeda suggested the possibility of translating ED into *tanka*, a traditional form of Japanese poetry. The experiment with *tanka* might open one way to put the "poetry" of one culture into another, she explained. After initial comments on her choice of form, she then looked in more detail at some of the structural differences between the two languages involved and high-

lighted these with specific examples from ED's works.

Overall the symposium offered a stimulating chance for lively discussion of a range of issues and problems in the area of translation. It was strong proof, if such be needed, of the vigorous work being undertaken at present in Japanese Dickinson studies.

Masako Takeda  
Osaka Shoin Women's College

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*Musicians wrestle everywhere—  
All day—among the crowded air  
I hear the silver strife—  
And—waking—long before the morn—  
Such transport breaks upon the town  
I think it that "New life"!*

*It is not Bird—it has no nest—  
Nor "Band"—in brass and scarlet—  
drest—  
Nor Tamborin—nor Man—  
It is not Hymn from pulpit read—  
The "Morning Stars" the Treble led  
On Time's first Afternoon!*

*Some—say—it is "the Spheres"—  
at play!  
Some say—that bright Majority  
Of vanished Dames—and Men!  
Some—think it service in the place  
Where we—with late—celestial face—  
Please God—shall Ascertain!*

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