

Emily Dickinson Abroad

August 4-6, 1995

Innsbruck Awaits You

Emily Dickinson went "abroad" only through the power of her imagination. But this summer nearly a hundred of her admirers from around the globe will gather in the heart of the "siren Alps" to strengthen the worldwide network of scholarship and appreciation for her poetry.

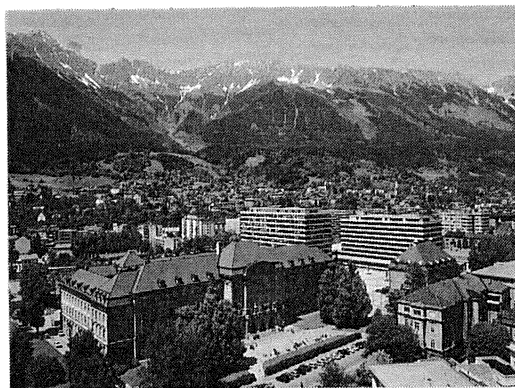
Scholars from fifteen countries will meet in Innsbruck, Austria, August 4-6. The gathering, jointly sponsored by EDIS and the University of Innsbruck, will include representatives from Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United States.

Conference panels will take a broad range of approaches to Dickinson's work. For a semifinal schedule and list of speakers, see pages 10-11.

In addition, a buffet luncheon, two festive dinners, an evening of Tyrolean music, a recital of Dickinson song settings by Austrian-born soprano Barbara Hess, and an evening of film by students at the University of Innsbruck will be added attractions.

The city in which all this will take place is an ancient and fascinating one. Innsbruck, capital of Tyrol Province, was founded in the twelfth century by Count Berthold of Andechs and later became important under the rule of the Habsburgs. Emperor Maximilian liked the town so much that he asked to be

buried there. This wish was not fulfilled, but he is still remembered in a fascinating monument in the Court Church consisting of twenty-eight larger-than-life bronze statues showing Maximilian's ancestors.



Innsbruck's most famous sight is the "Goldenes Dachl," a richly ornamented bay crowned by a golden roof, erected by Maximilian on the occasion of his second wedding, with Maria Blanca Sforza from Milan. The building now houses the Olympic Museum.

In the sixteenth century, Innsbruck became a center of Renaissance culture under Erzherzog Ferdinand and his wife, Philippine Welser. With the castle of Ambras they created a splendid Renaissance court. By that time Innsbruck had also developed a strong musical tradition that resulted in construction of one of the first large opera houses in the world, recently integrated into the Congress Hall.

The Leopold-Franzens-University was founded in 1669. Today it has more than 23,000 students.

The most productive period in the town's history was the Baroque. Most of its churches were built then, and under Maria Teresa the old town palace, the "Hofburg," was redesigned in charming Viennese Rococo. In 1809 the leading figure of the Tyrolean Wars of Independence, Andreas Hofer, a simple landlord and farmer, ruled there for two months.

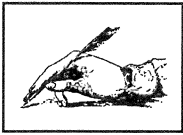
The 1964 Olympic Games made Innsbruck famous all over the world. Today Innsbruck is a modern city with more than 120,000 inhabitants and a booming economy. Every year it is flooded with tourists attracted by its setting. Surrounded by the picturesque Nordtiroler Kalkalpen, Innsbruck is the ideal place for hiking tours. Even on rainy days, one can sightsee, shop, or enjoy the many fine cafes and restaurants.

Summer days in Innsbruck are warm (25-30° C, 78-83° F) with cool evenings. You'll need a sweater and an umbrella.

You can still register for the conference by using the form on page 19. If you have not already done so, you should make hotel reservations as soon as possible by contacting the conference hotel directly. For address, phone, and fax numbers, see page 18.

The planning committee, headed by Gudrun Grabher, looks forward to greeting you in Innsbruck on August 4.

There is still time to register for the conference! See the registration form on page 19. Hotel and other conference information is on page 18. The conference schedule appears on pages 10-11.



“Upon Concluded Lives” New Letters of Emily Dickinson

By Polly Longworth

Twice in the past year, while searching for other things, I’ve had the serendipitous thrill of coming upon an unpublished Emily Dickinson letter.

The first one was at Harvard’s Houghton Library, in a file box containing materials given to the Dickinson Collection since publication of the poem and letter variorums in the 1950s. I was looking for an unpublished letter of Vinnie’s, written in 1885 to her Newman cousins (mentioned by Jay Leyda in *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson*, 2:441), and I found it—excitement enough after months of tracing Newman descendants. But beneath that folder was another holding a few of Emily’s letters, one of which seemed unfamiliar.

Its six pages, reproduced here for the first time, convey the poet’s loving sympathy to her Uncle Joel Warren Norcross after the death of his wife, Lamira Jones Norcross, on May 5, 1862. A tender message to her mother’s youngest brother, the note was given to Harvard in 1988 by the elderly granddaughter of Anna Jones Norcross, the little “Annie” mentioned in its closing lines. It had been a treasured family possession for four generations and is one of only two extant letters to this favorite uncle of Dickinson’s. The text follows:

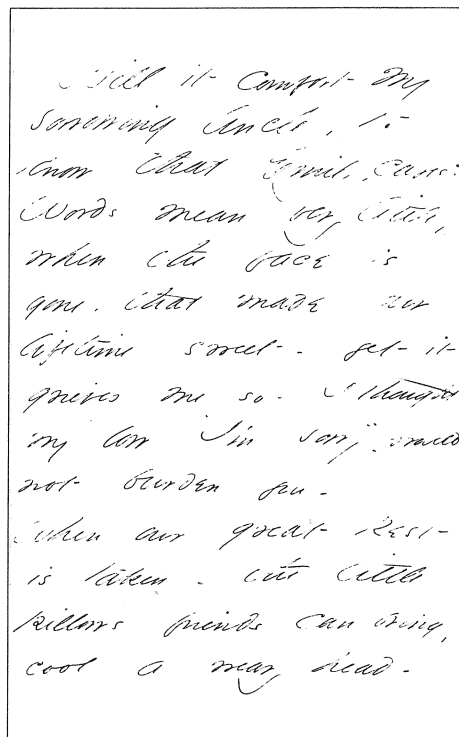
Will it comfort my sorrowing Uncle, to know that Emily, cares? Words mean very little, when the face is gone, that made our lifetime sweet – yet it grieves me so – I thought my low “I’m sorry” – would not burden you –

When our great Rest is taken – the little pillows friends can bring, cool a weary head –

I did’nt know dear Mira, so well as the other Nieces, knew her – but I was always thinking to, when she came next time – “next summer” – and now, I cant believe my opportunity is done –

She was’nt so far from Nellie Converse – as she supposed – when she talked with me, and sobbed like a child, whose schoolmate had been stolen –

Nor so far from the other Aunt – snatched like herself, in spring – I do not think the Birds, mind our going to sleep. I notice they sing louder – They may know Heaven – better than we – down here – so far away – and sing so – for our



Page 1 of a previously unpublished letter of Emily Dickinson to Joel Warren Norcross (BMS Am 118.7). Published by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

sakes – I am glad Mira was not afraid – That will always be comforting to you – and that you were with her – and that she could talk with you – and that Mrs Wood – and Etta, were there – to make her Good night pleasant – as among sweet neighbor’s faces – I hope we shall be more mindful of each other – for just her sake – learning a quicker tenderness, from finding her no more –

So many brave – have died, this year – it dont seem lonely, as it did – before Battle begun – , then, too, dear Uncle – Many weep – so you are not alone –

I cant believe it, while I write – that Mira wont come back –

I never shall believe it. ’Twill always seem to me – and more, as months go by – that she is on a journey, through pleasant lands – I cannot see – but may – some day – like her –

Uncle Loring, writes that you are not well – I hope you will soon be better –

Annie, and Will, will need you more – now Mama, is gone –

Loo will make your Home as sweet, as her fingers can –

She is mine, you know, but I will lend her to you, dear Uncle, because you need her most –

Mother sends much love – and talks tearfully of you –

Affy, Emily.

Of key interest are the several contexts within which Dickinson seeks to comfort her uncle. Her words move from Mira’s face to the suggestion of a personalized heaven where Mira’s friend Nellie Converse and Aunt Lavinia Norcross await, then on to evidence of God’s design in nature, provided by the birds. She softens Mira’s death into a child’s goodnight before encompassing the larger context of the great war, and finishes by reminding Joel of the solace of his children.

By setting Joel’s grief into generalized suffering for the war dead, Dickinson touches without speaking on the widespread mourning for Frazar Stearns, killed at New Bern some weeks earlier. And at the end, commending to Joel the services of her dear cousin Louise (Loo) Norcross, she stops just short of what Richard Sewall calls “playing Deity.” One almost hears the favorite line from Revelation, “I Jesus have sent mine angel.”

The letter contrasts markedly with Letter 29, a witty, high-spirited, bantering epistle Dickinson penned to her Uncle Joel in January 1850, soon after he went into business for himself in Boston. Only ten years older than the poet, Joel adver-

I didn't know dear
Mira, so well as the
other Miras, know her -
but I was always
thinking 1: when she
came next time - next
Summer. And now, I
can't believe my 90 year
nephew is gone.
She was not so far from
Hellen Converse. As
she supposed. when she
talked with me, and
talked like a child.
where Schoolmatt had
been stolen.

For so far from
the Court - emulated
like herself in Spring.
I do not think like
Birds, mind our going
1: sleep. I notice
they sing loudly.
They may know Heaven -
better than we. Come
here - so far away - and
sing so far for sake.
I am glad Mira was
not afraid - that will
always be comforting 1:
you. And that you were
with her - and what she

I hope you will soon
I settle -
Tami, and Uir, will
will you soon - Mary
Phama, is gone.
You will make your
Home as sweet, as
her fingers can.
She is gone, you know,
but I will send her
to you, dear Uncle.
I have just read her
most -
Marta ends much too -
and talks tearfully of you -
Edith, I will.

could talk with you.
And that Mrs Wood,
and Edith were here -
1: make her good night
pleasant. As among
sweet neighbors faces.
I hope we shall be met
mingled of each other,
for just her sake.
Learning a quick in-
dances, from finding her
no more -
So many have had
died, this year. It's sad -
I am not, as it is -
before Hellen's return -

then, 1: dear
Uncle. Many weeks, as
you are not alone -
I can't believe it, until
I write - that Mira
will come back.
I never shall receive it -
I will always love 1: her.
And now, as months
go by - what she is on
a journey, through, alas.
and - and - I cannot
do - but pray - Peter say.
like her -
Uncle Henry, makes what
you can not see.

tised himself as "an Importer of Fancy Goods and druggist Sundries," and lived in a handsome house in nearby Lynn. The War Between the States had ruined his business by the time Mira died, so this newly published letter was written during a very low period in his life.

The second Dickinson letter came to light in the course of a lengthy, ongoing search for the missing diary of Perez Dickinson Cowan of Knoxville, Tennessee, Emily's second cousin, who attended Amherst College from 1863 to 1866 and became a Presbyterian minister. The di-

Emily Dickinson to Joel Warren Norcross. Top left, pages 2 and 3; left, pages 4 and 5; above, page 6. The odd indentation at the top of page 5 was apparently made because of an embossed seal on the stationery.

ary, mentioned by Leyda (1: xxxvi) and by Thomas H. Johnson in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (p. 719), has not been found, but a great-grandson of Perez D. Cowan inquired whether a Dickinson letter in his possession was one of the five already published by Harvard. To my astonishment and joy, it is not. The new letter reads:

If I could help you Peter, but no one can help a Heart in pain except the one that pained it, often too futile or too far. You will tell me about your Sister when you feel the strength? I am sure she was lovely, because her Sisters were. I am sure beloved, because the lovely are, and now no more our own but the Holy Angel's, forgive me the sweet envy that obscures their right.

Remember me with love to your living Sisters, firmer secured to you I trust than herself that rose - and still in happiness or pain, believe me much
your Cousin -

Written in 1869, seven years after the letter to Joel, this second note of consolation is briefer, more abstract, closer to the

If I could tell
 you Peter, but
 no one can tell
 a secret in secret
 except the one
 that shared it,
 often too late
 or too far.
 You will tell me
 about your sister
 when you see her
 tonight?
 I can sure see
 her face, because

Mrs. Mabel
 Cowan
 Amherst
 Mass.

My sister was
 I am sure blessed,
 because she loved
 me, and am so
 more than ever
 our the Holy Spirit
 judge me the
 great thing that
 obscures their light
 Remember me with
 love to your living
 sister, mine second
 to you I trust
 than herself ever
 rose, and still in

Emily Dickinson to Perez Dickinson Cowan, previously unpublished. The letter is on one folded sheet; page 3 (center) is on the back of page 1, facing page 2. Published by permission of Dickinson B. Cowan.

cryptic flashes that were Dickinson's late trademark. She sent it to "Cousin Peter" at his first pastorate in Rogersville, Tennessee, upon learning of the death of his twenty-seven-year-old sister, Nancy Estabrook Cowan Meem, on June 21, 1869. It precedes by three months or so Letter 332, the first of the five P.D. Cowan letters appearing in *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*.

Dickinson's interest in Perez's sisters (he had five, some of whom, the new letter suggests, she may have met) is carried into L 332, which further dwells on Nancy's death. It recurs in L 386, written during the winter of 1873 to congratulate Perez on the remarriage of his widowed sister Lucinda Cowan Alexander. That Dickinson followed the fortunes of these southern relatives is made clear by her mention in L 386 that Lucinda's "early pain had seemed to me peculiarly cruel." She is referring to the death of Lucinda's first husband early in the Civil War, six months before the birth of their second child, a little boy who was named for his father but did not survive infancy.

The story of this southern branch of

the Dickinsons can be sketched swiftly. Perez D. Cowan's grandfather was Perez Dickinson, brother of Emily's grandfather, Samuel Fowler Dickinson. Perez was a blacksmith, farmer, and mill-owner who lived in a handsome house (still standing) on the Mill River in South Amherst. Four of his children, Perez Jr., Appleton, Nancy, and Lucinda, went to Knoxville after Nancy's husband, Joseph Estabrook, professor of Latin and Greek Languages on Amherst College's earliest faculty, became principal of a school there in 1826. Lucinda married James H. Cowan, business partner of her brother Perez, and had ten children, of whom Perez D. Cowan was the seventh. In the fall of 1863, Perez Dickinson Jr. was forced to leave Knoxville because of his northern sympathies. He escaped to the North, bringing his nephew Perez D. Cowan with him to enter the sophomore class at Amherst.

Of Dickinson's three remaining published letters to Perez Cowan, one (L 355) congratulates him on his marriage (it was a double wedding—Perez and his youngest sister, Isabelle, married a sister and brother in October 1870), and the final

two (620 and 671) console again, this time for the loss of Perez's two-year-old daughter, Margaret, late in 1879.

That Dickinson excelled at the consolation letter none can doubt. These two additions to her canon bear it out, just as they extend the evidence of Dickinson's empathy for sufferers North and South during the Civil War. The secret to her art is revealed in her own undated poem (P 1704):

Unto a broken heart
 No other one may go
 Without the high prerogative
 Itself hath suffered too

Acknowledgment: Many thanks to Dr. Ralph Franklin for assistance in interpreting Dickinson's punctuation and letter forms.

Polly Longworth is the author of *Emily Dickinson: Her Letter to the World*; *Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair and Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd*; and *The World of Emily Dickinson*. She is currently at work on a biography of Dickinson.



New Finds in Dickinson Family Correspondence

By Norbert Hirschhorn

In the course of my research into Emily Dickinson's life, four letters from Dickinson family members have turned up to which I wish to call the attention of EDIS members. The first two are letters from Edward Dickinson to Charles Sumner, U.S. senator from Massachusetts (1851-74). Both are unpublished and apparently unknown to Dickinson scholars, though they have been in the Houghton Library collection at Harvard since 1874. They were first catalogued in Beverly W. Palmer's *Guide and Index to the Papers of Charles Sumner*.¹

The first, headed "Amherst, May 12. 1862," responds to a speech Sumner had delivered in the Senate on April 24 favoring full diplomatic relations with two black republics, Haiti (then spelled Hayti) and Liberia.² Although Sumner, an ardent abolitionist and then-chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, cleverly couched the argument in narrow commercial and diplomatic terms, it was clear that passage of the bill would score an important propaganda victory over the Confederacy. Border state senators from Delaware and Kentucky understood the game and objected to the possibility of "full-blooded negro" diplomats and their families enjoying social equality with Washington whites. The bill passed, over their objections.

Former congressman Dickinson's letter to Sumner reveals much about his personality and political outlook:

My dear Sir,

I have recd your speech on the duty of the U.S. Govt. to recognise the Independence of Hayti & Liberia, with great interest, and am very glad that you have stated the case so clearly, that "____ who ____ may read". I should have been surprised at any other than an affirmative vote, upon so plain a proposition.

We shall all now call things by their right names – and this infernal rebellion which must soon be put down forever! & forever!! will so shake up the extremes of conservatism & radicalism that the veins[?] of our Republican insti-

tutions will be wide[?] & proud and enduring," [& one fist?] be exercised, at the unclean devils who have made their "dens" in our very Council Chambers'.

In the hope of one union of all good & true men, in support of the Union & the Constitution & the enforcement of the law,

I am, with high esteem
& regards,

Yours very truly
Edward Dickinson

It is unclear who Dickinson quotes; his reference to "unclean devils" is probably aimed at the border state senators and perhaps the nativist Know-Nothings.

The second letter, headed "Amherst July 20. 1868," responds to an impassioned Sumner speech before the Senate two days before that among other things denounced President Andrew Johnson's "criminal conduct."³ The Union had borrowed heavily through bond issues to pay for fighting the Confederacy, and Johnson proposed to repay with paper money ("greenbacks"), repudiating the promised payment in gold coin, or "specie," and to break another promise by taxing the interest payments.

Sumner argued that while suspension of specie payment during the war was as necessary a measure as suspension of habeas corpus, continued repudiation would cause ruinous inflation and destroy "Public Faith." (He was quoting Milton's "And Public Faith cleared from the shameful brand/Of public fraud"). He proposed that only interest be paid in specie and that principal repayment be postponed by issuance of new bonds whose security would rest on the assured population growth and productivity of the country.

To these proposals Edward Dickinson responded as follows:

My dear Sir

I thank you for your speech on the Funding Bill – The government is founded on "good faith" – and where that is broken, there is no tie to bind us, or hold us together.

I hope there are honest men enough in both branches of Congress to resist the demand for repudiation – else our political salvation is not complete.

The interest on our National debt is all we ought to pay for ten years, at least – that should be paid in coin – & so should the principal – there is no difficulty in resuming "specie payments" in six months, if Congress so wills.

If I were an office seeker, I should desire that of – a Special Agt. of the Internal Revenue under the new Tax Bill, or a District Collectorship – to see if it is possible for a man to administer the office honestly –

The friends[?] of public offices, in all Departments of the service seem to me to threaten the very existence of the go'vt – and so to demoralise the people that we are fast following in the wake of Republics that have existed & flourished & died out.

Excuse my croaking –
and believe me, as ever,

Yours very resp,
Edward Dickinson

The letter is curious in two respects: its misquotation of Sumner's (and Milton's) trenchant phrase "Public Faith," and Dickinson's less-than-subtle bid for a federal job. The matter of tax collectors was irrelevant to the issue and not mentioned in Sumner's speech. The frog image ("croaking") reminds one of Emily Dickinson's "How public – like a frog –" (P 288). Both letters nicely demonstrate the elder Dickinson's excitable nature.

There is no evidence that Sumner replied to either letter, which is surprising, if true. Sumner gave the Amherst commencement address in 1847, and in 1855, when Dickinson was a congressman, Sumner presented him with the book *Isaac T. Hopper* by Lydia Maria Child as a gift for Mrs. Dickinson.⁴

My further search through correspondence to Massachusetts governors and senators for the period 1833-74 in the *Catalogue of Manuscripts at Houghton Library*⁵ turned up no additional finds.

I have, however, turned up two more Dickinson family letters. The first is from Lavinia Dickinson to Jeanie Greenough, located through my colleague William Bates Greenough III, a great-grandson of Mrs. Greenough. At my suggestion, he went through the family books in search of new correspondence, and this penned letter fell out of a 1924 edition of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's *Emily Dickinson: Life and Letters*. It may be dated accurately to November 11, 1890, by its reference to the next-day publication of the first volume of Emily's poetry.

My Dear Mrs. Greenough

Austin says you remember me & so I venture, after so long delay to tell you I've thought often & most tenderly of you in your cruel sorrow and almost written to you again & again.

I hope you are well & some what accustomed to your great robbery. I should love to see you - I have never felt reconciled to your going away from Amherst & I never recognize the living of any other family in your lovely house - Perhaps you will be interested in knowing "Roberts Brothers" Boston publish (tomorrow) a small volume of Emilie's poems - She left more than 6 hundred poems, each remarkable & all daintily copied in her own exquisite hand - Col-Higginson thought few wisest introduction to the world & later on, add a larger

Page 1 of a letter of Lavinia Dickinson to Jeanie Bates Greenough, November 11, 1890.

volume - tell me (if you will) should they please you - with love for your self & regards for your husband

The letter is unsigned, but someone has pencilled in its author and date at the top of page 4. The "cruel sorrow" and "great robbery" refer to the double tragedy when, in February 1888, Mrs. Greenough's twenty-five-year-old daughter died in childbirth and the infant son died six weeks later.

Mrs. Greenough, the former Jane (Jeanie) Ashley Bates, then living in Westfield, Massachusetts, was the recipient of several letters from Emily Dickinson. She had met Emily and Lavinia while staying with her parents at the Willard Hotel in Washington in February 1855. She later married James C. Greenough, president of the Agricultural College at Amherst from 1883 to 1886.⁶ When her mother died in October 1885, Emily wrote her of her own mother's loss two years earlier (L 1022).

The final new manuscript is the long-lost holograph of Emily Dickinson's letter 877, a note to Mrs. Henry Hills (or more likely to her children) dated by Thomas H. Johnson as Christmas 1883. This note, in pencil on one side of a folded sheet of paper, is in the collection of the Karpeles Manuscript Library, Santa Barbara branch. The content and its similarity to letters 876 and 878 suggest that it may have been written after nephew Gilbert's death the previous October.

Santa Claus
comes with
a Smile and
a Tear -
Santa Claus
has been robbed -
not by Burglars
but Angels.
The Children
will pray for
Santa Claus?

Johnson took his text of this letter (and that of letter 376, also to Mrs. Hills) from transcripts made by George Frisbie Whicher when the originals were in the possession of Susan H. Skillings, daughter of Mrs. Hills. They were missing by the time Johnson was researching his edition of the letters. David Karpeles purchased them from the well known collec-

Letter of Emily Dickinson to Mrs. Henry Hills, December 1883. Courtesy of the Karpeles Manuscript Library, Santa Barbara, and Harvard University Press.

tor Paul Richards, a dealer connected with Superior Galleries in Los Angeles. The holograph of letter 376 to my knowledge has not been found.

The late Jay Leyda once encouraged all Dickinson scholars to keep searching for new material. These finds came about through combined knowledge, intuition, good luck, and an obsession to discover.

Notes

I am grateful to Polly Longworth for transcribing these letters and to Harvard University Press and the Karpeles Library for permission to reproduce them.

1. Alexandria, Va.: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988.
2. *Charles Sumner: His Complete Works* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1890), 8:307-35.
3. *Ibid.*, 16:259-96.
4. Jay Leyda, *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press., 1960), 1:330.
5. Alexandria, Va.: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986.
6. *History of Amherst* (Amherst: Carpenter and Morehouse, 1896), 562-63.

Norbert Hirschhorn is a physician and currently visiting professor of public health at the University of Minnesota.

P E R F O R M A N C E S

Songs of Charles Ives and Ernst Bacon. Helen Boatwright, soprano, John Kirkpatrick and Ernst Bacon, piano. Composers Recordings, Inc. Time: 77:45. CD675. Available from CRI, 73 Spring St., Suite 506, New York, NY 10012-5800, Tel. 212-941-9673. Scores available from Classical Vocal Reprints, P.O. Box 20263, New York, NY 10023.

Wider Than the Sky. 14 songs, words by Emily Dickinson, music by Sean Vernon, with guitar, piano, cello, flute, and percussion. CD \$15, cassette \$10, from Snark Music, P.O. Box 431, Hadley, MA 01035.

Reviewed by Sara Hopkins

Ernst Bacon wrote to Marian Anderson in 1939, "The poetry of Emily Dickinson has long seemed to me one of the great achievements of womankind. Her style of lyricism lends itself more perhaps than any other poetry of this country to musical setting, for it gives lyric expression to philosophical human thought without the latter being too apparent." In his preface to *Fifty Songs* (1974) he said of Dickinson that she "could, with an economy as great as the classical Chinese poets and painters, conjure ecstasy, poignancy, immensity, grief, passion, and intimacy with nature."

Nine of Bacon's early Dickinson songs, written when he first discovered her poetry in the late 1920s and 1930s, are performed on this recording, interspersed with thirteen from the next three decades. All show a characteristic sensitivity to the emotional moods of the poems, to color, word inflection, and asymmetrical phrasing. The songs are less cerebral than Copland's, and the piano figurations are the antithesis of Copland's blocklike structures, often fluctuating with the nuances of the text.

Bacon's harmony is traditional, unashamedly deriving from the classical and early romantic composers; yet it is never dull, using modes, altered chords, dissonance, and unresolved harmonies, again fluctuating with the text. Yet his songs have unity and shape. The early songs are spare in texture; his later songs

show a more luxuriant use of piano figuration and counterpoint, as well as a greater mastery of structure, with more complex textures used to accomplish equally individual and delightful ends.

Bacon wrote in the above-mentioned preface, "There is no literary skill that can describe the simplest melody; nor analyze its beauty, any more than it can bring alive a human face or a landscape, beyond suggestion or analogy." With this in mind, I will mention a few of the songs on this newly rereleased CD that bring certain poems more alive for me.

Of the 1930s songs, "As well as Jesus" is naked voice expressing great feeling with the Chinese economy of Dickinson herself. "Eternity" ("As if the Sea should part") contrasts completely, a perfectly formed and powerful romantic song. "A Threadless Way" conveys Dickinson's depressive side with utter simplicity and no hint of histrionics.

In the 1940s Bacon composed a bouquet of gemlike songs. "To Make a Prairie" ascends to the height of "revery" with a lightly luxurious melisma (an extended passage on a single syllable), elegantly sung here; the final harmonic resolution is delayed, like the bees. "Come slowly, Eden," sung here with great warmth of tone, uses syncopated rhythms to convey the languorous ecstasy of the poem. "Alter? When the Hills do —" belongs to Bacon's romantic side but avoids all hint of cliché in expressing Dickinson's depth of feeling. "Weeping and Sighing" ("It's such a little thing to weep"), written in the 1950s, perfectly evokes this ironic little poem, with a bubbling accompaniment that plays against the poem's implied pathos.

In the 1960s songs, a frequent melisma on the final word of the poem sometimes verges on cliché and at other times is effective. The vocal line of "The Snake" sweeps down to the rich secrets of the swamp at the very beginning and continues in a childlike gallop, the final melisma on "goes" conveying snake, slithering, and guile. In "Alabaster Wool," vocal melisma drifts and flings the snow's "crys-

tal Vails." Conversely, the piano part creates the web in "A Spider" while the voice looks on.

These songs will be loved by every Dickinson enthusiast, and they deserve to be as well known as those by Copland, Duke, and Hoiby. Bacon saw Dickinson as a vibrant human being, full of the passion, wit, philosophy, and sensitivity of all great poets. She was not strange or puzzling to him, and thus his songs flow from his natural appreciation of her intensity and lightness. Their freshness compares well to Dickinson's own.

Helen Boatwright's career began to flourish in the 1940s, when she premiered several young American composers' works at Tanglewood. The Ives songs here were recorded in 1954, when her voice had a clear tone, almost "white," with very little vibrato; she was also an admired interpreter of baroque cantatas in these years. Her diction is always impeccable, and the 1964 Bacon recording displays a fuller, more vibrant tone. Bacon's wide-ranging vocal lines, often with sustained soft high notes, invite comparison with the fine thread-spinning of Dickinson's spider. Boatwright rarely disappoints the vocally critical listener. Her sensitive phrasing and rhythmic vitality match Bacon's alternately delicate and strong presence at the piano.

The accompanying booklet has some curious omissions and errors.

Sean Vernon's fourteen Dickinson songs are new-age popular music, with elements of jazz, blues, folk rock, bluegrass, and even Latin style. The instrumentation mixes electric and acoustic instruments with percussion, cello, flute, and fiddle in a crossing of boundaries familiar to many pop songwriters since the Beatles. The songs were performed in Amherst in December of 1994, and the album was released on December 10, Dickinson's birthday. Vernon's songs have their own simplicity, one accessible to ears that may find the classical idiom too complex or precious. Conversely, some classical purists may dislike a "popu-

Continued on page 9

The Brown University Library Collection

By Mark N. Brown

One of the most significant events in the field of Dickinson scholarship in the last decade has been the establishment of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, which will, in time, open the Evergreens, the Amherst home of Emily Dickinson's brother, Austin, to researchers.

Mary Landis Hampson, the last private owner of the house, included one clause in her will, however, that separates the personal papers and other research materials from the house where they were gathered, giving instead to Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, "all papers in my possession which belonged to or relate to Martha Dickinson Bianchi...personally or as an author."

This collection is in the care of Mark N. Brown, Curator of Manuscripts at Brown University, who has provided us with a description of the materials now being catalogued and has allowed us to print a previously unpublished photograph from the collection.

Daniel Lombardo, *Series Editor*

In 1932, a letter written by Emily Dickinson that survived only in typescript, together with three letters written by her sister, Lavinia, were given to Brown University by the legatee of one of Lavinia's correspondents. Everything else at Brown that has a Dickinson family provenance can be traced to the last surviving child of Emily's brother. William Austin Dickinson had built the Evergreens next door to the Dickinson Homestead, and there is a direct line of transmission from his daughter, Martha Dickinson Bianchi (d. 1943), through her editorial collaborator, Alfred Leete Hampson (d. 1952), to his wife, Mary Landis Hampson (d. 1988)—all, successively, owners of the Evergreens and keepers of the Dickinson flame.

In 1951 Alfred Hampson sold to an intermediary the Dickinson materials donated to the Houghton Library. Dur-

ing her lifetime Mrs. Hampson gave some Dickinson papers to Professor Barton St. Armand, of Brown Univer-



An ambrotype portrait thought to be of either Susan Dickinson or her sister Martha Gilbert Smith, with a child, early 1860s. Brown University Library.

sity, who has begun donating them to Brown University Library in installments. By the terms of her will the house was transferred to the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, which she created, and the books and papers to Brown University.

Since 1991 approximately 273 cubic feet of materials have been received by Brown: 185 cubic feet of books, 33 of pamphlets and serials, and 55 of manuscripts. Of the 50 cubic feet still expected, the bulk will be serials; the remainder will include most of the photographs and sheet music found in the house but relatively few additional books or manuscripts.

The materials already transferred include more than 3,000 books, approximately one-third of which were published during Emily Dickinson's lifetime. Some have indications of ownership by various members of the Dickinson family, excluding Emily.

Serials of special interest for Dickinson scholars include Susan Dickinson's copy of the December 1862 *Atlantic Monthly*, annotated by her on the cover, with marginal markings in the article "The Procession of the Flowers" by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, which was cited by Emily Dickinson in a letter to him in 1863 (L 280). Lavinia Dickinson's copy of the September 1893 *Century Illustrated Magazine* has yielded a laid-in letter from her to publisher Thomas Niles, not sent, concerning publication of Emily's *Letters*.

The manuscripts are now being sorted and arranged into three distinct collections: (1) The Martha Dickinson Bianchi Papers include her own personal papers, all those she inherited, and a few that her former husband left behind. Within this collection, the papers belonging to each family member will be kept separate; a letter from one family member to another will be filed with the papers of the recipient. (2) The St. Armand Collection of Dickinson Family Papers will be subdivided in like manner. (3) The Mary Landis Hampson Papers will include her husband's, filed separately from her own.

Approximately 62 percent of the manuscripts received from the Trust may be attributed to the Dickinsons, the rest to Alfred and Mary Hampson. Of the Dickinson folders, fewer than 18 percent appear to contain any items dating before 1900, and of these very few predate Emily's death in 1886.

There is a significant continuity of content between the papers of Martha Bianchi and those of the Hampsons, with which they are mingled, often in the same folders. Alfred Hampson assisted Martha in her Emily-related research and defended her copyrights after her death. Both before and after Martha's death he corresponded with her family, her friends, and various Dickinson researchers and admirers, as did Mary Hampson both before and after his death. The papers of all three

document the history of Dickinson scholarship and Emily's popular reputation.

Highlights of Martha Bianchi's papers include three early love letters from Austin to his future wife, Susan Gilbert (two of them drafts); an 1888 letter from Mabel Loomis Todd to Austin; an undated letter from Martha to her brother Ned (Edward Austin Dickinson) recounting Emily's anecdote about her Aunt Elizabeth, found also in an 1876 letter from Emily to Elizabeth Holland (L 473); and Lavinia's December 1893 letter to a Miss Colton discussing the forthcoming publication of Emily's *Letters*.

With the possible exception of some passages marked in books or serials, the only item containing Emily's handwriting is a family deed of 1852 which she witnessed by signing "Emily E. Dickinson"; her mother signed it as "Emily Dickinson."

The St. Armand Collection contains clippings about Emily Dickinson assembled by Martha; a scrapbook (dated 1851) of clipped poems and articles compiled by Emily's friend Mary Warner; Martha's scrapbook of her and her mother's publications in newspapers; and 125 letters from one Dickinson to another, including a letter from Ned to

Martha in February 1885 with their mother's postscript: "Alice S. and Mrs. Todd are going over the Sweetser house— Of course the Todds are coming in there! What shall I do!"

The manuscripts received from both sources include about 100 items each from the papers of Edward, Austin, and Ned Dickinson, and Susan Dickinson's niece Elizabeth Smith; 400 from Susan's papers; 50 from Lavinia's; and 6 from Thomas Gilbert (Gib) Dickinson's. Of 170 letters written by one Dickinson to another Dickinson, most are by Martha and Ned.

As an accommodation to researchers, cataloguing priorities have been set so that selected materials can be processed and made available as soon as possible. Thanks to the meticulous inventorying and packing by Gregory Farmer, consultant to the Trust, it has already been possible to permit access to the uncatalogued books.

As for the mass of unpublished materials, Martha's own papers are so extensive that only her correspondence up to 1913 (when her mother died) have been included in the first cataloguing priority. Her remaining papers will be worked on before those of the Hampsons. Neverthe-

less, because of the decision to process all the folders in a particular filing cabinet and the entire contents of various scattered folders, some Hampson and post-1913 Bianchi materials are being catalogued now. These materials will be ready for use by June 1995.

In order to use this collection, it is necessary to make an appointment in advance. For books, contact the Curator of Printed Books; for all other materials, including the serials and manuscripts noted above, contact the Curator of Manuscripts. They can be reached at the John Hay Library, Box A, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912; telephone 401-863-2146; fax 401-863-1272. Except for major holidays, the library is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and also on two Saturday afternoons in May and two in December.

Mark N. Brown, formerly Assistant Professor of History at Carnegie Mellon University, then Assistant Editor at the Chronological Guide to European Americana project, has been Curator of Manuscripts at Brown University since 1980. He has edited the works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax (3 vols., Oxford, 1989-90). This is his first mention of Dickinson in print.

Performances, continued from page 7

lar" Dickinson. I find these songs very well written and true to the poems. Vernon's choice of idiom or rhythm for each text is always intriguing, even if one occasionally disagrees.

Vernon's voice is a pleasant baritenor, freely produced, with good diction and some variety of color to suit the feeling of the songs. The instrumentalists (all from Amherst) are excellent: Vernon, acoustic guitar, piano; Joe Podlesny, bass, electric and acoustic guitars; Dan Lombardo, percussion; Peter Jones, keyboards; Larry Berger, bass; Vernon David, cello; Rani Arbo, fiddle; Sylvia Brallier, flute; and Mari Martin, Jeff Keliher, Barbara Baker, and Judy Polan, harmony vocals.

Harmony vocals are sparingly but tellingly used, and inventive counter-melodies on various instruments are attention-grabbing and always quite appropriate. Indeed, the choice of instruments

and rhythms is often more descriptive of the text than the melody itself. Good songs result, especially "I Felt a Funeral in My Brain," "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died," and "The Brain Is Wider Than the Sky."

All of these songs feature a slow build to a climax, remaining within one mood. "I Felt a Funeral" begins quite softly, with bass pizzicato and a guitar ostinato, adding a soft drum, then sustained chords on electric keyboards. The entrance of a cello to "creak across my soul" is unexpected and wonderful. Several songs use jazzlike vocal melismas and scat to emphasize words and mood; my favorite is "The Brain Is Wider Than the Sky," using a slow rock beat, with echoing, overlapping vocals on the final words, "syllable from sound."

Very different but just as good is "Poor Once More," a short blues with a country guitar pattern that reminds me of Missis-

sippi John Hurt. The style fits the poem exactly and makes it vivid with the help of an electric guitar riff and a harmonica tag. The uses of fiddle in "I Died for Beauty" and flute in "Wild Nights," along with distinctive rhythmic patterns, are memorable. "After Great Pain" begins well (a hint of Beatles, to me), but its central piano break doesn't seem to fit the text, and the ending is anticlimactic.

Vernon sets the texts with less flexibility than Bacon; emphasis on particular words or sections is done with pauses, rubato, longer note values, vocal color, or different instrumentation. Bacon, with only a piano, a Schubertian ability to vary the figuration, and a more lyrical approach to melody, produces songs in which each word and phrase is thrown into relief. Comparing such different styles is always dangerous, but I think one can say that the classical idiom is better oriented to fine nuances. Vernon is more successful with

Continued on page 19

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

2:00-7:00 P.M. REGISTRATION

Humanities Building, Innrain 52, main entrance

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

8:00 A.M. and all day REGISTRATION

9:00-12:00 Board Meeting

2:00-3:30 Walking Tour of Innsbruck

5:00-7:00 Opening Plenary Session

Welcoming Remarks: Gudrun Grabher, University of Innsbruck, and others

"Emily Dickinson Abroad"

Moderator: Vivian Pollak, Washington University, St. Louis

Papers and participants: "Dickinson and War" (Margaret Dickie, University of Georgia); "Reading Dickinson Reading Whitman" (Vivian Pollak); "Emily Dickinson's 'Sumptuous Destitution'" (Roland Hagenbüchle, Catholic University of Eichstätt); "Dickinson and the Austrian Mind" (Gudrun Grabher)

7:00-8:30 Buffet Dinner

*Sponsored by the University of Innsbruck
On terrace, weather permitting*

8:30-10:00 An Evening of Film

and Music: Barbara Hess, Soprano

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

8:45-9:15 COFFEE

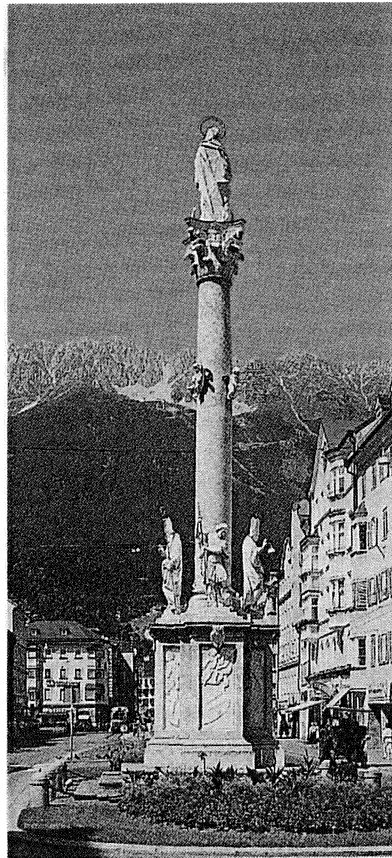
9:15-10:45 Plenary Session

"Editing Dickinson"

Moderator: Martha Nell Smith, University of Maryland

Papers and participants: "The Emily Dickinson Wars" (Betsy Erkkila, Northwestern University); "The Book of Emily and Susan Dickinson" (Ellen Louise Hart, University of California at Santa Cruz); "A Hypermedia Archive of Dickinson's Writing" (Martha Nell Smith)

10:45-11:15 BREAK



11:15-12:30 Panels

"Gender Issues in Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "Sexual Metaphors and Images in Emily Dickinson's Letters and Poems to Susan Gilbert Dickinson" (Lena Koski, Abo Akademi University); "Emily Dickinson's Erotic Persona: Unfettered by Convention" (Marisa Pagnattaro, University of Georgia); "Neither Lesbian nor Straight: Multiple Eroticisms in Emily Dickinson's Love Poetry" (Sylvia Henneberg, University of Georgia); topic TBA (Cettina Tramontano Magno, University of Messina)

"Interdisciplinary Approaches to Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "Light and Colors in Emily Dickinson's Poetry: A Comparative Approach" (Andrea Mariani, Università Degli Studi "G. D'annunzio"); "Dickinson and the Voice of Hym-

nody" (Mary De Jong, Pennsylvania State University); "Science in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" (Hiroko Uno, Shiga University); "The Technological Imagination of Emily Dickinson" (Marianne Erickson, Washington University of St. Louis)

"Dickinson Compared to International Artists"

Papers and participants: "Poets at the White Heat: Emily Dickinson and Annette von Droste-Hülshoff" (Mary Elizabeth K. Bernhard, Amherst, Mass.); "Wild Nights and White Nights: Dickinson's Vision of the Poet in Anna Akhmatova" (Joanna Yin, University of Hawaii); "Exiles from Orthodoxy: Devotional Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Mír B" (Sushila Singh, Banaras Hindu University); "All Men Say 'What' to Me: Emily Dickinson and George Eliot" (Catherine Costa, LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York)

"Privacy and Isolation in Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "Dickinsonian Dialectics" (Charles Altieri, University of California at Berkeley); "The Meaning of Dickinson's Social Withdrawal" (Mark Bauerlein, Emory University); "A Tumultuous Privacy": Snow and Self-Representation in Emerson's 'The Snow-Storm'" and Dickinson's 'It Sifts from Leaden Sieves'" (James Guthrie, Wright State University); "Homelessness and the Experience of Selfhood" (Paul Crumbley, Niagara University)

12:45-2:45 Buffet Lunch

*Sponsored by the Austrian community
Speaker: Sandra Gilbert, University of California at Davis, president elect, Modern Language Association of America*

3:00-4:30 Plenary Session

"Dickinson and Gender"

Moderator: Cristanne Miller, Pomona College

Papers and participants: "Emily Dickinson's Comic Power: A Perform-

mance" (Suzanne Juhasz, University of Colorado, and Cristanne Miller); "Dickinson's Threshold Glances: Mapping the Borders and Beyonds of Subjectivity" (Sabine Sielke, Free University of Berlin); "Size Circumscribes': Body, Boundaries, and Dickinson's Identity of Self" (Joanne Feit Diehl, University of California at Davis)

4:30-5:00 *BREAK*

5:00-6:30 *Panels*

"Dickinson in Historical Contexts"

Papers and participants: "Emily Dickinson's Civil War Poetry" (Leigh-Anne Urbanowicz Marcellin, University of Georgia); "Emily Dickinson: Reading a Spinster" (Esther Loehndorf-Giger, Hochschule St. Gallen); "'I'm Glad I Finally Surfaced': A Norcross Descendant Remembers Emily Dickinson" (Martha Ackmann, Mount Holyoke College); "Emily Dickinson's Exploration of the Limits of Logic: The Example of Her Puritan Heritage" (Marietta Messmer, York University)

"Editing Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "Dickinson's Poetic Revelations" (Mary Carney, University of Georgia); topic TBA (Marget Sands, University of Maryland); "Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning" (Dorothy Huff Oberhaus, Bronxville, N.Y.); topic TBA (Lionel Kelly, University of Reading)

"Dickinson and the 'Foreign'"

Papers and participants: "Dickinson Abroad: The Paradox of Seclusion" (Chanthana Chaichit, Chulalongkorn University); "Brave Columbus, Brave Columbia: Emily Dickinson's Search for Land" (Cynthia Hallen, Brigham Young University); "'The Siren Alps': The Lure of Europe for American Writers" (Jane Donahue Eberwein, Oakland University); "I have but to cross the floor to stand in the Spice Isles': Emily Dickinson and Altarity" (Prateeti Punja Ballal, University of Massachusetts)

"Dickinson's Resistance to Patriarchal Convention"

Papers and participants: "The Business of Circumference: Circularity and Dangerous Female Power in the Work of Emily Dickinson" (Lisa Holloway-Attaway, University of Georgia); "Emily Dickinson's Mastering 'Master'" (David Sullivan, University of California, Irvine); "Dickinson's Silences and Poetic Persona and Ada's Selfhood in *The Piano*" (Cheryl Langdell, La Canada, Calif.)

8:00 *Tyrolean Evening: Dinner and Music.*

\$35.00.* *Sign up when registering*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

9:00-9:30 *COFFEE*

9:30-10:45 *Panels*

"Dickinson in Cultural Contexts"

Papers and participants: "Emily Dickinson and Her Place in the Great Code" (Nancy Honnicker, University of Paris VIII); "Emily Dickinson's Letters and Victorian Epistolary Conventions" (Stephanie Tingley, Youngstown State University); topic TBA (Jonathan Morse, University of Hawaii); "The Meaning of Sovereignty in Dickinson" (Calvin Bedient, University of California at Los Angeles)

"Dickinson's International Reception"

Papers and participants: "Dickinson's Letters in Polish" (Agnieszka Salska, University of Łódź); "Emily Dickinson's Vision of 'Circumference' from a Japanese Perspective" (Midori Ando, Japan); "Emily Dickinson and the French Critical Reception" (William Dow, American University of Paris)

"Dickinson and Her Contemporaries"

Papers and participants: "The House of Dickinson and the House of Hawthorne: Secret Passages of the Inner Life" (Barton Levi St. Armand, Brown University); "Inclusion and Exclusion: Fictions

of Nation and Self in Whitman and Dickinson" (Faith Barrett, University of California at Berkeley); "Emily Dickinson's Readings in the Nineteenth-Century Intellectual Milieu" (Joan Kirkby, Macquarie University); "'What Is Inspiration?': Emily Dickinson, T.W. Higginson, and Mary White Lowell" (Katherine Rodier, University of Connecticut)

"Language and Rhetoric in Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "Emily Dickinson's Poetry: On Translating Silence" (Margarita Ardanaz, University of Complutense, Madrid); "Emily Dickinson and the New Rhetoric" (Bryan C. Short, Northern Arizona University); "'Near, but Remote': Dickinson's Dialogic Voice" (Erika Scheurer, University of St. Thomas); "The Giant at the Other Side: Emily Dickinson and the Inhuman" (David Francis, University of Washington)

"Sentimentality and Domesticity in Dickinson"

Papers and participants: "The White Sustenance – Despair: Dickinson and the Elegiac Voice" (Allison Giffen, University of Puget Sound); "Dickinson and the Wound: Sentimental Explorations of 'The Ecstasy of Parting'" (Marianne Noble, American University); "Domestic Work and Poetry" (Aife Murray, San Francisco, Cal.)

10:45-11:00 *BREAK*

11:00-12:15 *Closing Plenary Session*

"Dickinson in Historical and Cultural Contexts"

Moderator: Gary Lee Stonum, Case Western Reserve University

Papers and participants: "Claimants for the Corpus" (Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology); "Whither and Whence" (Gary Lee Stonum)

12:30 *Annual Business Meeting*

1:15 *Box lunch*

\$10.00.* *Sign up when registering*

“Coming to Grips with the World” Susan Howe’s Reading of Emily Dickinson

By Susan Vanderborg

Susan Vanderborg is a Ph.D. candidate in postmodern American literature at Stanford University. She is currently writing a dissertation on avant-garde poetics and poetic “paratexts” after World War II. She defines paratexts as the source texts, notes, marginalia, and essays that increasingly seem to accompany contemporary poetry. One of her chapters includes a study of Susan Howe’s historical sources. An article by her on Howe’s approach to lyric poetry will appear in *New Definitions of Lyric: Theory, Technology, and Culture*, forthcoming in 1996.

Benjamin Lease, *Series Editor*

Susan Howe has been one of the most innovative poets and critics of the last decade. The trademark of her writing is the use of “found” texts—passages excerpted from historical journals, memoirs, documents, and narratives. Thoreau’s *Walden*, for example, is transformed into her modern-day poem-commentary on nature and naming, “Thorow.” She uses the *Federalist Papers* in “Scattering as Behavior Toward Risk” to indict a legal system that confuses “democracy and property” (*Singularities* 67).

But Emily Dickinson is the primary source to which Howe returns for inspiration, scrutinizing the manuscript fascicles to answer questions central to her own poetry: What is the writer’s community? How can a poet challenge traditional methods of communication while still conveying a sense of her identity to an audience? To explicate this nineteenth-century predecessor, Howe attempts to re-create the style of Dickinson’s poems and letters in her own lyrical, associative essays.¹

Often the distance between Howe and Dickinson seems negligible. Howe’s 1985 text *My Emily Dickinson* transforms its subject into a postmodernist manqué, emphasizing Dickinson’s themes of “dis-

location” and “deconstruction” (11), the minimalist, metonymic diction, the use of different personae, and the irregular line arrangements of the booklets. Yet Howe’s own project is to preserve rather than disrupt these texts. Precisely because Dickinson’s techniques have been conventionalized by editors, she argues, it is necessary to recover her unique voice and to understand it in its communal context.

Reacting to Dickinson criticism that has portrayed an isolated writer unsure of her art, Howe makes her poet a masterful lyricist able to voice not only her private ambitions but the political rhetoric of other American separatists.

The combined focus provides background for Dickinson research that has been unduly neglected. Until Howe’s work, little attention had been paid to the lineation of Dickinson’s manuscripts as part of her poetics. Where Thomas H. Johnson formalized the poems into hymn quatrains suggested by their meter, Howe reprints the fascicle pages with run-on or broken lines. Although she does not claim that all the resulting arrangements were deliberate, the technique does open up suggestive ambiguities in the sense and syntax of Dickinson’s poetry. If typed by line, the manuscript version of the first stanza of Poem 754 reads:

My Life had stood – a
Loaded Gun
In Corners – till a Day
the Owner passed – identified
And carried Me away –

By reprinting this, Howe lets us anticipate the kind of connections drawn in her own analysis. The break in the first line leaves open the meaning of “My Life,” and the response, “a Loaded Gun,” seems a choice rather than an imposed definition. What fascinates Howe in both the poetry and the “Master” letters is the way Dickinson’s personae take on alternate masks of power and vulnerability to make

their argument. Similarly, the pause after “day” opens up the potential for other relations than that of possession, while the juxtaposition of “Owner” and “identified” suggests the inversion of power that Howe reads in the poem: the controlling Owner is also the creation of Gun, in need of its identification and guidance.

Rapid-fire identifications that revise an initial premise are indeed Howe’s method of glossing the text as she finds multiple associations in almost every word. The adjective “sovereign” later in the poem inspires a discussion that ranges from the sacred right of kings to the circulation of currency and language in the American colonies, all linked by a loose, paratactic prose rhythm that complements the original Dickinson stanzas.

In addition to rereading the manuscript lines, Howe creates her own coda to the poem by incorporating Dickinson’s variant word choices into an extra quatrain. “My Life Had stood” is given this new conclusion:

in] the
Deep] low
stir] harm
power] art

These variants are so juxtaposed on the page in Johnson’s edition but not in Ralph Franklin’s manuscript facsimiles, and it seems harder to defend them as Dickinson’s intention. Yet Howe uses these substitutions to suggest primary themes in Dickinson’s work: the hidden depths of a “low” or neglected object and the poet’s ability to “stir harm” into simple diction. Stirring, cooking, and serving seem tranquil feminine occupations, and yet “harm” underscores the dangerous enclosure that both Howe and Dickinson expose in nineteenth-century domestic roles. The last line, connecting art and power, is a critical link for Howe’s argument that Dickinson saw aesthetic decisions as implicated in political power struggles. It is no coincidence that Howe

chooses this brief lyric of the poet as Gun as the focus of more than one hundred pages of exegesis.

What sustains the analysis is the way Howe places Dickinson's lyric experiments within the context of other contemporary rebellions.² She delves into Dickinson's reading to find precedents for her themes of subversion and exile among innovative writers from Robert Browning to Emily Brontë; the text closes with a vision of Dickinson as the quester "Childe Emily" joining her "visionary precursor peers" after death (138). But the main focus on community is a national one. Howe reads Dickinson as if her poetry were, in the words of one of her sources, "A Key to the Language of America" (113).

It is paradoxically the Amherst poet's sense of separatism and dissent, Howe suggests, that can make her a typical figure of American history. She is associated with Anne Hutchinson's claims of spiritual insight, Jonathan Edwards's self-scrutiny and "disciplined" use of "negativity" (49), Thomas Wentworth Higginson's youthful radicalism. The violence of that dissent is literalized in the Civil War context of "My Life," which Howe reads as "the original American conflict between idealism and extremism...being acted out again" (74). She glosses the poem's images of hunting, possession, and death as a series of private and public civil wars in American history that foreshadow the divided Union.

Among the "possibilities" that Howe sees for the persona of "My Life" are a poet "waiting in corners of neglect for Higginson to recognize her ability," a "slave," a "white woman taken captive by Indians," and the "westward moving frontier" pictured "in terms of masculine erotic discovery and domination" (76). The question she asks is not how Dickinson as a woman poet fits within these narratives but how she challenges their dualism, offering an alternative history from the Union's excluded margins—whether the exclusion takes place in terms of race, politics, or economics.

This revisionist history complicates the roles of gender and community in Howe's analysis. To be a poet is a "transfiguration beyond gender," Howe believes (138);³

what Dickinson "reveals of her inmost self" (*The Birth-mark* 20) is a genius affected but not determined by historical circumstance. Yet Howe argues that the most radical American separatists, whether women or men have been perceived—and punished—in terms of gender.

In a survey of American literary history, she theorizes that "lawlessness seen as negligence is at first feminized and then restricted or banished" (*The Birth-mark* 1). These "feminized" rebels do offer a different perspective on conflict and union. "In the Civil War we are all mutually entangled," mutually fascinated by the chaos of leveling, Howe comments (*My Emily Dickinson* 114). But she claims that "to be rebellious and to distrust rebellion comes easily to women who may lose their husbands and children"—or other creative offspring (114).

The feminine for Howe is the voice of the true "tragic artist" whose idealism does not devolve into extremism (114). Her Dickinson in the role of Gun ultimately refuses the Nietzschean "will to Power" (35), stripping away old ideas rather than destroying their human proponents. Howe offers Dickinson's own inversion of the Jacob story (P 59), where a poet "Pugilist" arrogantly—and miraculously—tells the angel/adversary she has just fought: "I will not let thee go except I bless thee" (120). Gun redefines not only the battle but the victory on her own terms.

It is sometimes a difficult victory to translate. What may make the reader question Howe's Dickinson is that she seems not too composite but too purist a creation. She is associated for Howe with platonic images of Truth, Art, Imagination, and Love. The focus on the manuscripts is perhaps the counterweight to this idealization, an attempt to ground Dickinson as a material presence for readers.

The chapter on Dickinson that concludes *The Birth-mark* takes this materialism even further, evaluating the paper texture, quality, and embossed seals as part of the composition process. Given Dickinson's tendency to conflate correspondence and poetry (writing letters in poetic form or enclosing poems in let-

ters), Howe insists that each new detail in these private manuscripts should be read as part of Dickinson's "letter to the world" (152). The first subheading for the Dickinson chapter, "A Concrete Community of Exchange Among Peers" (131) may mock the fraternity of editors who have misread the poet, but it also suggests the potential for a new Dickinson audience that would appreciate the politics of her "concrete textuality."

If such claims beg the question of whether Howe's version of Emily Dickinson is as flawed in its own way as are the versions of Todd and Higginson or Johnson, Howe's ability to synthesize fact and exegesis within broader narratives of community cannot be dismissed easily. Readers trying to recover their own Emily Dickinson have a more challenging territory to explore for what Howe reveals of her poet.

Howe Texts

The Birth-mark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1993.

My Emily Dickinson. Berkeley, Cal.: North Atlantic Books, 1985.

Singularities. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1990.

Notes

1. Marjorie Perloff emphasizes *My Emily Dickinson* as a poet's book in the tradition of Charles Olson's *Call Me Ishmael* and Robert Duncan's *H.D. Book*—"texts in which one poet meditates so intensely on the work of another that the two voices imperceptibly merge." *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1990), 36.

2. Howe's communal poet is a response to Gilbert and Gubar's vision of a "Spider artist" confined to poetic miniatures (*My Emily Dickinson* 14). Even the 1975 reevaluation of Dickinson by Adrienne Rich ("Vesuvius at Home," in *Poetry and Prose* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1993], 177-95), which advocates a study of the poet in the context of nineteenth-century women's culture (177), focuses more on how "the women and men in her life" were "converted to metaphor" (180) than on reading the poetry itself as a reflection of contemporary conflicts.

3. John Taggart, in his excellent review of *My Emily Dickinson* (*Conjunctions* 11 [1988]: 264-74), discusses at length Howe's "courageous and human recognition" of a poetic identity that transcends gender (268).

Gwendolyn Brooks and Emily Dickinson

By D. H. Melhem

I had the privilege of getting to know Gwendolyn Brooks when she came to Walsh University as the William McKinley Visiting Scholar last winter. I count her among my personal heroines and am honored to present D.H. Melhem's view of the Brooks-Dickinson connection as part of the "Poet to Poet" series.

Since 1945 when she published her first poetry collection, *A Street in Bronzeville*, Brooks has been in the foreground of the American literary scene. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1950, following the publication of *Annie Allen*, and was the first Black writer to be so honored. Currently writer in residence at Chicago State University, she has held the post of Poet Laureate of Illinois since 1968 and served in 1985-86 as the Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. Brooks was selected by the National Endowment for the Humanities to deliver the 1994 Jefferson Lecture—the highest honor the federal government bestows for intellectual achievement in the humanities.

Jonnie Guerra, *Series Editor*

Gwendolyn Brooks began writing verses at the age of seven; by the time she was thirteen, her mother told her, "You are going to be the *lady* Paul Laurence Dunbar."¹ We neither have nor anticipate any record of corresponding parental encouragement of Emily Dickinson. As Brooks herself has pointed out, "Emily and I are absolutely different in the details of our lives."²

Certainly their personal data seem antithetical: the earlier poet a spinster, reclusive, her work largely unpublished in her lifetime; the later poet a wife and mother, a public figure with a national reputation who travels widely to give readings and upon whom have been conferred more than seventy honorary doctorates and an ongoing host of awards. Yet they share several affinities.



Photo © 1994 by Jill Krementz

When asked in September 1994 for her appraisal of Dickinson, Brooks told me approvingly, "She said what she said and believed, and said it briefly." This forthright quality, honed by compression that makes every word count, characterizes the work of both poets. Seeking to distinguish between them, I suggested that Dickinson took compression in one direction, inward; Brooks in another, outward toward humanism. Brooks, however, justly observed that some of her compression moves inward, too.

Viewing her oeuvre as a whole, one may conclude that, from *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945), her first book, to her most recent work, *Children Coming Home* (1991), Brooks has always spoken to her times. Yet one can find introspection and metaphysical speculation throughout her works. Like Dickinson, for example, for whom God is sometimes a mundane presence, an "Old Neighbor," Brooks takes an unconventional stance toward the Deity, whom she pities in "the preacher: ruminates behind the sermon" in *A Street in Bronzeville*:

I think it must be lonely to be God.
Nobody loves a master. No. Despite
The bright hosannas, bright dear-Lords,
and bright
Determined reverence of Sunday eyes.
.....
Perhaps—who knows?—He tires of
looking down.
Those eyes are never lifted. Never
straight.
Perhaps sometimes He tires of being
great
In solitude. Without a hand to hold.

A later poem, "In Emanuel's Nightmare: Another Coming of Christ" (from *The Bean Eaters*) reveals a disheartened Jesus:

It wasn't coming. I'd say it was—a
Birth.
The man was born out of the heaven, in
truth.
Yet no parturient creature ever knew
That naturalness, that hurtlessness,
that ease.
.....
He had come down, He said, to clean
the earth
Of the dirtiness of war.
Now tell of why His power failed Him
there?
His power did not fail. It was that,
simply,
He found how much the people wanted
war.
How much it was their creed, and
their good joy.
And what they lived for. He had not
the heart
To take away their chief sweet delectation.
.....
God's Son went home. Among us it is
whispered
He cried the tears of men.
Feeling, in fact,
We have no need of peace.

Brooks and Dickinson are courageous. Alicia Ostriker notes that Dickinson's mind takes risks as it examines "impos-

sible possibilities” and subverts convention. By the same token, from *A Street in Bronzeville* on, beginning with her poem on abortion (“the mother”), which Richard Wright would have preferred she omit as a subject unfit for poetry, Brooks has always spoken—and written—her mind.

George Kent, in his excellent biography, cites an interview with the poet in which she defines poetry as “the very sifting of life. . . . Think of life as a rough powder that you pour through a sieve. Well, the finest part of it that comes through will be the poetry. Poetry is a concentration; you can get the essence of a novel into a short poem.”³ The intense compression that Brooks shares with Dickinson has sometimes led to difficulties with her earlier work. Yet while she speaks of her current objective as to be “clarifying, not simple,”⁴ she maintains in *Winnie*, her poem for Winnie Mandela (1988), with Winnie as her persona:

A poem doesn't do everything for you.
You are supposed to go on with your
thinking.
You are supposed to enrich
the other person's poem with your
extensions,
your uniquely personal understand-
ings,
thus making the poem serve you.

Brooks's early notebooks, kept from the age of thirteen, reveal the impress of and compatibility with Dickinson. The two poets share intensity of feeling, delight in metaphysical speculation, in imagery, in concern with craft and typography. (Dickinson favors the dash and capitalizations; Brooks employs the latter, a feature that persists.) Dickinson's reliance on the ballad stanza and its variants is paralleled in Brooks's ballad stanza and her use of variants such as blues.

Regarding Dickinson, Kent writes that Brooks had “taken [her] to heart at Wilson Junior College after paying tribute to the delicate lines of Sara Teasdale” (16), and illustrates with the poem “Myself,” written April 28, 1936:

Myself is all I have,
Myself is all I need;
Should grain and blossoms be?
Myself can plant the seed.

hunchback girl: she thinks of heaven

My Father, it is surely a blue place
and straight. Right. Regular. Where I shall find
No need for scholarly nonchalance or looks
A little to the left or guards upon the
Heart to halt love that runs without crookedness
Along its crooked corridors. My Father,
It is a planned place surely. Out of coils,
Unscrewed, released, no more to be marvelous,
I shall walk straightly through most proper halls
Proper myself, princess of properness.

From *A Street in Bronzeville*, 1945; reprinted in *Blacks*, Third World Press, 1991. Reprinted by permission of the author.

After her graduation from Wilson, Kent observes, Brooks's “greatest triumph was a new sense of language provided by Langston Hughes and Emily Dickinson.”⁶ Yet even in 1930, in the notebooks she kept at thirteen, she wrote:

It hurts a lot to see the top –
And know you're at the base;
To know some power holds you back
And yet see glory's face!
But all true climbers know that they
Must rise by base degree.
And so they keep on climbing 'til
They find that they are – free!⁷

Two of Dickinson's poems reveal remarkable tangents and intersections, prosodically and thematically, with Brooks's 1930 poem. Although Poem 772 was first published in 1945, making it unlikely that Brooks had any acquaintance with it at the time, it bears reference here:

The hallowing of Pain
Like hallowing of Heaven,
Obtains at a corporeal cost –
The Summit is not given –
To Him who strives severe
At middle of the Hill –
But He who has achieved the Top –
All – is the price of All –

Dickinson's Poem 1176 (published in 1896) further illustrates the similarities:

We never know how high we are
Till we are asked to rise
And then if we are true to plan
Our statures touch the skies

The Heroism we recite
Would be a normal thing
Did not ourselves the Cubits warp
For fear to be a King.

The poets' perspectives on the struggle toward spiritual excellence and perfection, the falling short of human proportions (“the Cubits”) to achieve their heavenly potential, and the difficulty of achieving grace eerily coincide.

Intimacy with the universe appears in the reversals common to Brooks and Dickinson. In Dickinson, an insect can reveal life or Heaven can become a “small Town.” In Brooks's *In the Mecca*, Alfred can lean over the balcony, peer at the slum building of the Mecca, and hear something “Substanceless; yet like mountains, / like rivers and oceans too,” begin to call. Heaven and Earth are interchangeable for both poets; they travel freely in both dimensions.

A difference between them, however, emerges in their view of nature. For Dickinson, it is often a place of wonder and liberty, conceptions that may spark its pervasiveness as her subject. Brooks enjoys and respects nature—even the smallest insect deserves life, she believes—and she has written several engaging poems on the subject. But for some time, particularly in the sixties, she was hesitant to write about it. In 1969, acknowledging the controversy among Black poets over the propriety of nature as a subject, Brooks observed that all subjects merit poetic attention. Yet “A
Continued on page 17

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Recent and Forthcoming

[Some information from publishers' catalogues]

Berthoff, Warner. *American Trajectories: Authors and Readings, 1790-1970.* University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1994. 200 pp. ISBN 0-271-01051-7, \$29.95.

Berthoff argues that literature "is a matter of individual signatures and differences, but that there are also recognizable patterns and continuities marking off what is distinctively American." Scholarly essays on Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Kate Chopin, and eight other American writers investigate the claims pro and con for a shared national experience.

Bolin, Francis Schoemaker, ed.; Chi Chung, illus. *Emily Dickinson.* New York: Sterling, 1994. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8069-0635-9, \$14.95.

One of the first volumes in the Poetry for Young People series. Each of the thirty-five poems is illustrated with a full-color drawing. Some poems are footnoted with helpful word definitions. A short biography, bibliography, and index are included. Ages 10-up.

Houston, Jean. *Public Like a Frog: Entering the Lives of Three Great Americans.* Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993. 294 pp. ISBN 0-8356-0694-5, \$14.00.

Houston explores the lives of Emily Dickinson, Thomas Jefferson, and Helen Keller, using their biographies as a resource to guide readers on a transformational journey. The Dickinson essay has five sections: childhood, school days, conversion, poet/goddess/creator, and love and death. Following each section are exercises for mind- and spirit-expanding experiences, including scripts for guided imagery, discussion, writing, drawing, music, and dramatic expression. Houston, a psychologist, philosopher, and spiritual guide, taps into three

creative minds of the past to show how to release human potential for self-development.

Russell, Paul. *The Gay 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Gay Men and Lesbians, Past and Present.* New York: Citadel Press, 1995. 386 pp. ISBN 0-8065-1591-0, \$24.95.

Russell ranks Dickinson 27th on his list, conceding that "some will think that the inclusion of Emily Dickinson on this list is completely unwarranted." In the introduction, he explains his criteria for his selections and rankings. Spanning 2,400 years of history—from Socrates to Madonna—Russell includes 60 entries for men, 38 for women, and 2 entries shared by men and women. Each profile is approximately three pages long and includes a portrait.

Ward, R. Bruce. *The Gift of Screws: The Poetic Strategies of Emily Dickinson.* New York: Whitson, 1994. 118 pp. ISBN 0-87875-457-1, \$15.00.

Ward "refutes the popular view of Dickinson as a morbid sufferer helpless in the face of nineteenth-century repression, and instead demonstrates her ability to speak universally of the human condition by objectively baring her soul." Focusing on the creative process, Ward discusses alienation, autonomy, circumference, and the aesthetic center of Dickinson's poetry.

Review

Oberhaus, Dorothy Huff. *Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning.* University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1995. 260 pp. ISBN 0-271-01337-0, \$40.00.

Reviewed by Cynthia L. Hallen

The poems of Emily Dickinson are "alive with the sound of music"; they breathe with the music of meters, meanings, words, figures, structures, rimes, ideas, images, allusions, and personas. The

power of this biotic music has prompted many readers to nominate Dickinson as the Muse prophesied by Hawthorne, or the American Poet described by Emerson. More recently, the linguistic drama of her verse has convinced some critics to propound Dickinson as America's equivalent to Shakespeare.

Because of rich intertextual connections, the circumference of Dickinson's poetic "experiment" is exquisitely organic, like Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Several scholars have noticed that Dickinson's poems need to be read as a whole, not just as 1,775 discrete lyric units. A holistic or organic reading is especially important when the poems are viewed in the fascicle context of forty hand-bound manuscript packets.

But finding underlying principles to explain Dickinson's poems and packets is often as bewildering as trying to figure out the riddle of one individual poem. In Dickinson's circumlocutions, the whole can be just as puzzling as the parts, causing some readers to assume that the fascicles are idiosyncratic bundles of idiolectic images without any distinct structural principles.

Dorothy Oberhaus's new book, *Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning*, focuses on the structural principles of the fortieth fascicle and challenges the assumption that Fascicle 40 is merely a "random collection of singularly cryptic poems." After years of careful analysis, Oberhaus proposes that Dickinson organized the fortieth fascicle as a three-part meditation similar in substance and structure to the devotional works of writers such as Ignatius Loyola, George Herbert, and Thomas à Kempis.

In F-40, Dickinson seems to be presenting the poet-persona as a meditator who seeks and finds communion with Christ the Mediator. Other scholars have noticed thematic similarities between Dickinson's poems, seventeenth-century metaphysical writers, and the mystical inner journeys of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, but Oberhaus is the

first scholar to use the fascicles as the basis for such observations. Through her reading of F-40 and other fascicles, Oberhaus demonstrates that Dickinson's poems are the account of a spiritual and poetic pilgrimage.

Oberhaus did not begin her study of the fascicles with preconceived notions about what she would find. After publication of Franklin's edition of the manuscripts in 1981, Oberhaus began searching the forty fascicles for hints of a conceptual framework. To start with the first fascicle seemed logical, but a structural pattern began to emerge only when she skipped forward to the last fascicle.

Using a hand-typed replica of the fortieth fascicle, Oberhaus discovered that Dickinson had developed (1) a two-part relationship between the circuits of time and the spheres of eternity; (2) a "garland of praise" woven with intricate word clusters and clasps; (3) a three-part meditation contemplating the soul as a "composition of place" for poems of analysis and poems of faith; (4) a letter of good news to readers; and (5) a conversion narrative depicting Christ's invitation to

the meditator, the meditator's renunciation of the world, her betrothal to Christ, her calling to serve readers through poetry, and her hopes for a reunion with Christ in His heavenly home.

Each of these complex structural principles is sometimes elusive in Dickinson's typically understated style, but Oberhaus uses several tools to walk readers through the patterns as they emerge in F-40. She makes linear graphs and circular diagrams for intertwining conceptual tropes found in the poems. She proposes and brackets missing words and phrases to fill in Dickinson's elliptical constructions. She uncovers biblical allusions that provide stunning insights.

Oberhaus is particularly effective in her use of Noah Webster's 1844 dictionary to illuminate lexical items in Dickinson's poems. For example, Webster's "Lexicon" entry suggests that a "nosegay" in Poem 8 (F-3) is not just a posy of picked flowers but also a "fascicle" of selected poems. A "garland" in Poem 21 (F-1) is not only a wreath of intermixed flowers but also "a collection of little printed pieces."

Margaret Dickie once reminded readers of Pound's "Cantos" that "philology is the art of reading slowly," and Oberhaus uses an artful, deliberate, philological method to get to meaning in Dickinson's fascicles. She is careful to support her interpretation with textual details of prosody, diction, and syntax. Such attention to structure is not to be equated with the hammer of formalism but is instead representative of the "delicate spun-glass probe" of philological criticism advocated by A.L. Becker and Clifford Geertz.

Oberhaus's meticulous attention to detail shows us that Dickinson's "loved Philology" deserves careful study. Both Jack Capps and Richard Sewall have enthusiastically endorsed Oberhaus's approach. Oberhaus candidly admits that Dickinson's text is richer than any reading of it, but Dickinson scholars will be enriched by *Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning*.

Cynthia Hallen is assistant professor in the Linguistics Department at Brigham Young University, where she teaches linguistics, lexicography, philology, and Dickinson.

Brooks, continued from page 15

Black poet may be involved in a concern for trees, if only because when he looks at one he thinks of how his ancestors have been lynched thereon."⁸

Another difference is the treatment of death as a subject. At times an almost friendly presence for Dickinson (as in "Because I could not stop for Death—/He kindly stopped for me"), for Brooks death is always an enemy of fulfillment, a scourge that destroys the young for whom she cares so deeply. A poem called "Early Death" appears in *The Near-Johannesburg Boy* (1986). Like a two-part "letter to the world" ("Of the Young Dead" and "To the Young Who Want to Die"), it expresses the tragedy of early death, an especial affliction of Black ghetto youth, and exposes the illusive appeal of suicide. Although for both poets death is a familiar presence, in Brooks familiarity remains distinct from friendliness. She addresses the young:

I assure you death will wait. Death
has
a lot of time. Death can
attend to you tomorrow. Or next week.
Death is
just down the street; is most obliging
neighbor;
can meet you any moment.

Emily Dickinson wrote letters to a world that did not respond in her lifetime. Our own good fortune is the ongoing discourse with Gwendolyn Brooks. Into this vivid dialogue, moreover, Emily Dickinson, luminous and impassioned, belated and welcome, enters.

Notes

1. Gwendolyn Brooks, *Report from Part One* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1972), 56.
2. Quoted in Martha Nell Smith, "Everywoman Her Own Theology," *EDIS Bulletin* 6, no. 2 (Nov./Dec. 1994): 6.
3. George Kent, *A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1990), 235.
4. D. H. Melhem, *Gwendolyn Brooks:*

Poetry and the Heroic Voice (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1987), 103.

5. Kent, *Life of Brooks*, 16.

6. *Ibid.*, 40.

7. Quoted in *ibid.*, 10.

8. Brooks, *Report from Part One*, 166.

Other Works by and about Brooks

Brooks, Gwendolyn. *The Near-Johannesburg Boy and Other Poems*. 1986. Chicago: Third World Press, 1991.

———. *Blacks*. 1987. Chicago: Third World Press, 1991. [Omnibus, 1945-1987]

———. *Winnie*. 1988. Chicago: Third World Press, 1991.

Melhem, D. H. *Heroism in the New Black Poetry: Introductions and Interviews*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1990.

D. H. Melhem is the author of three books of poetry and of Gwendolyn Brooks: Poetry and the Heroic Voice. Her Heroism in the New Black Poetry won an American Book Award in 1990. Blight, her first novel, was published in March.

M E M B E R S ' N E W S

1995 Annual Meeting

The Society's annual business meeting will be held on Sunday, August 6, immediately following the closing plenary session of the Innsbruck conference. The agenda will include reports on the election of officers and Board members and on the many activities of the Society. We look forward to hearing from and meeting with many of you at that time.

ALA Dickinson Panels Announced

Two Dickinson sessions are planned for the 1995 meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held at the Stouffer Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, May 26-28. Both panels will deal with the topic "Emily Dickinson: Influences and Traditions in the 20th Century."

Speakers for Panel I will be Martha Nell Smith, University of Maryland; Paul Crumbley, Niagara University; and Cynthia Hogue, University of New Orleans. Jonnie Guerra, Walsh University, will chair the session.

Panel II, chaired by Cristanne Miller of Pomona College, will feature Erika Scheurer, University of St. Thomas; Rob Smith, George Washington University; and Mary Loeffelholz, Northeastern University.

To register, contact Alfred Bendixen via e-mail at abendix@calstatela.edu, by phone at 213-343-4291 or -4140, or by fax at 213-343-6470.

Emily Goes Electronic

Cynthia Hallen, Brigham Young University, has established an e-mail network for persons interested in the *Emily Dickinson Lexicon*, the International Bibliography project, and other EDIS research activities.

To subscribe to the network, christened EMWEB, send your e-mail messages to majordomo@lal.cs.byu.edu, then type in **subscribe emweb**. You can then communicate messages through the majordomo address. If you have questions, contact Cynthia Hallen by phone at 801-378-2020 or by fax at 801-378-4649.

Innsbruck Meals and Accommodations

If you plan to attend the conference and have not made your hotel reservations, you should do so immediately. The Hotel Mozart is now completely booked, but rooms are still available at the Rössl in der Au. Make your reservations directly with the hotel: phone 0043-512-286846; or fax 0043-512-293850. The mailing address is Höttinger Au 34, A-2060 Innsbruck, Austria. Conference rates are \$40 for a single room, \$30 per person for a double room.

As the schedule indicates, there will be no charge for the Friday night dinner or Saturday buffet lunch for those attending the conference. Price of the Saturday Tyrolean evening, which includes dinner,

will be approximately \$35; the box lunch for Sunday noon will be about \$10. (Final prices will be close to these.)

Traveling companions who do not attend the conference need not pay the registration fee and will be welcome to join us for social functions. Their cost for the Saturday dinner and Sunday lunch will be the same as for attendees. The charge for Friday dinner will be approximately \$20, and for Saturday lunch, \$10.

If you have additional questions, they should be directed to Gudrun Grabher, head of the planning committee in Innsbruck. See the registration form opposite for her address, phone, and fax numbers.

Cognitive Approaches Seminar Planned

An informal seminar will take place on Sunday, August 4, from 5:30 to 7:30, directly following the conference in Innsbruck. It will continue with general discussion and conversation over dinner.

Focusing on recent work in cognitive linguistics, we will discuss ways in which cognitive approaches to metaphor can be applied to poetry interpretation and thus to translation of poetry into other languages.

Special emphasis will be placed on the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the current

translation project generated by the EDIS international conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1992.

No formal registration is necessary, though participants may wish to extend their hotel reservations. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the conference.

For further information, contact Margaret Freeman, 1300 Greenleaf Canyon Rd., Topanga, CA 90290 USA; by phone: 310-455-3566; by fax: 310-455-3686; or by e-mail: freemamh@laccd.cc.ca.us.

Utah Chapter Welcomes *Five Emilies*

By Elizabeth McKenzie

The revival of a Reader's Theater production of *Five Emilies: The Majority of One* and a new setting of a Dickinson poem were highlights of the second meeting of the Utah Chapter of EDIS. More than forty people attended the February 1 gathering on the campus of Westminster College, Salt Lake City. The meeting opened with Rob Low, an American Studies student at Brigham Young University, accompanying as the entire gathering sang his new setting of Poem 444, "It feels a shame to be Alive," setting the tone for an inspirational evening.

The singing was followed by a performance of *Five Emilies*, written in 1981 by Wanda Clayton Thomas, professor emeritus at the University of Utah. The play features five actresses depicting the poet in

dialogue with her various selves: the playful, impish Emily; the timid, fearful Emily; the ecstatic, exalted Emily; the collected, intellectual Emily; and the passionate, tortured Emily. *Five Emilies* was last performed in 1986, the centennial of Dickinson's death. Its 1995 revival brought together the 1981 cast, who will now perform it for other groups in Utah.

Flown?

The *Bulletin* has learned indirectly of the death of poet **Roger White**, author of *One Bird, One Cage, One Flight*, his poetic tribute to Dickinson. If any member has further information, please send it to the *Bulletin* editor.

Notes & Queries

EDIS president **Vivian Pollak** will be moving in July from the University of Washington, Seattle, to St. Louis, Missouri, where she will be professor of English at Washington University. (Members should not confuse the two Washingtons.) The English Department in St. Louis (314-935-5190) will have her summer travel plans for anyone needing to reach her.

Robert Lucas reports that his new catalog of rare and out-of-print books, devoted entirely to Dickinson-related items, is now available and includes 175 works. To receive a free copy, write him at P.O. Box 63, Blandford, MA 01008 USA.

Those interested in more recent publications may wish to get on the mailing list for the **Jeffery Amherst Bookshop**, which stocks a full complement of Dickinson in-print books and tapes and publishes a newsletter. The most recent newsletter features reviews of Dickinson books for young people. The toll-free number is 1-800-253-2962 or write to the shop at 55 South Pleasant St., Amherst, MA 01002 USA.

Immolation

By *Herbert W. Edwards*

When Lavinia burned Emily's letters
And, perhaps, her lover's name,
What sigh escaped the dying embers,
What color was the flame?

Published by permission of the poet.

Herbert W. Edwards is professor emeritus of English at Washington Square College of New York University, where he taught chiefly American literature. He is co-author, with Rod W. Horton, of *Backgrounds of American Literary Thought*.



Tours of the **Dickinson Homestead** are scheduled for Wednesdays through Saturdays from 1:30 to 3:45, early May through October, Wednesdays and Saturdays only in early spring and late fall. Admission is \$3.00. Reservations are advised: call 413-542-8161 or write well in advance to the Emily Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main St., Amherst, MA 01002 USA.

Performances, continued from page 9

monolithic moods of depression and pain; Bacon catches Dickinson's protean changes with subtle shifts of piano or vocal melody.

On first hearing, some of Vernon's songs sounded generic to me, notably "Western Mystery," "Letter to the World," and "This World Is Not Conclusion." I wondered if, for listeners unfamiliar with the poems, the familiarity of the styles would melt the words into the wallpaper, leaving their quixotic variety unexplored. But when I played them as background music, I found the words subliminally sinking into my memory—so much more rewarding than most pop or folk lyrics, even at their best.

I look forward to giving this CD to nieces and nephews, and to feeling happy that the side of me that has loved popular music since Bob Dylan can merge with the side that loves Dickinson.

Soprano **Sara Hopkins** is completing a doctorate in vocal performance at the University of Maryland. She recently wrote and performed *The Passionate Emily Dickinson*, a dramatic work featuring songs by several American composers, including Ernst Bacon.

Conference Registration Form

Please print or type your name and affiliation as you wish them to appear on your conference badge.

Name, title, & affiliation _____

Mailing address _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (office) _____ (fax) _____

Conference Fee: \$75.00 Make check or money order payable, in U.S. funds, to EDIS, Inc.

Send to: Gudrun Grabher, Institut für Amerikanistik, Universität Innsbruck, Innrain 52 III, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria.

Phone: 0043-512-507-4171 Fax: 0043-512-507-2879

Emily Dickinson International Society Membership Form

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Martha Nell Smith, Treasurer, EDIS, Dept. of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 U.S.A.

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Editor's Note: This issue of the Bulletin focuses on two exciting events. The first is the forthcoming international conference, to be held in Innsbruck, Austria. We hope many of you will be among those gathering with fellow Dickinson admirers.

For the benefit of those who cannot attend, I hope to cover many of the sessions in my next issue. If you are willing to serve as a conference reporter, please contact me at the address below, call me at 606-257-8438 (office), or fax me at 606-257-2984.

The second event, equally significant, is the first publication of several newly discovered Dickinson family letters, including two by the poet. Polly Longworth and Norbert Hirschhorn deserve our gratitude for their efforts in searching out these docu-

ments, which throw additional light on Dickinson, her work, and her family relationships. After several barren decades, their discovery raises the hope that more such items will come to light in the fullness of time.

Poems 754, 772, and 1704 by Emily Dickinson are reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of Amherst College from The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Thomas H. Johnson, Editor (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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Annual dues are \$35.00 for regular members (includes subscription to the Bulletin and The Emily Dickinson Journal), \$15.00 for special members (the Bulletin only), and \$50.00 for contributing members. Membership inquiries and changes of address should be sent to Eleanor Heginbotham, Towers of Galtier Place, 172 East 6th St., Apt. 1707J, St. Paul, MN 55101, U.S.A. Membership applications should be sent to Martha Nell Smith, Dept. of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, U.S.A.

Submissions and other communications for the Bulletin should be sent to Georgiana Strickland, 133 Lackawanna Rd., Lexington, KY 40503, U.S.A. Submission deadlines are March 1 and September 1. All articles become the property of the Bulletin. Back issues are available for \$5.00 each from the editor. Copyright ©1995 by the Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc.

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