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

"MY BUSINESS IS TO LOVE" EMILY DICKINSON IN WORDS AND MUSIC

Reviewed by Cindy Dickinson

There are few good reasons to get up at 3:00 a.m. on a February day for a long drive from Amherst to New York City, especially on a day for which one of the major storms of the season is predicted. Yet that is what I found myself doing on Friday, February 18, as I headed to the city to sit in on a dress rehearsal of *"My Business Is to Love": Emily Dickinson in Words and Music*, a world premiere performance featuring Julie Harris, actress, and Renée Fleming, soprano.

I had initially agreed to review the February 20 public performance of the piece for the *Bulletin*. But, as might be expected of an event starring both a Tony Award-winning actress and the world's leading soprano, tickets to the event, part of Lincoln Center's "Great Performers" series, had sold out immediately. Through the kindness of Harris and playwright William Luce, I was invited instead to attend the Friday morning dress rehearsal at Alice Tully Hall.

The idea for the program was conceived several years ago by Charles Nelson Reilly, director of William Luce's 1976 play *The Belle of Amherst*. Reilly felt that a program of Emily Dickinson song settings and poem recitations would be an appealing creative collaboration. As William Luce commented, "It was with Renée Fleming's commitment—that Possibility was realized." Reilly enlisted his friend and colleague Julie Harris (who originated the role of Emily Dickinson in *The Belle of Amherst*) to provide Dickinson's voice.

Harris found the idea intriguing but, as she shared with me in a recent interview,

felt an initial reluctance to the concept because "I always think that Emily is better solo...[her words] are music by themselves." Yet the possibility of performing with Renée Fleming, who shares Harris's love of Dickinson and who frequently includes settings of Dickinson poems in her recital repertoire, was too tempting to pass up.



Photo © 2000 by Chris Lee

Renée Fleming and Julie Harris perform in William Luce's "My Business Is to Love" at New York's Lincoln Center.

With the concept determined, the program needed structure, and for that William Luce was reunited with his *Belle* collaborators. Working with song suggestions from Fleming and poems selected by Harris, Luce constructed a narrative based on the twelve months of the year. As he noted in an e-mail exchange with Georgiana Strickland, "The spoken portion [of the performance] offered the chance to have natural dialogue based on, inspired by, both letters and poems—and by events taking place in Amherst through the years of Emily's life." Harris emphasized the

structure's historical basis: "Every month has a specific meaning to the Homestead and to Emily's life."

The Friday morning rehearsal was a run-through of Act II, July through December. This portion of the program highlighted such events in Dickinson's life as a soiree at a friend's house, Jenny Lind's

1851 Northampton concert, the effect on Amherst of the death of native son Frazar Stearns in the Civil War, and the deaths of several Dickinson family members. For each month, Fleming sang one or two song settings by various composers, accompanied by Helen Yorke at the piano (see the review of the music, page 3), and Harris read the engaging narrative drawn from Dickinson's poems and letters by Luce. At times Fleming joined Harris in dialogue in the role of Lavinia.

The seasonal structure works well. It roots Dickinson's poetic experiments in a historical context but does not burden the piece with a strict chronology. Through this structure, the audience member can begin to understand how the themes Dickinson explored poetically throughout her life emerged in her work. Also effective structurally is the Lavinia-Emily dialogue. It adds a note of intimacy to the performance, reminding us that Dickinson did not live in a vacuum. Personal relationships—however few—were vital to her existence and her development as an artist.

As the rehearsal proceeded, I enjoyed observing the piece take shape as the principals—Harris, Fleming, Yorke, Luce, and Reilly (who served as director)—conferred about details of presentation to evoke certain reactions from the audience. Particularly delightful was a section of the rehearsal devoted to a retelling of the Jenny Lind concert. Harris (as Emily Dickinson) described the concert and Fleming acted the part of Jenny Lind, singing quotations from various songs in Lind's repertoire. Harris, Fleming, and Reilly worked for some time on the timing of each musical interjection in order to achieve the desired reaction from the audience—in this case, laughter.

During the rehearsal, I considered the audience that would fill the hall on Sunday. Who were the people with tickets, and why were they coming? Were they prepared for the interpretation of Dickinson they would experience during the afternoon? It seemed that the audience would be comprised of two groups—admirers of Renée Fleming and devotees of Dickinson and Julie Harris.

For the mass of Fleming fans, the primary attraction of the performance was undoubtedly the opportunity to hear their beloved soprano in recital. If this was their first introduction to the poet, what impression of her would they take away? I was pleased to find in Benjamin Folkman's comprehensive program notes a fairly balanced presentation of Dickinson's life, a summary that did not water down or mythologize the complexities of her poetry or her lifestyle. With that as background, those in the audience unfamiliar with Dickinson would be better prepared to assess for themselves the interpretation presented in the performance.

The other audience, of Dickinson fans, would be challenged by the musical settings of Dickinson's words. Would they appreciate not only the narrative but the song settings? Folkman remarks at the end of his program notes: "Finding the right music for these poems has always, in fact, been a challenge. The greatest danger...is that only prettified pictures of nature may emerge, shorn of the philosophical and moral force that gives the poems their greatness." But from a musical standpoint, why would a composer *not* select some of the world's most challenging lyrics to set to music? I myself have a bias in favor of Dickinson song settings, not because I think they necessarily enhance the meaning of a particular poem but because they provide a tangible chronology of the history of Dickinson interpretation. Dickinson purists might rue anyone's—composer's or dramatist's—tampering with her words, but there is no doubt that dramatic and musical compositions such as those presented in this performance widen the appreciation for Dickinson's genius.

Audiences not familiar with this aspect of Dickinson interpretation could not have a more appropriate introduction than the presentation by Fleming and Harris, since the songs are balanced with historical fact as well as eloquent recitation of Dickinson's poems. The songs were also performed with deep feeling by a truly great singer. As Folkman says, "Ms Fleming's program gives us a provocative opportunity to compare the various strategies adopted by composers in pursuing Emily Dickinson's unique visions."

But what shine through both the musical and spoken aspects of "My Business Is to Love" are Dickinson's words. Al-

though shaped in dialogue by a playwright, set to music by composers, sung by an exquisite musician, and delivered by a consummate actress, Dickinson's words star in the performance. As always, they delight, intrigue, provoke, and baffle.

After the rehearsal, I met several of the principal players. Their commitment to Dickinson's art and the art that she has inspired in the composers represented on the program resonated even in the frenzy of last-minute rehearsing. I was particularly touched by Harris's devotion to Dickinson. For almost twenty-five years, she has introduced many people to the poet. Indeed, for some, she *is* Emily Dickinson. Harris clearly takes this responsibility seriously and feels a genuine kinship with the poet.

With the rehearsal over and my good-byes to the principal players expressed, I left Alice Tully Hall and exited onto 66th Street to encounter the promised snow storm. Inside the windowless hall, the outside world had disappeared, the creative energy focused in that odd place where art takes you—out of yourself. I headed toward the subway, knowing that the ride back would be long. But the opportunity to watch a new Dickinson program take shape in the hands of such talented collaborators was an experience worth getting up early for.

Cindy Dickinson is Director of the Dickinson Homestead in Amherst.

"My Business Is to Love" was repeated at the Barbican Centre in London on March 1 with Claire Bloom, who starred in a Thames Television production of *The Belle of Amherst*, replacing Julie Harris.

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“MY BUSINESS IS TO LOVE”: THE MUSIC

Reviewed by Ellen Bacon

A unique event combining Emily Dickinson's poetry with musical settings of seventeen poems took place on Sunday afternoon, February 20, in Alice Tully Hall at New York's Lincoln Center. The performers were actress Julie Harris as Emily, soprano Renée Fleming, doubling as sister Lavinia, and accompanist Helen Yorke. All three were superb.

The script, written by William Luce, author of *The Belle of Amherst*, presented Emily's poetry and life in the context of the twelve months of the year, with the seasonal or particular events of each month as the subjects of the readings and songs. The musical settings were by nine composers, many of whom had written them specifically for Renée Fleming in the 1990s, in some cases for this actual occasion. Those by Scott Wheeler, Ricky Ian Gordon, André Previn, and Michael Tilson Thomas were world premieres or New York or U.S. premieres.

The earliest song on the program was Ernst Bacon's "The Heart Asks Pleasure First," composed in 1931. Bacon's discovery of Dickinson's poetry in the late '20s was a revelation to him, inspiring about thirty settings, followed in later years by almost forty more. As the program notes pointed out, he was the first important composer to have set Dickinson's poems, and the pre-concert lecturer called him the real "pioneer" of Dickinson song-settings.

It was Aaron Copland, however, whose cycle of twelve Dickinson settings, composed in 1944, put this genre on the map. Of these twelve songs, which are so difficult that they are rarely sung as a complete cycle, Fleming sang three.

The program begins with Ricky Ian Gordon's "Letter to the World" (1999), a slow and dignified song with a long, arching melody. Emily then enters, reciting "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" The bleak days of January and February bring memories of Emily's intensely serious father, but wintry preoccupations are brightened with two songs of elated hope. Robert Beaser's "I dwell in Possibility" (1994) conveys the cataclysmic event of enter-

ing Paradise with agitated rhythms, sequences of rising piano figures, and a breathlessly rushing vocal line. In "The Shining Place" by Lee Hoiby (1992), a setting of poem J431, exuberant rhythms, high vocal tessitura, and "shining" major harmonies envision Paradise.

It was in the month of March that Emily's mother died. Her poignant reminiscences—pondering the last night of her mother's life, when she was "so nearly infinite," and remembering how as children they had always run home to their mother—were followed by Bacon's "The Heart Asks Pleasure First." The simplicity of this song, with its rising bass preparing for resignation to death, was deeply moving, and Fleming's intoning of "The privilege to die" left the audience in palpable silence.

April brings news of the death of a townsperson and ends with André Previn's "Good Morning, Midnight" (1999), in which a languorous melody is underpinned by contrastingly dark and bright harmonies, representing night and day. May mornings find Emily in the garden, raptly noting the stirrings of birds and flowers. In Scott Wheeler's "Oriole" (1999), Fleming's voice soared over the fluttering piano figurations. The song ends with the idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder: the song is not "in the Tree" but "in Thee."

The program had many moments of humor as well as profundity. The approaching visit of an aunt in the spring—"the only male relative on the female side"—was one of many of Emily's remarks that brought laughter. A news item about the local preacher gives rise to her disgruntlement with Churchianity and to Michael Tilson Thomas's setting of "Of God we ask one favor" (2000). This song begins with a pleasant hymn tune that becomes gradually distorted with harsh, jarring chords from the word "Prison" to the last lines, which are repeated higher and yet higher—perhaps suggesting the human happiness that "competes" with Heaven.

In June, Emily declares, "I keep the

Sabbath at home," with nature as her church. Ernst Bacon's "It's all I have to bring today" is a song of pure lyricism in which Fleming's voice floated its message of the simple heart that embraces all of nature. Later in the summer, Emily remembers when the family traveled to Northampton to hear Jennie Lind, and Emily defines singing as "the pure art of feeling." Of all the composers on the program, *New York Times* music critic Paul Griffiths felt that "Bacon...came nearest taking her at her word."

The first half of the program concludes with Copland's "Sleep is supposed to be," in which an angular melody begins gently and ends with a series of dramatic crescendos. The second half continues in July with two songs each by Previn and Copland. Previn's joyful "Will there really be a Morning?" paints the mountains with an ascending vocal line. The mellow harmonic warmth of Copland's "Heart, we will forget him" (1949-50) suggests that the man Emily loved would not, indeed, be forgotten.

August brings the end of summer, and the alternating minor and dissonant chords of Previn's "As imperceptibly as Grief" (1999) represent the gradual darkening of the days, ending with a pearly sound as the summer makes "her light escape / Into the Beautiful." Copland's "Nature – the Gentlest Mother is" follows in the Indian Summer days of September. Here piano figurations evoke the sounds of birds and crickets, while both the vocal line and the accompaniment contain examples of word-painting, such as the descending melody when the sun goes down, the prominent major harmony when it is time for Nature to "light" her lamps, and the very quiet, low ending when there is "Silence – everywhere –." Fleming sang this song with the tenderness of a loving mother, and one could feel "infinite Affection" in every nuance of her lovely tone.

With October come memories of grief. Brother Austin had paid \$500 for a substitute to serve for him in the Civil War, and when a dear friend was brought back dead, his sorrow made him ill. Ned Rorem's "Love's stricken 'why'" (1962-63) is a poi-

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PERFORMANCES

MINT THEATER REVIVES GLASPELL'S *ALISON'S HOUSE*

Reviewed by *Jonnie Guerra*

Susan Glaspell's play *Alison's House*, winner of the 1931 Pulitzer prize, has been a focus of my research since 1993, so I was thrilled when, in August 1999, Jonathan Bank, artistic director of the Mint Theater in New York City, contacted me with the announcement that the Glaspell drama would be featured during his theater's upcoming season. The production inaugurated the Mint's eighth season and marked the first New York revival of Glaspell's drama since the play originally opened there on December 1, 1930, shortly before the centennial of Dickinson's birth. Bank invited me to attend the Sunday afternoon opening performance on September 26 and to lead a discussion of "the Dickinson connection" following the play.

The Mint Theater (311 West 43rd Street, New York) has a unique mission: to locate neglected dramatic treasures and to present them for contemporary audiences in the "mint condition" they merit. Certainly the setting of *Alison's House* on the last day of the nineteenth century made last fall an auspicious time to revive the play. Bank and his associates thought the play's turn-of-the-century theme would be provocatively attractive to audiences who were themselves contemplating the approach of Y2K. They were correct.

Although the Dickinson name is never mentioned and the setting of the play is relocated from Amherst, Massachusetts, to Iowa, the character of Alison Stanhope is clearly modeled on Emily Dickinson. Susan Glaspell's interest in Dickinson may have been sparked by her reading of Genevieve Taggard's recently published *Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson*, but Martha Dickinson Bianchi's edition *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson, Withheld from Publication by Her Sister Lavinia* and other current interpretations of the poet's life, such as Josephine Pollitt's *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background of Her Poetry*, probably also were influential.

When the Glaspell play begins, Alison Stanhope already has been dead for eighteen years, and the family home in which she lived and wrote is on the verge of being sold. The publication of Alison's poetry has not only brought her posthumous fame, but also generated insatiable curiosity about her private life. As news of the impending house sale has spread, that speculation has intensified.



Photo by Barry Burns

Sharron Bower and Lee Moore in Susan Glaspell's Alison's House at the Mint Theater.

Central to the drama's unfolding plot is a portfolio of unknown poems that Alison's sister, Agatha, has harbored secretly since Alison's death and that reveal intimate details of Alison's unrequited love relationship with a married man. When a dying Agatha entrusts the manuscripts to their niece, Elsa, the family dilemma is crystallized: Do the poems belong to the family or to the world?

The ensuing feud is gendered and generational: John Stanhope, Alison's brother and the ruling patriarch of the family, opposes Elsa, his "new century" daughter. In the last scene of the play, the struggle between John and Elsa to control Alison's poetic legacy climaxes in the very room in which Alison did her writing. Citing family duty, John insists that the poems be suppressed. Burning them, he argues, will avoid scandal as well as the besmirchment of Alison's "good"

name. Elsa counters that it is time to end Alison's imprisonment by societal convention and to publish her poems as a gift to future generations. As ringing bells announce the new year and the new century, Elsa succeeds in winning her father's approval to publish his sister's poems. John acknowledges that to prevent their publication, as he had many years earlier intervened to end Alison's love affair, would be "too lonely."

Despite Glaspell's unconventional choice to make Alison an off-stage character, *Alison's House* is an old-fashioned play in its structure and dramaturgy. The Mint Theater production, directed by Linda Ames Key, fully mined the richness of Glaspell's script. The play was well cast and the acting uniformly strong and convincing. Although I had read the play numerous times, I found myself wholly engrossed by the suspenseful final scene in which Elsa (Karla Mason) and her father John (Lee Moore) sparred over the destiny of Alison's poetry. Sharron Bower gave a fine performance as John Stanhope's secretary, Ann, and Matt Opatrny was amusing as Alison's nephew, Ted, a Harvard student who angles for gossip about his aunt with which to bribe his English professor into giving him a passing grade.

The set and lighting design by K. Maynard and Mark T. Simpson, respectively, were outstanding. Particularly memorable was the use of shoshi panels in lieu of a curtain and later as the windows in Alison's bedroom. The shadowy image of the silhouetted actors behind the scrim of the panels offered a stunning visual reminder of Alison's and Dickinson's ultimately mysterious lives!

Jonnie Guerra is vice president for Academic Affairs and professor of English at Cabrini College. She has been vice president of EDIS since 1995.

Emily Dickinson Poems. Read by Doris Abramson; piano interludes played by William Jordan. 49:08 mins. Amherst, Mass.: Dickinson Homestead: www.amherst.edu/~edhouse), 1999. CD \$12.00; cassette \$8.00; \$3.00 shipping charge.

Reviewed by Judy Jo Small

This outstanding new recording of forty-two of Emily Dickinson's poems may be hailed with enthusiasm by Dickinsonians far and wide. Intelligent sensitivity has guided the selection and arrangement. The reading pace is just right, neither rushed nor dragged. The pauses between poems are just long enough to allow a reader to absorb the weight of thought and emotion. In addition, the accompanying musical interludes enhance rather than detract from the performance of the poems. It's a fine production, all around. The real triumph of the recording, though, is to be found near the center of the collection, in a magnificent sequence of poems related to death.

Doris Abramson, a professor emeritus of theater at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, reads the poems in a strong, assured voice. Her perfect enunciation conveys the textures of words exceptionally well. Her respect for caesurae is precise. Her delivery is never pretentious or overblown but emphatic, feeling, quietly dramatic.

The Dickinson she gives us is serious, contemplative, rather solemn. Depths of pleasure, sorrow, terror, and wonder glow in her voice. One somewhat misses here the frivolous side of Dickinson, her spirit of play. But Abramson's reading of the great death poems is more than adequate compensation. These—so awful, so honest, so strangely consoling—express the soul of a poet who could declare "I like a look of Agony, / Because I know it's true." Listening, one feels convinced that herein lies Dickinson's bedrock strength.

The musical interludes are performed on a single piano by William Jordan. Jordan is a composer as well as a pianist, and he has previously set a sequence of Dickinson poems for voice and piano. On this recording, care has been taken to ensure that the musical works are ones Dickinson herself played,

knew well, or may have been familiar with. Two Bertini exercises, pretty and a bit quaint, set the initial tone for readings beginning with "This is my letter to the World," "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" and other best-known anthology pieces.

Subsequently, hymn tunes and short works by Schumann and Bach separate groups of poems arranged loosely by subject. The musical interludes contextualize the poetry, provide listeners time to ponder, and subtly guide shifts of mood. The disc closes with a sprightly dance tune, "The Lancer's Quick Step," followed by "It's all I have to bring today" and "A word is dead / When it is said."

The poetic text is drawn from Ralph W. Franklin's edition. No list of poems is provided with the recording, but that is a minor complaint.

Were it not too blatantly to advertise, I'd say this is the recording that from now on I shall choose to give to friends. Proceeds from the sale of the recording benefit the Dickinson Homestead.

Judy Jo Small is professor of English at North Carolina State University and the author of Positive as Sound: Emily Dickinson's Rhymes.

Smit, Leo. 33 Songs on Poems by Emily Dickinson. Rosalind Rees, soprano; Leo Smit, piano. CD, 65 min. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Bridge Records, 1999. Bridge 9080, \$9.99.

Reviewed by Ginger Wyrick

For a musician, perusing bins of recordings is as tantalizing as a child's visit to the candy store. As far as the eye can see, morsels of tempting treats await the tasting. Yet the gift of a recording from a friend is even sweeter than the choosing. By such a gift I have come to meet Leo Smit and discover his settings of Dickinson poems.

In the fall of 1988, Smit set out on an intimate journey to discover Dickinson's poetry. (See the spring 1999 *Bulletin* for a closer look at Smit's discovery of Dickinson.) His natural musical instincts led him to compose *The Ecstatic Pilgrimage*, six song cycles using seventy-eight of her poems. This disc documents three of the cycles: Cycle 1, *Childe Emilie* (1989), fourteen songs about memories and fantasies

of childhood; Cycle 2, *The Celestial Thrush*, twelve songs about music and birds; and Cycle 6, *The White Diadem*, seven songs about poets and poetry. In 1997, a New York studio brought together Smit and Rees to complete this CD.

Smit's compositional approach in these cycles is unique in that he allows the text to precede the music. Speech-like rhythms employ mixed meters, poetic pauses, and text painting to reveal colors, sounds, and images. Melodies imitate the undulation of spoken words as the music unwraps a marriage of poet and composer. This neo-Classical approach to composition reflects Smit's friendship with musical greats Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. Rees's vocal interpretations once again give breath to Dickinson's voice, allowing the poetry to lead the muse.

Thorough liner notes by Smit himself describe each poem and include reference numbers to Thomas Johnson's variorum edition of Dickinson's poems. The exegesis gives tremendous insight into the composer's expedition, his searching of independent texts to create familial arrangements. The title of each song cycle identifies the theme. Smit selected and ordered texts based on their relationship to the motif. The liner notes also include the complete poem texts as well as biographical information on Smit and Rees.

The treasure of this recording lies in its preservation of a presence no longer with us. Leo Smit died in December 1999, having seen the completion of this project (see his obituary, page 21). This CD became the final recording of a long career. A musician can have no finer archival document than a composer performing his own music. Scholars will view this as a reference tool for studying Smit's compositional and performing style. Performers will value hearing an art song repertoire performed under the composer's direction. Dickinson enthusiasts will appreciate the tonal journey of each text.

Ginger Wyrick is on the music faculty at Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina. She is active as a conductor, performer, and author.

For more performance reviews, see page 25.

SIRKKA HEISKANEN-MÄKELÄ THE INVISIBLE WOMAN BEHIND SO MUCH

By Lena M. Koski

Since 1996, Lena M. Koski has held the position of Department Assistant in the Department of English at Åbo Akademi University in Turku, Finland, where she has just earned her Licentiate degree with a dissertation focused on Dickinson and dissent. A contributor to *An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, she shared research findings at the EDIS Innsbruck conference and at the Mid-Atlantic Popular Culture Association 1995 annual meeting, where her paper on "Homoeroticism in Emily Dickinson's Letters and Poems to Susan Gilbert Dickinson" won formal recognition. This profile is based on an interview with Sirkka Heiskanen-Mäkelä, at whose encouragement Koski is working to establish a Dickinson Center at Åbo Akademi University.

Jane Donahue Eberwein, *Series Editor*

"To manage Dickinson at all, the translator must simply learn all *her* tricks with *her* language and then try to apply them to his or her own."

—Sirkka Heiskanen-Mäkelä, 1981

Born on February 13, 1934, in Iisalmi, Finland, Sirkka Heiskanen-Mäkelä took her M.A. at the University of Helsinki in 1957. For a few years she "taught school in a country town to make money," as she says, before she continued her studies, first in Helsinki, then at the University of Jyväskylä, where she became an assistant teacher of comparative literature in 1965. She had married the year before, and in the busy years that followed, she had two children (1965 and 1968), published a good number of articles and reviews, and in 1970 publicly defended her dissertation on Emily Dickinson, the first—and so far the only—on this subject in Finland. The same year she was appointed associate professor of comparative literature at Jyväskylä University, a post she held, with stints of full professorship, until 1991, when she retired.

During her earlier years, Heiskanen-Mäkelä was able to pursue foreign research only in England, but in 1971 she won a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where she settled, together with her small children, for ten months. At that time she was working on a new book about another



author, Isak Dinesen (pseudonym of Karen Blixen), but the stay in Amherst naturally gave her an opportunity to do further research on Dickinson as well. On returning to Finland in 1972, she offered a lengthy article she had written on the latest Dickinson publications in the United States to several literary magazines and papers, but none of them accepted it. As her dissertation (published by Jyväskylä University) did not seem to rouse any interest either, she concluded that there was no market for Dickinson in Finland and turned to other subjects.

These subjects have been numerous and, in most cases, closely connected to Heiskanen-Mäkelä's work as a university teacher. She has written and translated several academic textbooks (on literary

and drama theory, literary history, and children's literature, for example). Besides Karen Blixen, on whose life and works she has written extensively, she has studied another favorite Dane, Hans Christian Andersen. Translating and editing his autobiography (published in 1995) was, as Heiskanen-Mäkelä recalls, "one of the most pleasurable jobs I've ever had," for it meant interpreting an entire historic era for Finnish readers.

Heiskanen-Mäkelä's interest in translation has always been more practical than theoretical, an approach particularly realized in the so-called Translation Seminar Project, whose co-leader she was for all of its active years (1980-90). The chief aim of the project, which involved all the departments of languages and literary studies at the University of Jyväskylä, was to introduce the participants, whether students or practicing translators, to current scholarly views and visions on literary translation. Its two-day summer seminars also presented topics connected with the history of translation in Finland. The problems of interpreting different genres (prose fiction, drama, epic and lyric poetry) in translation were allotted their own sections or workshops.

The project's summer seminar in June 1982 concentrated on the translation of lyric poetry, with Emily Dickinson as one of the two poets whose verse was discussed in plenary meetings and translated in two workshops. One of the latter was led by Heiskanen-Mäkelä, another by Kaarina Halonen, who, together with the late Helvi Juvonen (a renowned modernist poet), was then recognized as one of the very first eminent interpreters of Dickinson's verse in Finnish. As usual, a report on the proceedings of the seminar was published (including a paper by David Porter, who visited Jyväskylä University later in the year).

Soon another publication was in the making, a small volume titled *Valitse Sielu Seuransa* ("The soul selects her

own Society”), which was published the following year (1983) and consisted of forty-six Dickinson poems with Finnish translations, prefaced by an essay on the poet by Juvonen (first published in 1958). Eleven of the translations were by Juvonen, eighteen by Halonen, and the rest by Heiskanen-Mäkelä, who—as she says with a smile—“had never tried my hand at translating Dickinson before that.” The modest collection proved so successful that it was soon sold out, but it took ten more years before an enlarged edition, under the same title, appeared in 1992. This edition contained sixty-one poems by the same translators, with Heiskanen-Mäkelä’s contributions numbering twenty-four.

“Over the years,” she counts now, “I have translated more than a hundred Dickinson poems and also reflected, in various talks and papers, on the possibility and conditions of translating them at all into such a difficult language as Finnish.” Back in 1981, for instance, in a paper originally presented at the Nordic Association for American Studies seminar in Helsinki, she wrote: “In all respects, the Finnish language is so different from English. The most common rhythm in native Finnish poetry is the four-beat trochaic line. This falling rhythm is quite unlike that in Dickinson’s poems. An additional problem is the fact that many Finnish words are extremely long, which makes it very difficult to re-create the quick and often breathless beat of Dickinson’s poetry in the Finnish translation. Furthermore, while many of Dickinson’s poems are elliptic, the Finnish language requires a large number of words to describe the same thing. Hence, the translator is forced to leave out some of the content of the poem in order to maintain the meter.”

Despite these difficulties, Heiskanen-Mäkelä’s own approach is to follow Dickinson’s rhythm and meter as far as possible without distorting either the natural phrasing of Finnish or the general intent of the original poem. In this dual task she has succeeded astonishingly well. A good example is her hitherto unpublished Finnish version of poem J1741, with measures and rhymes as shown at right. Even though it has been impossible to create exactly the same rhythmic effect

That it will never come again
Is what makes life so sweet.
Believing what we don’t believe
Does not exhilarate.

That if it be, it be at best
An ablative estate -
This instigates an appetite
Precisely opposite.

Se et/tei pa/laa kos/kaan
e/lä/män su/los/taa -
us/ko/maan us/ko/mat/to/maan
ei in/noin ke/tään saa.

Jos si/tä vie/lä on se lie
ti/la ab/la/tii/vi/nen -
ja e/lä/vis/sä he/rät/tää
ha/lun täy/sin vas/tai/sen.

in Finnish, the meter and the beat are the same as in the original. So is the development of the idea, although Heiskanen-Mäkelä has naturally been forced to rephrase a few lines in both stanzas. (Cf. lines 3-4 and 7-8: “to believe what is unbelievable/no one can be inspired”; “and in the living instigates/a precisely opposite appetite”). These interpretations, however, arise not so much from the demands of the meter and rhyme of the original as from the natural phrasings in Finnish. As Heiskanen-Mäkelä herself has observed: “Success in translating Dickinson’s work lies not in merely interpreting her ‘Meanings’ but in interpreting—or rather recreating in the target language—also the means by which Dickinson fixed on paper the ‘truths’ she divined.”

When asked whether she intends to offer her new (more than eighty) translations of Dickinson’s verse for publishing, Heiskanen-Mäkelä reports ruefully that she has already done so and been disappointed. Half a dozen of them have been accepted by literary magazines, but the publishers to whom she has offered them as a collection have shown no interest. “That may simply be due to my insistence on metric translation instead of free verse,” she speculates. “As neither translators nor readers nowadays master or recognize the principles of metric verse, my translations probably sound old-fashioned to them. But I can’t give up my own views of Dickinson’s poetic techniques, which I have studied and explicated for thirty-five years by now.”

A few years ago, Heiskanen-Mäkelä also selected and edited a collection of Dickinson’s so-called “nature poems” (translated by Juvonen, Halonen, and herself) for the Finnish Institute for Children’s

Literature. The institute was interested in publishing the illustrated collection, with school children as the intended audience. Unfortunately, the institute could not raise the funding, so this Dickinsonian enterprise failed as well.

As to the public recognition of her academic or translator’s work in Finland, Heiskanen-Mäkelä considers it non-existent, yet she refuses to complain. “I actually feel lucky to be a ‘Nobody’ here—or anywhere,” she explains. “I may have felt a bit bitter earlier, having been for years just the typically invisible woman at the department, too, laboring endlessly for every need there but neglecting my own research, never getting any positive feedback on my efforts. So when I was conferred an early retirement after various ailments and mishaps, I felt relieved. My invisibility as an academic teacher and scholar was an asset now, I told myself; I was free to do whatever I chose to—paint; translate Dickinson; write, at my own pace and without any academic jargon, on any subject in the universe. I could even redecorate a house.”

Redecoration, though on an unusually vast scale, is actually what Heiskanen-Mäkelä has been doing in recent years. After settling back in Iisalmi, the town in northeastern Finland where she was born and later went to school, she purchased the old village school of Valkeinen, some ten miles north. This was the school in which her mother taught local children to read and write for forty-one years. Since the early 1990s, Heiskanen-Mäkelä has devoted herself to restoring the historic building (erected in 1898, extended in 1908), which was facing total decay. Today the building houses an antiquary and an exhibition gallery, both specializing in village

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JUDITH FARR'S DICKINSONIAN LANDSCAPES OF DESIRE

By Eleanor Heginbotham

Since the early 1980s, when I was teaching in Washington, D.C., I have counted Judith Farr as an inspiring friend and mentor. I have especially admired her versatility as a writer and so take special pleasure in presenting her life as a poet in this issue. This summer Judith will be a featured speaker at the Society's annual meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Jonnie Guerra, *Series Editor*

Judith Farr is known to most *Bulletin* readers as the author of *The Passion of Emily Dickinson* (1992), a work that critic Paul Delany calls "one of the most intelligent and authoritative guides" to Dickinson, and of the novel *I Never Came to You in White* (1996), which was a runner-up for the PEN-Hemingway and *Los Angeles Times* book awards. In the novel's afterword (225), Farr tells readers that "genius requires freedom to explore its own vision, and...such 'freedom' is really an inspired perception of form." It takes a poet with an artist's eye to write a line like that, and Farr is such a poet. One could say of Farr, as she said of Dickinson in *Passion* (58), that her "mission [is] the artist's...her errand [is] that 'of the eye / Out upon the Bay,' the 'Ether sea' (1622) of light" that is the natural world and its forms. Reading her novel and scholarly work, including her book on Elinor Wylie, is preparation for reading Farr's poetry, with its images of color, its rich language that creates music and movement, and its focus on form.

In the scant spaces between teaching duties (first at Vassar and then at Georgetown, where she became the first female full professor of English in the university's 200-year history), Farr published the books on Dickinson and Wylie, edited two books of critical essays, and wrote not only short stories and articles on literature and art history but also more than seventy poems. She has read her poems in Washington's National Gallery of Art, on WNBC-TV, and on Grace Cavalieri's radio program, "The Poet

and the Poem," and has published them in literary journals. I am pleased to give you an advance look into Farr's first collection of poetry, *Landscapes of Desire*, which will appear next year.



Photo by Kathryn Aiken Photography

Judith Farr actually began her career as a poet. She traces her love of poetry to her mother, who presented her with an early edition of Dickinson's poems and took her to the grave in Amherst. As Farr tells it now, she became intrigued by words because of Dickinson: "When I was about ten, my mother read aloud 'I'll tell you how the Sun rose.' I remember thinking that the poem was not about sunrise but about miracles and that steeples swimming in amethyst was both the strangest and loveliest idea I had ever heard expressed." Later, says Farr, "I approached [Dickinson's] poems...and experienced my first great rapture with language. Phrases like 'an Altitude of Death' seemed dazzling, cryptic, and ultimate while the Dickinson 'landscape,' with its pine-seas and bee courtiers, vast eclipses, dreadful storms of the heart and capital letters, appeared more fascinating and *fresh* even than Shakespeare's. 'Speaking' the poems was a mysteriously persuasive voice—that

once belonged not to a man but to a girl like me!"

At sixteen, Farr wrote a sonnet that won a poetry prize sponsored by *Seventeen* magazine. Then she turned to drama for a time and "learned how to auction the whole self in auditions, not the mere mind." During her stint at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, another of her poems earned first prize in a New York City competition sponsored by Grove Press. Marianne Moore was one of the judges and took an interest in the younger poet. At the time, Farr admits, she was so under the thrall of Dickinson that her poems were sometimes "slavish imitations." Moore advised Farr to "turn from that giantess and try to find your own voice" and even suggested, "Why not pattern yourself on me? I, after all, am *alive*." Another of Farr's mentors was Leonie Adams, who eventually made Judith her literary executrix. Nevertheless, anyone who reads Farr's luminous, imagistic, and narrative poems will attest to this: deep as are the influences of Dickinson, Wylie, Moore, Adams, and others, it is the uniqueness of Farr's own voice that moves the reader—often to tears.

Once Farr's book is published, Dickinson lovers will be able to sample the full range and variety of her poems. They are often, but not always, narratives inspired by visual art. Farr recalls that "for many years it was hard for me to write clear of [Dickinson] and the tetrameter 'box.'" As her poem "Of Berthe Morisot's 'In the Dining Room'" (reprinted opposite) attests, Farr has indeed liberated herself from the box. In *Landscapes*, she includes a section titled "In the Gallery" that contains forms ranging from haiku to the villanelle, each suited to the time and content of the painting to which it responds. Farr may have escaped that tetrameter "box," but the Dickinson passion and traces of the Dickinson voice frequently merge with Farr's own distinctive voice.

The Morisot poem is among those in

which Farr explicitly alludes to Dickinson. The poem calls to the reader synaesthetically, sounds evoking colors and the swish of curtains and flowers moving in the breeze, conveying scents and temperatures. Sibilant sounds (e.g., line 3) and images of light suggest the feel of the spring afternoon that seems to occur close to the day of Dickinson's death. Simultaneously we are in the dining rooms of Amherst and Europe as Farr's "perception of form" links her freeze frame of "this [Morisot] girl who takes our gaze, untroubled...so mute, so sweetly welcoming" with Dickinson, who also "lived for art, and arts of love, foods / excessive on some palates so that a heart / might break." The poem acknowledges differences between the European Morisot and the Yankee from Amherst, but also merges them in a palimpsest manner. "Morisot" is written with a fluidity that almost defies prosodic descriptions. The poem's organic, aqueous form affects the reader deeply.

An earlier Farr tribute to Dickinson, "Remembering 28th August 1971 (when the U.S. Post Office issued a stamp / honoring Emily Dickinson)," creates a very different reader response. Published in 1982 in *Manhattan Poetry Review*, "Remembering" begins with a proper declarative sentence: "She was the 'Queen recluse.'" It moves from direct biographical images of Dickinson in clear, unambiguous (though heavily freighted) words to a brief meditation on the strangeness of the face on a tiny stamp of one who "distrusted photographs" and even more distrusted "fame." This poem has a bitter-sweet ending:

The day is further from summer than
the birds,
Autumnal, elegiac. I pay, and go.
Oh Emily, evanescent, light-spun,
stern,
How you would (or would you?)
stare
To see yourself "a Plated Person"
In my hand. You who relished
ironies,
Opposites: The mail "from Tunis" or
downstairs,
Miss Dickinson of Amherst and of
air.

Both Dickinson tributes articulate a moment of recognition for the speaker of the

Of Berthe Morisot's "In the Dining Room"

bright talk like jays or peonies riffing in the wind and rustling, clustering, could be uttered in a light altogether suave, sinuous, and without fault (like a solemn girl, sewing her own bridal gown). And yet this girl who takes our gaze, untroubled, is so mute, so sweetly welcoming, the open cabinet and clear carafe, red studio beyond, so cordial to a dream of ease that clever talk is emptied of smart meanings and the plays of light, effulgent as a painter's whim or mother's joy shine, quiet.

"The supper of the heart is when the guest has gone," said Emily Dickinson, who died as Morisot put varnish on this dream of absent love, catching up her brushes, like Emily's slips of paper, when a guest came in the room; hiding, like Emily's life, her paintings behind screens when love was needed. "She rose to [their] requirement": "I am a wife and mother too." Smilingly, handsomely, she lived in serious music with her family's hopes, taking "something from their passing moments": Julie's hair, lilting cornsilk in the morning wind; Eugène reading; her niece and sister, pensive on a balcony; the cook's four oranges, lit by suns within. She lived for art, and arts of love, foods excessive on some palates so that a heart might break, serving up the feast in dining room or studio: "My little Julie, I love you on my deathbed. I shall love you after death." "Called back," like Emily, before the images, sweet brides in bright array, vulnerable, wondered at – had each one sheltered in perspective, she left enough to feed the eye, (that "Subtle Glutton who feeds upon the Fair –"): the eye who was her guest, her lover, as in her studio, or dining room.

Berthe Morisot, "In the Dining Room," 1886

Quotations: Emily Dickinson, poems and letters, lines 11, 17, 29, 33.
Berthe Morisot by Jean Dominique Rey (New York, 1982), lines 18, 20, 27-28.

From *Landscapes of Desire*. Reprinted by permission of the poet.

dense complexities of human life, particularly life drenched in art.

The landscapes of *Landscapes of Desire* owe as much to the painters Farr knows intimately as to the poets who inspire her. Painters, writers, and family members merge in poems such as "Corot's

'Rocks in the Forest of Fontainebleau'" and "On Agnolo Bronzino's 'Young Lady with a Small Boy.'" In the first, Corot's shapes and colors evoke the speaker's childhood memories of her grandmother's French voice reading to her. In the second, the lady and her gazing son

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THE NEW WHITE DRESS

By Cindy Dickinson

"I've finished threading - too -"

Last December, a special garment arrived at the Dickinson Homestead just in time for Emily Dickinson's birthday celebration. The replica of the white dress thought to have belonged to the poet was finally completed and ready for public display. More than three hundred people visited the Homestead on December 11 to help welcome the new addition.

As Emily Dickinson's writings have grown in popularity since her death in 1886, certain objects associated with the poet have become icons in their own right. Chief among them is the white dress thought to have been Dickinson's, a dress owned by the Amherst Historical Society. Made of widely available fabric and decorative trims, sporting a fashionable—and practical—pocket, and sewn on a machine, the dress is a typical house garment of the late 1870s and early 1880s. But the posthumous fame of the dress's owner and her writings has given the garment an extraordinary life of its own. For many of Emily Dickinson's fans, the white dress embodies the essence of their beloved writer.

The original white dress, ca. 1878-1882, made of a cotton fabric with mother-of-pearl buttons, is a garment known as a wrapper or house dress, worn by women as everyday clothing for doing chores and other activities inside the house. It was not a particularly unusual or expensive dress for its time. It is primarily machine stitched, with supplemental hand-stitching. The maker of the dress is unknown.

After Dickinson's death, her sister, Lavinia, gave this dress to a cousin, Eugenia Hall. Little is known about how or why the dress was given to Mrs. Hall, or about what happened to it while it was in her possession. In 1946 Mrs. Hall's sister, Margaret Bradlee, gave the dress to the Amherst Historical Society.

In 1976 the Dickinson Homestead and the Historical Society made a special arrangement to display the white dress at

the Homestead. For many years the dress was exhibited in the closet of the poet's bedroom. In 1986, in preparation for a Dickinson exhibition at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., a special mannequin and a display case

task. No printed pattern for the dress existed, nor did comparable fabrics or trims. All information for the new dress had to come from the original garment itself. The expertise of many people was required to give this special garment life.



For the Homestead's annual Dickinson Birthday Open House on December 11, 1999, the new dress replica (at left) and the original dress (at right) were displayed together. This intriguing photograph was taken by Amherst College photographer Frank Ward.

were made. Thereafter the dress was shown in the case in Dickinson's bedroom.

In recent years the Homestead and the Historical Society agreed that the original dress needed to be removed from permanent display to preserve it for future generations. Historic costumes are particularly sensitive to light damage and to stress from hanging on mannequins. The Dickinson dress was long overdue for an extended rest period to protect it from further damage. But because the dress had been such a popular object on Homestead tours, the Historical Society and the Homestead decided that a reproduction might best accomplish the goals of preserving the original dress and sharing the costume with the public.

Creating a replica of such an ordinary yet extraordinary dress was not a simple

Adrienne Saint-Pierre, a costume maker and preservationist from Redding, Connecticut, was hired to construct the replica. To do so, Saint-Pierre first had to create a pattern from the original dress. She carefully examined and measured the nineteenth-century garment and used photographs and drawings to record details about the dress's style and construction.

To make the pattern, she worked first on the front, side, and back sections. The sleeves were the most difficult to render into a pattern because they are made in two pieces and are cut in a curve to fit the arm. Once finished, the dress pattern, which was made in muslin, was checked for accuracy against the original and was then used as the prototype for the replica.

No suitable fabric or embroidery for the

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A PILGRIMAGE OF POETRY: DICKINSON ON THE RADIO

By Gregory Farmer

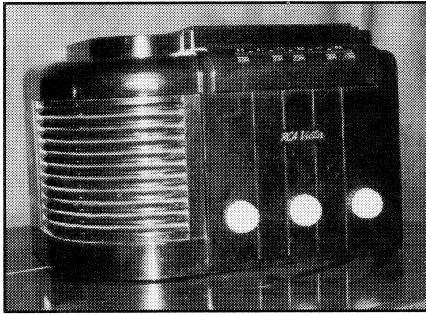
Emily Dickinson on the airwaves? Well, not exactly—but close. Through the kindness of a friend of Mary Landis Hampson, the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust recently received the script of a radio broadcast on Dickinson made from the Evergreens on May 19, 1940. This pioneer broadcast capped the growing wave of appreciation for Dickinson's poetry in the first half of the twentieth century and marked the first use of a broadcast medium to provide details of her life and art. By reaching out to new audiences, the radio broadcast from the Evergreens helped shape the public image of Emily Dickinson.

In the years following World War I, Martha Dickinson Bianchi made good use of the standard print media to spread the fame and appreciation of her Aunt Emily. In addition to editing her aunt's letters and poetry, Martha lectured widely and corresponded regularly with scholars, students, and poetry lovers.

Encouraged by the success of the publications and the growing interest in Dickinson, Martha decided to open the Evergreens to Dickinson "pilgrims." From 1926 to her death in 1943, she opened the house each summer and shared her memories and insight with a wide range of visitors. The hand-made guestbook for the Evergreens preserves the record of those summer visits and demonstrates the appeal of Dickinson to pilgrims of every age and station.

The Federal Writers' Project, which produced *Massachusetts: A Guide to Its People and Places* in 1937, directed visitors to Amherst to the Dickinson Homestead and the Evergreens: "Nothing relating to the Dickinsons now remains in the old family mansion, but the Emily Dickinson memorabilia are preserved at 'The Evergreens,' the home of the poet's only brother, the late William Austin Dickinson, just across the lawn, which is now the home of her niece and biographer, where during the summer months they may be seen by those especially interested in Emily Dickinson's work."

Regular radio programming for the general listener was a phenomenon of the 1920s. The dramatic increase in radio stations and air time created a burgeoning demand for new content and programming. By the 1930s, the format for daily



Radio (ca. 1940) at the Evergreens. Courtesy of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust

radio programming was well established and consisted of news broadcasts, interviews, coverage of political speeches and events, classical music, popular dance music and songs, and a seemingly endless number of comedies, dramas, mysteries, and serials for adults and children. Some, such as *Amos and Andy*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Little Orphan Annie*, and *The Shadow* have become classics. Others, such as *Just Plain Bill*, *Five-Star Jones*, and *The Romance of Helen Trent* have faded from memory.

The idea of a radio broadcast dealing with Emily Dickinson was suggested to Martha Dickinson Bianchi by Ted Malone (1908-1989), a radio personality with WJZ, the NBC Blue Network affiliate in New York City. Malone (whose real name was F.A. Russell) was planning a series of broadcasts called *Pilgrimage of Poetry* to run every Sunday from October 15, 1939, to May 26, 1940. His broadcast from the Evergreens, arranged with the cooperation of Martha Dickinson Bianchi, aired on May 19, 1940, just a few days after the anniversary of Emily Dickinson's death.

The typescript of the program provides a revealing insight into the shaping of Dickinson's image in the public eye. Malone's narrative, mixed with sound effects and poetry readings, created a radio drama

around the life of the poet. The fifteen-minute program began with an evocative image of Amherst:

"Hello there....Last night as I watched a lamp burning in the window of a handsome old brick mansion here in Amherst, Massachusetts...I saw the mad May moon climb a starlit sky above the Pelham Hills and for a minute I caught myself waiting to hear the wild ringing of village church bells....It was another May evening almost a hundred years ago. A tall solemn man stood in the doorway of that same mansion and suddenly, moved by the beauty of the golden sky, surprised himself and astonished the townspeople of Amherst by rushing to the bell tower and summoning them to see the northern lights."

Malone went on to present "the most interesting story in American Poetry, that of Emily Dickinson." "I am speaking to you today from the Evergreens, a golden buff old world villa behind the high hemlock hedge on Main Street in Amherst....You may be curious to know why we've made our Pilgrimage to the Evergreens instead of the mansion across the lawn, but as I tell you the story of Emily I am sure you will understand....For there in the room where the lamp burned each night a girl entirely unknown beyond her few friends was writing poetry so modern today, so utterly contrary to all other poetry being written during her time, it baffles all the critics.

"This girl unknown...unpublished...living within herself is today recognized as one of the finest women poets in the English language....Today we have come to the Evergreens instead of the Mansion in order to dramatize its enchantment....

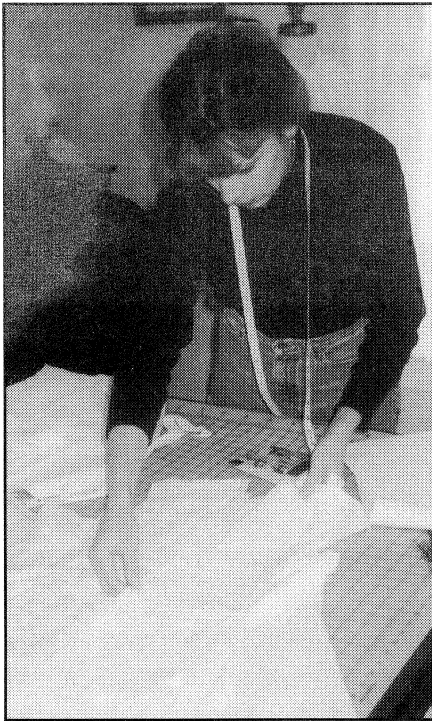
"Almost a hundred years ago she withdrew within its walls, nimbly eluding all that might have followed, for even her mind was never open to invasion, nor did the door to her feelings stand ajar....The curling fingers of curiosity caught at her snowy skirts but always slipped away."

The highlight of the broadcast was the inclusion of several of Dickinson's most

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dress replica was available commercially. Context Weavers, an English firm that specializes in historic textile reproduction, agreed to reproduce the fabric of the original white dress. Neil Warburton and Anna Benson of Context Weavers worked out the pattern of the fabric from photographs and measurements of the original material. The pattern was then punched onto special cards to be used on their Jacquard loom.

Micro Embroidery Punch Systems of West New York, New Jersey, agreed to reproduce both the embroidered insertion (used between the main body of the dress and the pleats) and the embroidered edging (used to decorate the front of the dress). The dress has more than fourteen yards of embroidery!



Adrienne Saint-Pierre works on the dress replica. Photo by Barry Rosenberg.

The search for adequate funding for the replica was as challenging as finding the right craftspeople to accomplish the various components of the project. The cost for the entire project, which included construction of two replicas (the dresses will be rotated to prevent deterioration), was approximately \$10,000. Financial support came from many sources. To demonstrate institutional support for this endeavor,

Dickinson on Dress

Although little evidence survives about Emily Dickinson's preference for and procurement of clothing and textiles, the references she does make to clothing—particularly during her twenties and thirties—provide a glimpse into Dickinson's world of fashion.

[H]ave you plenty of time before you come home, to try and match this bit of calico, and get me 10. yards of it? It is but a 12½ c[en]t. calico, but very pretty indeed, and as Vinnie has one, I think I would like to have one. [To Austin Dickinson, March 30, 1852, L83]

I should have written you sooner, but we have had Miss Bangs cutting dresses for us this week, and have been very busy. [To Austin Dickinson, June 20, 1852, L95]

While the minister this morning was giving an account of the Roman Catholic system...., I was trying to make up my mind wh' of the two was prettiest to go and welcome you in, my fawn colored dress, or my blue dress. Just as I had decided by all means to wear the blue, down came the minister's fist with a terrible rap on the counter, and Susie, it scared me so, I hav'nt got over it yet, but I'm glad I reached a conclusion! [To Susan Gilbert, June 27, 1852, L96]

I have some new clothes, Susie — presume I shall appear like an embarrassed Peacock, quite unused to its

plumes. [To Susan Gilbert, January 1855, L177]

I am sewing for Vinnie, and Vinnie is flying through the flakes to buy herself a little hood. It's quite a fairy morning, and I often lay down my needle, and 'build a castle in the air,' which seriously impedes the sewing project. [To Louise Norcross, about 4 January 1859, L199]

You seem to take a smiling view of my finery. If you knew how solemn it was to me, you might be induced to curtail your jests. My sphere is doubtless calicoes, nevertheless I thought it meet to sport a little wool. The mirth it has occasioned will deter me from further exhibitions! Won't you tell 'the public' that at present I wear a brown dress with a cape if possible browner, and carry a parasol of the same! [To Louise Norcross, December 1860(?), L 228]

I took the little Sac to wear in walking, under Cloak, to keep away more cold. [To Lavinia Dickinson (written from Cambridge), November 13, 1864, L297]

All quotations from Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*.

Amherst College provided money to initiate the project. In response to an appeal in the Dickinson Homestead newsletter, many individuals sent generous donations. The Emily Dickinson International Society also fostered the project with several significant gifts. Additional expenses will be offset by the sale of special souvenirs created from leftover embroideries; these will be made by volunteers and will be sold at the Homestead gift shop. Many volunteer hours were logged during the course of this project. Homestead guides, Advisory Committee members, textile experts, and museum professionals provided expertise and encouragement along the way.

Despite popular conceptions of Dickinson clad in her white dress, the poet herself never mentioned wearing white, nor does she wear white in the few existing images of herself. Her inclination for wearing white seems to have begun sometime in the 1860s, although no one has been able to pinpoint an exact date or reason.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson provides one of the few contemporary descriptions of Dickinson's wearing white. In a letter to his wife after his visit to the Homestead, he recalled that the poet was dressed in "a very plain & exquisitely clean white pique & a blue net worsted shawl" (August 16, 1870, L342a). Local townspeople promoted the image of

Dickinson in white. Shortly after moving to Amherst, Mabel Loomis Todd wrote to her parents of the town's "Myth": "She dresses wholly in white, & her mind is said to be perfectly wonderful" (November 6, 1881).

Did wearing the color white have symbolic meaning for Dickinson? Biographers and friends of the poet alike have debated this question. Whatever the reason for her color choice, Dickinson did go to her grave robed in white and was buried in a white casket. Since her death, the white dress has become a symbol for Dickinson. Stage directions for William Luce's one-woman play *The Belle of Amherst* (1976) call for the actress portraying Dickinson to be "dressed in a simple full-length white dress with an apron over it." "White Poem Dress" (1993), a freestanding painted metal and plaster sculpture by Lesley Dill, integrates the persona of Dickinson as the white-clad recluse with Dickinson the poet.

The new dress replica is now on display at the Dickinson Homestead as part of the museum's regular tour. The original dress is housed off-site in a secure, climate-controlled storage area.

This project was made possible by a special arrangement with the Amherst History Museum at the Strong House. The Homestead extends thanks to the museum, its staff and trustees, and to everyone who contributed time, money,

and expertise to the project's success. The Homestead is especially grateful to the ongoing interest and support of the Emily Dickinson International Society. Members are encouraged to come visit soon.

Pilgrimage of Poetry, continued from page 11

popular poems: "I took one Draught of life," "I'm Nobody! Who are you?," "The pedigree of Honey," "To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee," "I know some lonely Houses off the Road," "Although I put away his life," "Of Course - I prayed," "The Bustle in a House," "The Soul selects her own Society," and "This is my letter to the World."

This oral presentation of Dickinson's poetry to a mass audience was unprecedented. Although no audio recording of the radio broadcast has turned up yet, the script prepared by Ted Malone testifies to his poetic sensibility. Malone confessed at the conclusion of the broadcast, "I have been trying to ring the bells of Amherst for Emily, and even if I have failed to show you her humor or whimsy...or courage...or beauty...I still shall keep ringing the bell and pointing...and hoping..."

To complement the broadcasts, Malone prepared *A Poetry Lover's Map of America* and a listener's guide, the *Album of Poetic Shrines. The Pilgrim-*

age of Poetry series was sufficiently popular that Malone went on to host and produce others, most notably *American Pilgrimage*, which ran from October 13, 1940, to May 11, 1941, and was subsequently expanded and published in book form in 1942. He also produced a series of broadcast poetry readings called *Selections from between the Bookends* (published in 1946) and *Yankee Doodles*, a book of American verse.

The radio broadcast of May 19, 1940, marked the first exploration of a new electronic medium as a way of promoting interest in Dickinson's legacy. As such, it was a milestone akin to the television broadcast of William Luce's *Belle of Amherst* in the 1970s and the establishment of the Dickinson Electronic Archives on the internet in the 1990s.

Continuing in that tradition, the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust is pleased to announce that the Evergreens will again be open to visitors from April through October. Preview tours of the restoration in progress are offered on a regular basis each month, but reservations are required. For details, please refer to the Dickinson Homestead website: www.amherst.edu/~edhouse.

Cindy Dickinson is Director of the Emily Dickinson Homestead. Gregory Farmer is Project Manager for the Evergreens.

"My Business Is to Love": The Music, continued from page 4

gnant cry, repeated in a later version with even more anguished harmonies.

On a November day, Lavinia asks Emily to listen to an insipid poem from the local paper, which provokes Michael Tilson Thomas's "Fame [is a fickle food]" (1999). This was the most unusual setting of the afternoon, a jazzy bass with a syncopated, angular melody creating a flavor of irony.

In December, Emily begins to think of her own mortality and tells Lavinia her simple, nature-centered wishes, speaking also of "the tender carpenter." Lavinia, of course, doesn't want to think about losing Emily, and when Emily repeats that the business of the birds is to sing, while her business is to love, Lavinia sings "You cannot put a Fire out -" (1999) by Ricky Ian Gordon. The accompaniment imitates a flickering flame with a repeated, agitated

rhythm, while the voice is the flame that doesn't die.

Finally comes the conclusion: Jake Heggie's setting of "I shall not live in vain" (1995), which opens with a simple vocal line, almost like a popular song, and becomes more dissonant beginning with the word "Pain." As Fleming sang this deeply affecting song, Emily rested her head on her sister's shoulder.

The performers received a standing ovation and offered an encore in which the accompaniment of Bacon's "It's all I have to bring" was combined with Julie Harris's final homage to Nature, and Fleming sang a different, more contemplative setting of "Will there really be a morning," this one by Ricky Ian Gordon (1999). Author William Luce, director Charles Nelson Reilly, and the compos-

ers who were present then joined the performers in final bows.

Surely Emily Dickinson would be pleased and proud to have had such messengers as Julie Harris, Renée Fleming, and Helen Yorke to bring her message to the world, and warmly gratified that so many composers have discovered the worth of her poetry and been inspired to make musical settings of it. The program was repeated in London on March 1, with Fleming and Yorke joining actress Claire Bloom. It would be wonderful if this touching, humorous, and profound production could be presented on TV for a wider audience.

Ellen Bacon is the widow of composer Ernst Bacon. She teaches piano at her home in Syracuse, New York.

WHY DO CHILDREN LIKE EMILY DICKINSON?

By Connie Ann Kirk

As part of National Poetry Month each April, I visit a local school library and introduce children to Emily Dickinson. For starters, I speak about her as a favorite author and book friend of mine and usually read to them Carol Greene's biography and Michael Bedard's picture book *Emily*, illustrated by Barbara Cooney. On another visit I bring more poems—riddle poems that the children like to guess at and poems about things they know—birds and flowers and the sea. We look at how small the poems are, how they fit in your pocket, how some are even shaped like a pocket or a small writing table, or a piece of paper.

Each April I'm surprised anew. Just as surely as the spring arrives after each of our long Northeastern winters, these children embrace Emily Dickinson like no adult I've ever seen. I've often wondered what it is about the woman and the poems that makes her so accessible, so natural a poet for children to like, especially when my college students and other adults I know often have a much more difficult time following her life and her work.

One answer must be that children recognize instantly that Dickinson shares their zeal for subverting adult conventions. As Alison Lurie writes in *Don't Tell the Grown-ups: Why Kids Love the Books They Do*, children respond to writing that undercuts pretense, that questions authority and long-held beliefs in the adult world. Children understand that this is what is at work in poems such as "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church" and "Could I but ride indefinite."

In addition to seeing it in the poems, children enjoy this aspect of Dickinson's biography as well. After all, here was a woman who stayed in her room doing what she pleased for as long as she wanted, a woman who remained unmarried and who liked children but did not have to raise them. She refused to go to church, never got a job, and lived right next door to her best friend all her life, passing secret notes and gifts back and forth across the lawn! Greene's biography stresses Dickinson's independence, and when I read

the variations of the line "Emily had to be Emily" to children, their eyes light up not only in recognition and admiration, but in collusion.

Another reason children enjoy Dickinson must surely be that the world of her poetry is also their world. She might properly be called the "backyard poet." Her sphere did not run far from home and her images are the knee-high elements of the garden—bees and flowers—and the flat-on-your-back-gazing mysteries of the sky—stars and sunsets and storms—all beheld as through the fresh eyes of a child.

For as complex a poet as she is, Dickinson's work is comprised of predominantly simple words, with proportionately fewer allusions than many other poets also appreciated by adults. Like children who are still new at language and its uses, Dickinson relishes the mystery, beauty, and possibility embedded in everyday language about everyday things. In addition, as Charlotte Downey has said, many of the poems, such as "The Spider holds a Silver Ball," have a nursery rhyme cadence that is familiar and appealing to a child's ear. My own poet's ear tunes to the assonance of so many short *i*'s (as miniatures of the grownup *I*) in many of the words that surround her life and fill up her poems—words like "little," "robin," "children," "hidden," "gingerbread." The three short *i*'s in her name alone seem to make even it a friendly sound to children.

Children know when an adult they meet likes kids, and I think there is an inherent connection between Dickinson and children that makes them feel that she understands them and has not forgotten the joys and frustrations of youth. Many of the speakers in her poems are child personae, and the personification of images like the wind and butterflies is reminiscent of a playful child's imagination. Barbara Mossberg goes so far as to call the poet a "career child." From her letters we hear that Dickinson disliked leaving childhood and wished that she and her brother, Austin, "were *always* children" (L115). She advised twelve-year-old MacGregor Jenkins, "Please never

grow up...you are perfect now" (L717).

In both Martha Dickinson Bianchi's and MacGregor Jenkins's memoirs of knowing her as children, they recount their times alone with her as the most valued. Whether she was babysitting her niece while her brother and sister-in-law went to church, or lowering gingerbread from her bedroom window, or helping them take cookies from maid Maggie Maher's kitchen, or showing a young boy a moth in her conservatory, Dickinson seems to have enjoyed the company of both child relatives and friends.

In his well known account of his first meeting with her, Thomas Wentworth Higginson uses "child" or "childlike" in describing her three times in a single paragraph. Many critics bristle at this long-standing description of Dickinson, viewing it as condescending toward a brilliant woman of the nineteenth century who made unconventional choices. But, as Lurie notes, to be childlike, to remember and see the world as a child sees it, is a valued gift for an artist. Whether it seems appropriate to describe her as childlike or not, Dickinson herself says she "dwells in Possibility," and we have to admit that that is where every child dwells as well.

It is one of the privileges of working with children to cut through the distance of time and space and bring an author and a young reader together for the first time and watch what happens. Last year when I made my visit to the school library, I got to introduce a second grader named Ashley to "my Emily." Ashley had hazel eyes and thick hair and new front teeth that were coming in a bit crooked. Each week she checked out all the books she could find about Emily. The last time I saw Ashley she brought in two new books with her from home. One was a youth edition of the poems illustrated by Thomas Allen and using the Hampson-edited texts; the other was Elizabeth Spire's *Mouse of Amherst*. I had heard of Spire's book but had not yet seen it. As any good book friend would, Ashley let me borrow it overnight.

When I asked her where she got the

books, she explained that she had been talking to her aunt on the phone about how much she loved Emily, and this aunt, who lived far away, bought the books on the Internet and had them sent directly to her. Something in this description reminded me of Emily herself as an aunt; I could easily picture her recognizing an important moment like this for her niece and seizing it right then and there. I told Ashley this and we agreed that it was her good fortune to have an aunt like hers.

Reading through her book of poems with her, I asked Ashley just why she liked Emily Dickinson so much. Ashley answered with conviction, "I like how she did what she wanted, and I like the way she writes." Sure as the spring, I told her, that's why I like her, too.

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Connie Ann Kirk is a writer and poet who is editing a new children's anthology of Dickinson's poems and letters.

Heiskanen-Mäkelä, continued from page 7

school tradition and local handicrafts and open to the public during the summer months. One of the former classrooms—that of Heiskanen-Mäkelä's mother, of course—has now been restored much to its original state and furnished with genuine old school equipment. Heiskanen-Mäkelä's personal library, "a considerable collection of information," has been most serviceable when arranging various exhibits. During the summer season of 1999, for instance, the old schoolhouse gallery presented two public exhibitions, the first in honor of the jubilee year of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, the second in remembrance of the outbreak of the Finnish "Winter War" (between Finland and Soviet Russia) sixty years ago.

When asked about her plans for the first year of the new millennium, Heiskanen-Mäkelä is still somewhat uncertain. "The business at my schoolhouse," she muses, "will probably continue along the same lines as before, with a couple of displays during the summer and a special seminar meeting in September on a local author. I have also been asked to write something about my mother and her teaching career for a village history. As to Dickinson, isn't the year 2000 an anniversary year for her? Shouldn't we Finns also arrange a seminar—or even a national conference—in December? And am I, as

a responsible individual," she asks in conclusion, "at long last to find a publisher for my Dickinson translations?"

Heiskanen-Mäkelä on Dickinson

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- Translator. William Luce, *The Belle of Amherst* [Emily in Finnish]. Premiere at the Night of Arts in Vaasa, Finland, Aug. 7, 1997.
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“IN DREAMS BEGIN RESPONSIBILITIES”

CURATING THE HOUGHTON LIBRARY’S DICKINSON EXHIBITION

By Mary Loeffelholz

It was at the 1997 annual meeting of EDIS, in our pleasant boardroom atop the Jones Library in Amherst, that Cristanne Miller took me aside and asked if I might be interested in curating an exhibition of the Dickinson materials at the Houghton Library. Leslie Morris, the Houghton’s Curator of Manuscripts, had graciously volunteered to mount a Dickinson exhibition in conjunction with the summer 1999 conference, “Emily Dickinson at Home,” that the Society was in the midst of planning. Moreover, the exhibition would follow closely on the publication of Ralph Franklin’s new variorum edition of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, due out shortly from Harvard University Press.

Altogether, it looked like a most auspicious moment for the Houghton to show its Dickinson archives to the world—for the first time, astonishingly, in the history of the Harvard collection. As Cris pointed out, curating the exhibition would require a good deal of close work with materials in the Houghton at all stages, and it was my good luck to be the only member of the EDIS board who lived and worked in Boston. Would I be interested? Well, there are ways and ways of showing one’s interest—not all of them polite or acceptable in a library. I did not jump up and down with glee. I did say to Cris that yes, I would be interested. The Board as a whole indicated its approval, and the deal was sealed.

But in dreams begin responsibilities, as the title of Delmore Schwartz’s famous story has it. By contrast with several members of the EDIS board, I was—in the summer of 1997—not by any stretch a scholar of Dickinson’s manuscripts or of textual criticism more generally. I did, of course, have my opinions in the very lively professional debates over the significance of manuscript study to the reading of Dickinson. But to imagine curating the Houghton’s Dickinson exhibition was to realize that I would have to test my opinions against the very public (and at the same time curiously anonymous) responsibilities of the curator’s role.

For many readers and scholars of Dickinson’s poetry, the exhibition would quite possibly be their only opportunity to examine Dickinson’s original manuscripts and other materials closely, since the manuscripts’ fragility greatly restricts access to them. Even for scholars who had been granted access to the manuscripts, the exhibition would represent an unparalleled opportunity to see many of them at once, in close physical proximity—as Emily Dickinson herself would once have been able to see them. As Leslie Morris observed to me, no one, not even she, was usually able to see the manuscripts that way: “I’m the curator, and I only ever look at a few things at a time.” For a few months—from August through October 1999—viewers of the exhibition would have the chance to take in the life of Dickinson’s writing as some kind of whole. But what kind? That would be my responsibility.

The Houghton’s exhibition space itself established some concrete parameters: It would hold ten or eleven cases, and I could estimate about how many Dickinson items each case might hold. Leslie Morris and I agreed to another set of parameters very early on: The exhibition would be confined to Harvard’s Dickinson holdings, rather than borrow materials from Amherst and the Boston Public Library. Not only would this obviate the need to arrange for loaned materials’ safe transportation and insurance, it would allow Amherst College to exhibit its own selection of its Dickinson materials during the summer 1999 conference.

These concrete early parameters, once set, brought me back to the real question of what it would mean to represent Dickinson’s writings in a responsibly comprehensive way. With the help of Ellen Louise Hart, who listened to my early musings on the problem, I realized that some part of my brain had been proceeding on the assumption that the exhibition would have to be constructed around a biographical narrative, even though I

am not particularly a biographical scholar of Dickinson. But choosing not to borrow materials from Amherst meant that many biographical relationships (not to mention controversies) could not be shown directly at the Houghton: There would be no Master letters, nor items from important correspondences with Samuel Bowles or Judge Lord. Denied the easy answer of full biographical completeness in the exhibition, I needed to find another principle of comprehensiveness.

The answer I settled on was to try to show not so much Dickinson’s life as her *life in writing*—eventually the title of the exhibition: “Emily Dickinson: A Life in Writing, 1830-1999.” By Dickinson’s “life in writing,” I meant, of course, her letters, fascicles, and loose poems and fragments as they changed over time, as Dickinson evolved different ways of writing and of organizing her writing. But I also meant the afterlife of her writing, as it emerged after her death; the exhibition’s final case would eventually be devoted to juxtaposing Dickinson manuscripts with transcriptions and published versions of her poems. “A Life in Writing” also pointed to Dickinson’s relationship to the writing of others, not only in her early schooling but in her lifelong expansive reading; so two cases were devoted to juxtaposing Dickinson’s poems and letters with books from the Dickinson family libraries.

The heart of the Houghton exhibition, though, had to be the fascicles, since Harvard holds most of them and relatively fewer of Dickinson’s later, unbound or fragmentary poems. This was the most difficult part of the exhibition in terms of selection and design. A fascicle can’t be shown as a whole; whatever page is turned up, another page will be face down, hidden from the viewer. Some of the hardest choices Leslie Morris and I made stemmed from this apparently simple but great fact of *aspect*, as Henry James puts it.

Moreover, these backstage dramas of choice were difficult to translate into visual drama in the exhibition case; what is

a fascicle, after all, but small pages of writing paper folded together and tied up with string? The red thread running through the preserved string for one fascicle was almost all the visual color supplied by the four fascicles I chose to exhibit. Some historical material—such as the frontispiece to the Dickinson family's copy of the memorial volume for Lieutenant Frazar Augustus Stearns, killed early in the Civil War—helped supply some visual drama for the fascicle cases, as well as encouragement for viewers to ponder whether or how Dickinson's fascicles respond to their historical contexts.

There was certainly drama enough around the opening of the exhibition, with a wonderful reception supplied by Harvard and an equally wonderful reading afterwards by poet Jorie Graham on the steps of Widener Library. Those of us attending the conference saw as much as we could, crowding one another around each case. Some of us were able to return at other times during the exhibition's run and enjoy it along with the general public. I visited several times, and once was there when two young women came in, notebooks in hand, and bent together over each and every case with an extraordinary quiet intensity. Running later into a member of Harvard's American literature faculty who mentioned the exhibition, I told him about seeing these two young women pore over the manuscripts. I couldn't tell, I said, whether they were there for a class assignment or on a lovers' pilgrimage. He smiled and said, Why not both? Yes, of course, I realized. Curating the exhibition was both for me.

Mary Loeffelholz is professor of English at Northeastern University and author of Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Nov./Dec. 1999 *Bulletin* (page 14) presents an account of a paper entitled "Dickinson's Bawdy: Shakespeare and Sexual Symbolism in the Writing of Emily Dickinson to Susan Huntington Dickinson" that was read at the third EDIS international conference. The account contains misrepresentations of my vision

of the significance of *Antony and Cleopatra* to Emily Dickinson, which I would like to correct.

The account states that I "overlook the sexual dynamic in Antony and Cleopatra's relationship" and regard Dickinson as "us[ing] Shakespeare's tragedy as an emblem for the domination of one person by another and for the conflict between honor and duty," while Ellen Hart rightly sees Dickinson's allusions to the play as "coded declarations of desire to Sue."

I have twice discussed at length Dickinson's vibrant attraction to *Antony and Cleopatra*. In an essay entitled "Emily Dickinson's 'Engulfing' Play,"¹ I hypothesize various reasons—aesthetic and cultural, not only private and biographical—for the play's appeal and usefulness to Dickinson. A later commentary in *The Passion of Emily Dickinson*² studies motifs and metaphors from the play in the context of her relationship with Susan and of letters and poems sent to, or about, her.

Both commentaries declare that Dickinson often appears to "see herself as Antony [and] Sue as Cleopatra," while she regards Antony's "fatal and exultant passion" for Cleopatra as akin to her own complex feeling for Sue.³ I write that "she came to use the play as an emblem for the domination of one person by another" in an erotic relationship and for the conflict not "between honor and duty"—for there can be none in the classic Renaissance terminology—but "between honor and duty on the one hand and pleasure and charm on the other" (i.e., between what is "Roman" and what is "Egyptian," with Dickinson as Antony and Sue as her "Queen," her "Egypt," sometimes representing those antinomies).⁴

Finally, I assert that Shakespeare's *Antony* was one of the few "coded" works on which Emily Dickinson drew to express private, even secret, passion.⁵ (This was an elaboration of my words from the stage of the Folger Library at the Dickinson Conference in 1986.)

I claim that when Dickinson writes to Susan "Egypt—thou knew'st," "pencilled in 1874 on a very small piece of paper," her quotation from *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act II, lines 57-61) implies that Sue's influence or (in Antony's words) "full

supremacy" over her has long been pronounced; her "heart," and "spirit," like his to Cleopatra's, are "to [Sue's] rudder tied."⁶

Like all uses of extravagant epithet, especially on ordinary occasions (Susan has paid her a visit), this quotation may primarily be playful hyperbole, a grateful compliment. Or the continuance of a (more or less?) serious confession. Or both. I write that Dickinson's specific quotation of Shakespeare's line "pays his Heart for what his Eyes eat, only -" in a pencilled note of 1883 may imply "fascination [with Sue] and unsatisfied desire [for her]."⁷ (My word *desire* in that sentence was meant to denote sexual longing, as Webster provides.) But her quotation may also constitute high-flown, affectionate tongue-in-cheek. It must be remembered that Dickinson employs the same or related allusions to *Antony and Cleopatra* to address Samuel Bowles, Otis Lord, a nephew, a neighbor, and even Mabel Loomis Todd, whom she thanks for the gift of a vase in 1885 by saying, "'You knew, Oh Egypt' said the entangled Antony."

Nevertheless, I reflect that in alluding to Antony's attendance at a feast where his desire for the Queen is not fed, and in calling Sue "my great Sister," echoing the play's apostrophes to Egypt's "great Queen," Dickinson may be recalling her youthful posture as Sue's "Lover."⁸

Since illness kept me from attending the conference, I thought it important to correct these misunderstandings and misquotations of my work, especially for Dickinson scholars who do not know it.

Judith Farr

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3. *Passion*, 171, 170. Also "Emily Dickinson's 'Engulfing' Play," 232.
4. "Emily Dickinson's 'Engulfing' Play," 232.
5. *Passion*, ix.
6. "Emily Dickinson's 'Engulfing' Play," 237.
7. *Ibid.*, 236.
8. From *Letters*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson, 1:215, quoted in *ibid.*, 237.

MEMBERS' NEWS

THE TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE: CALL FOR PAPERS

The fourth EDIS conference will be held August 3-5, 2001, in the beautiful medieval city of Trondheim, Norway, just below the arctic circle, at a time of year when there are nearly twenty hours of daylight.

Titled "Zero at the Bone: New Climates for Dickinson Study," the conference encourages presentations on multiple "climates of study" and on interpreting the "zero" as a figure for understanding Dickinson's letters and poetry. Featured topics will be Dickinson in the material, political, and social culture of her nineteenth-century life (the "North," the U.S., as woman, as participant in popular and elite cultures) and contextualized study of Dickinson's manuscripts. Papers on these topics are welcome, as are papers on any other topic placing Dickinson in her time or in ours.

You may choose to participate in the formal proceedings of the conference in a number of ways: in a panel, a seminar workshop, or a poster session. There will also be a seminar on "Cognitive Linguistic Approaches to the Economy of Language in Translating Dickinson's Poetry," open to all participants. To participate in the conference, please submit one of the following:

- An abstract (200 words) for a paper to be presented in a panel; final papers for presentation should be 15-20 minutes long.

- An abstract (200 words) for participation in a seminar workshop on one of the topics listed below. There will be a maximum of five to seven formal participants in each workshop, each of whom will circulate to other participants a ten-page essay at least one month before the workshop begins. The workshop itself will consist of discussion, not formal presentations. Indicate the name and number of the workshop in which you would like to participate.

- A proposal (100 words) for a poster or work to be displayed and discussed in a poster session. This might be especially appropriate for linguistic and visually focused or artistic work on the poet.

Workshop Topics and Discussion Leaders

1. "The Soul has Bandaged Moments": Interpretation in the Arts, Criticism, and Translation. Discussion leader: Jonnie Guerra.
2. Variants and Variations: Reading a

Dickinson Poem. Discussion leader: Suzanne Juhasz.

3. "We do not play on Graves"—or do we? Gravity and Levity in Dickinson. Discussion leader: Eleanor Heginbotham.
4. The Fleeing of the Biographied: Finding Dickinson among Her Poems and Letters. Discussion leader: Polly Longsworth.
5. Dickinson and Calvin's God. Discussion leader: Jane Eberwein.
6. The Dickinson Electronic Archives and Technologies of Distribution—Voice, Manuscript Page, Printed Page, and the Screen. Discussion leader: Martha Nell Smith.
7. Dickinson and the Objects of Her World: Exploring Material Culture in Her Poems. Discussion leader: Cindy Dickinson.

Please send abstracts, proposals for posters, or requests for more information to Cristanne Miller, Department of English, Pomona College, 140 West Sixth Street, Claremont, CA 91711 USA, or to ccmiller@pomona.edu by November 15, 2000. Participation will be confirmed in February 2001.

ACADEMIC MEETINGS

At the annual meeting of the **American Literature Association**, to be held May 25-28 in Long Beach, California, EDIS will sponsor two sessions. The first, chaired by Daneen Wardrop, will be on "Emily Dickinson's Civil War," and will feature papers by Cristanne Miller, Karen Dandurand, and Vivian Pollak. The second, chaired by Angela Sorby, will focus on "Emily Dickinson and the Democratic Body," with papers by Faith Barrett, Barbara Baumgartner, and Paul Crumbley. For further information, see the ALA Website at www.americanliterature.org.

For the **2001 ALA** meeting, we are soliciting suggestions for panel topics. Please send them to Vivian Pollak, De-

partment of English, Box 1122, Washington University, St. Louis, MO 63130, or by e-mail to vrpollak@artsci.wustl.edu.

The December 2000 meeting of the **Modern Language Association** in Washington, D.C., will include two Dickinson sessions sponsored by EDIS. The first will focus on "Dickinson and the Victorians," with papers by Deborah Cadman, Nancy Mayer, and Marcy Tanter; Virginia W. Jackson will serve as chair. The second, on "Dickinson's Civil War," chaired by Mary Loeffelholz, will present papers by Nancy Leonard, Katharine Rodier, and Faith Barrett. For further information on the sessions, contact Loeffelholz (after

July) at m.loeffelholz@nUNET.neu.edu.

EDIS is now an affiliate member of **SSAWW (Society for the Study of American Women Writers)**, which will hold its first international conference February 14-18, 2001, in San Antonio, Texas. For that event we will sponsor a panel on the topic "Emily Dickinson and American Women Writers." Proposals for papers should be sent by September 1, 2000, to Eleanor Heginbotham, Department of English, Concordia University, 275 Syndicate St. North, St. Paul, MN 55104-5494, or via e-mail to heginbotham@csp.edu. For information on SSAWW, see the fall 1999 issue of the *Bulletin* (page 28).

BERNHARD ELECTED MEMBER AT LARGE

Whatever Emily Dickinson may have felt about politics ("George who?"), EDIS members seem to relish the opportunity to vote. Approximately 115 of our nearly 400 members (a better percentage than for the U.S. as a whole) returned the pink ballots for Member at Large of the EDIS Board. Although all of our seven distinguished candidates drew many votes, Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Bernhard was decisively elected for a three-year term beginning after the Minnesota meeting this summer.

Betty and her husband, Win, are long-time residents of Amherst. Betty has been a guide at the Homestead for the past twenty years, has published several papers on Dickinson's Norcross connections, and has presented papers at the last two EDIS conferences. See the review of her latest publication on page 22.

SCHOLAR IN AMHERST PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

The Emily Dickinson International Society announces the creation of a Scholar in Amherst Program. The program is designed to support research on Emily Dickinson at institutions such as the Frost Library of Amherst College, the Jones Public Library, the Mount Holyoke College Archives, the Dickinson Homestead, the Evergreens, and the Amherst Historical Society.

Each year EDIS will provide a \$2,000 fellowship, to be used for travel, accommodations, a rental car, and expenses related to research. A minimum stay of a week in Amherst is required; recipients may also use the fellowship to initiate a lengthier stay in the area. We will give preference to persons in the early stages of their careers with demonstrable need.

The Scholar in Amherst Program has been inaugurated by a generous donation

from Sylvia F. Rogosa, made in honor of her daughter, Vivian Pollak, immediate past president of EDIS. Sylvia Rogosa graduated from the University of Iowa in 1930 and from the Smith School of Social Work in 1936. She worked for many years as a psychiatric social worker, in New York City and in Washington, D.C., with refugees after World War II and in later years with families of at-risk children. This year's recipient will be the "Rogosa EDIS Scholar in Amherst."

We invite applications to the EDIS Scholar in Amherst Program. To apply, please send three copies of a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction, and two-page project proposal by September 15, 2000, to Ellen Louise Hart, Cowell College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 USA. For more information, contact her at ehart@cats.ucsc.edu.

CHAPTER NOTES

The **Saskatchewan chapter** met on April 6 for a reading of Dickinson's poetry by a special guest, Dr. David Barnard, president of the University of Regina. Dr. Barnard's wide-ranging knowledge of poetry and his specific interest in Dickinson initiated a lively discussion following the reading of his selection of poems. The reading was attended by scholars, students, and general readers alike. The chapter is grateful to Dr. Barnard for taking time to share his thoughts with us. At the reception that followed, the audience was treated to coconut cake made from Dickinson's recipe.

On January 8, the **Los Angeles chapter** hosted a daylong symposium entitled "The World of Emily Dickinson." Held at the scenic Huntington Library in San Marino, California, the event was open to the public and featured presentations by scholars of Dickinson and the nineteenth century, who focussed on the intellectual and cultural climate that surrounded the poet and influenced her work. Included were talks by Cristanne Miller of Pomona College on the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1860-1865; by Catherine Cucinella of California State University San Marcos, on "Dick-

inson and Politics"; and by Deborah Cadman of Skidmore College on "Dickinson and Gift Exchange in Nineteenth-Century America." The highlight was a presentation by Marcia Lebow, a specialist in nineteenth-century music, who spoke on "Chanting to Paradise: A Survey of Emily Dickinson's Musical Resources." It included a recital by soprano Erika Lazerow of selections from the program *Jenny Lind* performed in Northampton in 1851, a concert the Dickinson family attended. The day concluded with a panel discussion that included all the day's speakers and was moderated by symposium coordinators Cher Langdell and Margaret Freeman.

For information on forthcoming meetings, contact Cher Langdell at clangdel@calbaptist.edu.

EMILY DICKINSON LECTURESHIP ESTABLISHED

George and Barbara Kelly, of Palo Alto, California, recently established the Emily Dickinson Lectureship in American Poetry at The Pennsylvania State University. Their endowment provides funds to

support travel and an honorarium for a distinguished scholar to visit University Park and deliver an annual lecture on American poetry.

Martha Nell Smith, director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland, delivered the inaugural lecture, "Titanic Operas: American Women Poets' Responses to Dickinson's Legacy," on October 5, 1999, at the Nittany Lion Inn.

Smith's topic was aptly chosen, focusing on Dickinson and her poetry while opening the lecture series to other American poets. She cited Alice Fulton, Ruth Stone, Adrienne Rich, Amy Clampitt, Louise Bogan, H.D., Gwendolyn Brooks, Toi Derricotte, Maxine Kumin, Sharon Olds, and Alicia Ostriker among contemporary poets who have responded to Dickinson's poetry in their own work.

Smith emphasized that, different as these poets are from one another, their responses embody ideas about gender and connectedness and urge attention to Dickinson's words, rather than others' words about her, and to her silences.

The complete text of the lecture is available at <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/dickinson/titanic/introduction.html>.

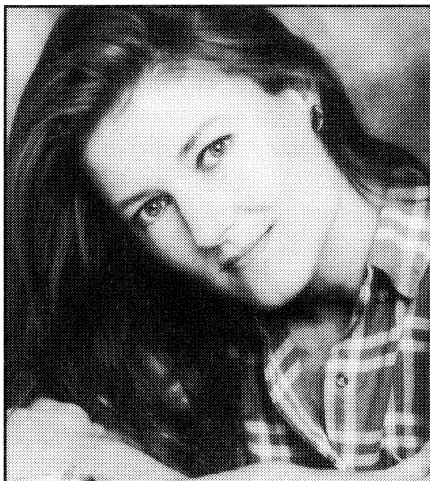
“TO MAKE A PRAIRIE”: COULD DICKINSON IMAGINE OUR ANNUAL MEETING?

Emily Dickinson may never have seen a Moor or visited the Prairie, but her imagination took her to both places. EDIS will supply the Prairie—albeit covered over by the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, declared to be second only to New York City in cultural attractions per capita in the United States. We may even supply some clover and a bee or three. We hope those who gather to discuss the poet and to hear from a distinguished group of scholars, actors, and singers will bring their own imaginations to this participatory event.

“‘To make a Prairie’: Emily Dickinson and the Imagination,” which will be held August 11-13 at Concordia University, St. Paul, will privilege the possibilities for interpreting and translating Dickinson into a variety of creative forms. This will be the first time EDIS has gathered in the Midwest. Before and after the meeting, participants may explore the dazzling new Science Museum, the Mall of America, a great zoo, hundreds of lakes, dozens of theaters (of which the renowned Guthrie and Ordway are but two), the city of Garrison Keillor’s *Prairie Home Companion* (which often honors Dickinson), and the birthplace of Charles Schultz and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Scuhltz memorials are still in the planning stages, but there are some grand ones on the Fitzgerald trolley tour, an optional part of our weekend that will show you not only Fitzgerald’s birthplace but also the grander Summit Avenue

homes in which he partied and, in one memorable summer, wrote *This Side of Paradise*.



Elizabeth Anne Dickinson

Most EDIS activities will take place on the campus of Concordia University, where guests may stay in modern air conditioned dormitory rooms or at a nearby Sheraton Hotel. Because the event is co-sponsored by the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, one highlight will take place at the Hamline Library and will be open to the public.

Our meeting will open with a reception, an address by Gudrun Grabher on “‘Beauty – be not caused – It Is –’: Spiritual and Physical Beauty in Emily Dickinson and Estee Lauder” and a reading of Dickinson’s letters by another E.D.—Elizabeth Dickinson, an actress descended from Edward Dickinson’s youngest brother.

Elizabeth Dickinson will not be the only one “performing” the words of the poet. Saturday morning’s small group sessions will lead to actual presentations by EDIS members later in the day. The wardrobe facilities of Concordia will be available, but imagination is, again, the key word. Those who are, as Keillor claims to be, “shy persons” need only enjoy the results, but the experiment that was a hit at the Colorado meeting promises to bring the poet alive again in surprising ways.

At the Saturday banquet, Judith Farr, distinguished scholar, author of the acclaimed Dickinson novel *I Never Came to You in White*, and of poetry previewed in this issue (see page 8), will discuss “Emily Dickinson, the ‘Supposed Person.’” The next morning, EDIS president Cristanne Miller will speak on “‘When Bees Are Few’: EDIS, the Imagination, and the Millennium.” And a number of poets will reflect Dickinson’s work in their own poetry. The co-editors of *Open me Carefully*, Ellen Hart and Martha Nell Smith, will demonstrate the Dickinson hypermedia resources. We may also hear a reading of William Luce’s *The Belle of Amherst*. And there will be music!

We look forward to greeting many of you in our prairie city. See the schedule below and the registration form on page 27. For more information, contact Eleanor Heginbotham, Department of English, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN 55104-5495 USA; 651-641-8267; or at heginbotham@csp.edu.

“To make a Prairie”

THE EDIS ANNUAL MEETING, 2000: TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, August 11

5:30: Reception, address by Gudrun Grabher, and a reading of Dickinson’s letters by Elizabeth Dickinson

Saturday, August 12

9:00: Small group discussions of ways to perform Dickinson’s poems, led by Board members

10:30: “Teaching and Thinking with the Dickinson Electronic Archives,” led by

Ellen Hart and Martha Nell Smith

St. Paul Presents: Dickinson in (and out of) the Classroom

12:30: Picnic

1:30: Literary Tour of St. Paul or Rehearsals for performances of poems

3:30: Tea and conversation with Emily Dickinson: Elizabeth Dickinson and member performances

Meet the Scholars (book signings)

St. Paul, Minnesota, August 11-13

7:00: Banquet and address by Judith Farr

Sunday, August 13

9:00: “The Dickinson Electronic Archives”: Ellen Hart and Martha Nell Smith

10:00: Closing address by Cristanne Miller; Report to the Membership; Emily Dickinson in song.

Afternoon: Possible reading of *The Belle of Amherst*

NEWS FROM DENMARK AND JAPAN

In the autumn of 1999, the *Emily Dickinson Center* in Aarhus, Denmark, in collaboration with the Hasle Library in Aarhus, sponsored a drive to disseminate knowledge of Dickinson's poetry to a wider public. For five weeks in September and October 1999, an exhibit on Dickinson's life and work was open to the public. It consisted of nine wall sheets and eight showcases, which included both rare and new Dickinson books. On October 4, Niels Kjær lectured on Dickinson, and the Hasle Library hosted a study group that investigated Web pages dealing with Dickinson on the Internet. Altogether it was a very successful arrangement that attracted both old and new Dickinson readers.

On the other side of the world, the *Emily Dickinson Society of Japan* held its fifteenth annual meeting at Nara Women's University on May 8, 1999. One paper was read and a program entitled "Reading Dickinson" included discussion of two poems. There was also a symposium on Franklin's new variorum edition.

The nineteenth issue of *The Emily Dickinson Society of Japan Newsletter* includes summaries in English of papers read at the Society's fourteenth meeting: Peter W. Schumacher on "The First Four Poems that Emily Dickinson Sent to T. W. Higginson," Shiho Fukuda on "Challenge against Patriarchy: A Re-examination of Personae in Emily Dickinson's Poetry," Sachiko Yoshida on "Women and History: Anne Bradstreet and Emily Dickinson," and Mark Richardson on "Dwelling in Possibility: The Americanness of Emily Dickinson," as well as a lengthy bibliography of works on Dickinson published in Japanese.

The sixteenth annual meeting will be held at Komazawa University in Tokyo on June 17, 2000. For more information, contact Hiroko Uno at hirouno@pearl.ocn.ne.jp.

The *Bulletin* thanks Niels Kjær, director of the Emily Dickinson Center of Denmark, and Hiroko Uno, executive secretary of the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan, for providing this information.

OBITUARIES

A FURTHER PILGRIMAGE LEO SMIT (1921-1999)

By *Emily Seelbinder*

Just when many EDIS members were getting to know him and his exquisite settings of Dickinson, Leo Smit, composer, pianist, and teacher, has been taken from us. He died in Encinitas, California, on Sunday, December 12, 1999, exactly one month before his seventyninth birthday. As he had requested, he was buried next to jazz pianist Pete Johnson on December 16 in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo, New York.

Smit's long and varied career touched several times on the poetry of Emily Dickinson. He was present for one of Martha Graham's watershed performances of her *Letter to the World*, which he later recalled as "stunning." In 1981 he celebrated Aaron Copland's eighty-first birthday by playing a concert of his close friend's music at the Library of Congress that included Copland's *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*, sung by mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani.

In the last decade of his life, Smit composed settings for nearly one hundred Dickinson poems and organized seventy-eight of them into six song cycles with the comprehensive title *The Ecstatic Pilgrimage*. With soprano Rosalind Rees, Smit performed three of these cycles for several enthusiastic audiences in the United States, including a memorable occasion at the Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts. In June 1997 Smit and Rees recorded these three cycles for a Bridge Records release. (See page 5 for a review.) It was to be his last recording.

Since 1991 it has been my pleasure and privilege to be numbered among Leo Smit's many friends and to indulge with him our mutual passion for Dickinson's poetry. Our last conversation took place by phone on Dickinson's 169th birthday, two days before he died. Though Leo was very tired, he still spoke with great animation of the delight he had found in composing his Dickinson songs. What possessed me to ask him this I cannot say, but I found myself wondering aloud which of his songs he would play for the poet herself

when he met her among the "Species [that] stands beyond" (J501).

"I don't know...." He paused, clearly relishing the possibility of such a meeting. Then, impishly, he concluded, "I will tell her I take requests."

Emily Seelbinder teaches American literature at Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina. She is currently working on a study of Dickinson's use of scripture.

HARUKO KIMURA (1936-1999)

By *James Fegan*

The Emily Dickinson Society of Japan mourns the death of one of its outstanding members. Many former medical students and others in Japan owe their interest in Dickinson to Haruko Kimura, a dedicated teacher, who also served on Japanese committees concerned with scholarship and education. Her courageous battle with cancer ended August 28, 1999.

After graduating from the prestigious Tsuda College (B.A., 1958), she entered the Graduate School of the University of Tokyo, receiving her MA in 1964. She was a special research student at Brandeis University from 1960 to 1962, and at Radcliffe College's Bunting Institute as an American Council of Learned Societies researcher in 1968.

Kimura was head of the English Department at two Japanese medical schools, Tokyo Women's Medical College (1967 to 1993), and Sei-Marianna Medical University (1993 to 1999). She also taught at the University of Tokyo, Waseda University, and Tokyo Women's University.

Her interest in the Transcendentalists resulted in an article on Margaret Fuller. More recently her publications in Japanese looked at the possibilities for rendering Dickinson poems in the *tanka* form. In English, in collaboration with James Fegan, she produced a Dickinson article, and with him was responsible for four entries in *An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia* as well as entries in the ongoing Emily Dickinson Lexicon Project.

James Fegan is professor of English at Waseda University in Tokyo.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Alfrey, Shawn. *The Sublime of Intense Sociability: Emily Dickinson, H.D., and Gertrude Stein.* Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2000. 183 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8387-5402-3, \$34.50.

Alfrey argues that Dickinson, H.D., and Stein revise the traditional sublime associated with patriarchal and imperial power and employ a poetic sublime that incorporates empathy, intersubjectivity, and the hospitable. In "Emily Dickinson's Hesitation: Toward an Empathetic Sublime," Alfrey describes Dickinson's relationship to the romantic sublime, her resistance to American manifest destiny and millennial Christianity, the empathetic and erotic qualities of her poetic sublime, and her efforts to replace "submissive awe" with "mutuality and recognition" in a spiritual sublime. Alfrey states that Dickinson's sublime "reflects the values attributed, not to oedipal mastery and struggle, but to women's psychoanalytic development." She draws upon the work of contemporary Dickinson scholars in her readings of more than a dozen Dickinson poems (J216, 285, 286, 505, 568, 593, 754, 894, 925, 937, 1000, 1002, 1247, and 1718). Informed by the theoretical work of Buber, Cixous, Derrida, Freud, Hegel, Kant, Kristeva, Lacan, and others, this book may interest a select group of sophisticated readers.

Bernhard, Mary Elizabeth Kromer. "Lost and Found: Emily Dickinson's Unknown Daguerreotypist." *New England Quarterly* 72. 4 (Dec. 1999): 594-601.

A collection of letters recently acquired by the Jones Library has led Bernhard to identify William C. North as the daguerreotypist who took the only known photograph of Dickinson. In a key letter, Edward Dickinson encourages his brother-in-law Alfred Norcross to send an oil painting of his deceased father, Joel Norcross, to Am-

herst so that a daguerreotype of it might be made by "Mr. North of Springfield." Advertisements in Amherst's *Hampshire and Franklin Express* confirm that William C. North spent two months in Amherst as a "Daguerrian Artist" beginning in December 1846. At the time of Edward Dickinson's letter and North's stay in Amherst, Emily Dickinson was sixteen. Bernhard says it "now seems virtually certain" that "Dickinson...sat for North." Bernhard's interesting and well documented article traces the history of the Dickinson daguerreotype—from Lavinia and Austin's dislike of it to its alteration for publication, from the disappearance of the copper plate in the 1890s to its curious reappearance in 1945 and its presentation to Amherst College in 1956. Bernhard's literary detective work sharpens our focus on the familiar daguerreotype, described in a 1978 Smithsonian publication for the National Portrait Gallery as "one of the most important of all American photographs...a plainsong of a charming quality."

Galvin, Mary. *Queer Poetics: Five Modernist Women Writers.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999. 143 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-313-29810-6, \$49.95; paper, ISBN 0-275-96106-0, \$18.95.

Galvin explores the innovative poetics of six nonheterocentric writers (Dickinson, Lowell, Stein, Mina Loy, Djuna Barnes, and H.D.), asserting that "the mind which can imagine other sexual orientations and gender identities can and must also imagine new ways of writing." She considers Dickinson a precursor to the five modernists. In "Poltergeist of Form: Emily Dickinson and the Reappropriation of Language and Identity," Galvin dispels the myth of Dickinson as "a morbid despairing old maid," believing her to be "an exuberant, defiant trouble maker." Read-

ings of J435 ("Much Madness is divinest Sense —"), J508 ("I'm ceded—I've stopped being Their's—"), J613 ("They shut me up in Prose —"), and J632 ("The Brain — is wider than the Sky —") show how Dickinson, a "trickster," purposefully subverts hymn or common meter, using dashes, ambiguous pronouns, and off-rhymes. Galvin concludes that "Dickinson the poltergeist haunts language, meaning, and form, turning things topsy-turvy everywhere she goes." Galvin's writing is clear and accessible to the general reader.

Hirsch, Edward. *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999. 354 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-15-100419-6, \$23.00; paper, ISBN 0-15-600566-2, \$15.00.

A passionate reader and an intelligent guide, Hirsch offers heartfelt, instructive readings of familiar and less well known poetry from around the world, spanning ancient to contemporary times. Arranged thematically, his readings of love poems, political poems, grief poems, and others reflect his intellectual, emotional, even physical responses to individual poems—poems he cares about and approaches with an intimacy bordering on the sacramental. Citing Dickinson as a touchstone throughout his work, he briefly reviews her pain poetry (J599, 650, 937, 967) and in a chapter on epiphanic poetry explicates J683 ("The Soul unto itself"). Hirsch describes his encounter with poetry as "active, inquisitive, relentless, disturbing, exuberant, daring, and beholden." Sensitive to "the Orphic enchantment, the delirium and lucidity...of poetry," with infectious enthusiasm he advocates "the shock, the swoon, the bliss of reading." His extensive glossary and reading list attest to his knowledge and deep regard for poetry, making this a useful handbook for novice and sophisticated readers.

Note: The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books. We would be especially happy to learn of those published outside the U.S. Information should be sent to Barbara Kelly, 444 Washington Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301, U.S.A., or faxed to her at 650-321-8146.

Kuribayashi, Tomoko, and Julie Tharp, eds. *Creating Safe Space: Violence and Women's Writing*. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1998. 239 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-7914-3563-6, \$65.50; paper, ISBN 0-7914-3564-4, \$21.95.

Mary Jo Dondlinger's "'One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted': Emily Dickinson's Haunted Space" is one of thirteen articles on writing as a way to create a safe space in response to sexual or emotional abuse. Dondlinger considers Dickinson "a survivor of sexual abuse, specifically incest." She supports her argument with sociological studies, suggesting that Dickinson was at risk for sexual abuse within her family, and with readings of the "Wife" poems (J199, 461, 463, 732, 1072, and 1737), explaining that "wife" is a metaphor for a relationship Dickinson had with her father. In response to the unsafe space that home represented, Dickinson created "safe spaces in the heart, soul, mind, and even the grave." The author provides an orderly argument but acknowledges the speculative nature of her thesis. The book includes articles on Charlotte Brontë, Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, and Virginia Woolf, as well as contemporary authors Sandra Cisneros, Anne Rice, and others.

McIntosh, James. *Nimble Believing: Dickinson and the Unknown*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2000. 194 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-472-11080-2, \$42.50.

Dickinson's Calvinist heritage stimulated reverence and awe for an inscrutable God while nineteenth-century liberal religious ideas bred skepticism. Providing a religious, historical, and cultural context, McIntosh "explores Dickinson's poetry of faith and doubt concerning an unknown God" and "the unknowableness of nature, the afterlife, and the human soul." With Emerson, Thoreau, and Melville, Dickinson shared strong religious roots and a willingness to question traditional assumptions: "We both believe and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps Believing nimble—" (L750). McIntosh suggests that Dickinson's experimental writing is consistent with her "interest in nimble believing." He considers her religious imagination, the various ways she puts the Bible to poetic use, and the

way her intellect needs and values the unknown: "It is true that the unknown is the largest need of the intellect, though for it, no one thinks to thank God" (L471). Familiar with current research, McIntosh clearly and persuasively shows how Dickinson "makes poetic use of her vacillations between doubt and faith."

McQuade, Molly. *Stealing Glimpses: Of Poetry, Poets, and Things in Between*. Louisville, Ky.: Sarabande Books, 1999. 213 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-889330-25-6, \$24.00; paper, ISBN 1-889330-26-4, \$14.95.

McQuade's twenty-seven short pieces combine familiar essays on such topics as her pet goat, her address book, poetry readings, and small presses with literary profiles of more than a dozen poets, including W.H. Auden, John Ashbery, Adrienne Rich, Charles Simic, Galway Kinnell, Randall Jarrell, and Dickinson. Two pieces are devoted to Dickinson. In "Short Survey of Scruples," McQuade cites five brief poems (J1365, 1429, 1563, 1596, 1695) to demonstrate how Dickinson is "a minimalist who seeks the utmost." In "The Slant of the Sidelong: Partiality and a Poet," she discusses J258 ("There's a certain Slant of light") and J1261 ("A Word dropped careless on a Page"), recommending careful observation and "glimpses of the partial" in life and in poetry. Describing herself as "disputatious, curious, and resistant," McQuade is earnest and candid, sometimes digressive and whimsical, recalling E.B. White, her chosen mentor.

Rosen, Michael, ed. Illustrations by Paul Howard. *Classic Poetry: An Illustrated Collection*. Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 1998. 160 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-56402-890-9, \$21.99.

A handsome large-format anthology with full-color illustrations, this collection celebrates the work of forty poets from the seventeenth century to the present, including Shakespeare, Blake, Coleridge, the Brownings, Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, Sandburg, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Langston Hughes. Each of the chronologically arranged entries provides a biographical sketch, a portrait, and rep-

resentative work of the poet. The illustrator employs a variety of artistic techniques and styles to render the historical context of each poet and capture the tone of the poems. The Dickinson entry includes J204 ("A slash of Blue —"), J288 ("I'm Nobody! Who are you?"), J328 ("A Bird came down the Walk —"), J824 ("The Wind begun to knead the Grass —"), and J1212 ("A word is dead"). Intended for young people (ages 9-12), this volume demonstrates how the visual arts can make poetry not specifically written for children more accessible to them.

Schmidt, Michael. *Lives of the Poets*. New York: Knopf, 1998. 975 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-375-40624-7, \$35.00.

Remindful of Samuel Johnson's 1779-81 work, Schmidt's monumental history of English-language poetry encompasses 600 years, including an eclectic selection of more than 300 poets—celebrated poets as well as neglected and newly emerging voices. Arranged in chronological order, his sixty-four essays reveal a knowledgeable, passionate reader and generous critic, more interested in "unlicensed" responses to poetry than in theoretical approaches. In "Winter Is Good," he discusses three Dickinson poems: J536 ("The Heart asks Pleasure — first —") made Schmidt, at age fourteen, pay attention to Dickinson; J449 ("I died for Beauty — but was scarce") reveals "as much of the afterlife as we can be sure of"; and J1100 ("The last Night that She lived") has a "penultimate stanza [that] must be among the most perfect in her work." Dipping into his book at any page, one finds that Schmidt's erudition, opinions, and enthusiasm for poetry never falter. His remarkable book offers a wealth of pleasurable reading on poets, poetry, and their literary and historical context.

BOOK REVIEWS

MacKenzie, Cynthia, ed. *A Concordance to the Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Boulder: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2000. 850 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-87081-568-7, \$225.00.

Reviewed by Stephanie Tingley

Publication of a concordance for Emily

Dickinson's personal correspondence, which should sit side by side with S.P. Rosenbaum's 1964 concordance to the poems (Cornell University Press), is long overdue. Editor Cynthia MacKenzie has made an important contribution to Dickinson studies.

This computer-generated concordance, based on T.H. Johnson's three-volume edition of *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, published in 1958 and 1965, as well as the one-volume 1998 edition, fills a significant gap in Dickinson studies. It will be especially useful to scholars and students interested in those Dickinson texts traditionally labeled "letters" and how they connect and intersect, particularly at the level of individual word choice or image, to those of her texts long labeled "lyrics."

Although I worked with only part of the manuscript (photocopies of entries for A through part of L, which was all the publisher was able to provide in March), I found the classification system easy to use. Each headword appears in bold print, along with information about the word's frequency. Each mention of that word in Dickinson's collected correspondence then appears under this heading, together with a bit of its context, each date it appeared, and the Johnson letter, volume, line, and page numbers. The sheer number of words and their uses, which fill more than 800 pages of small, double-column print, reminds us of Dickinson's large, complex, rich, and resonant vocabulary.

Having the ability to track patterns of words and images from the collected poems to the collected letters and back again highlights the interconnectivity and unity of Dickinson's writing, for, as Johnson notes in the Preface to his edition of the letters, "The letters both in style and rhythm begin to take on qualities that are so nearly the quality of her poems as on occasion to leave the reader in doubt where the letter leaves off and the poem begins." More recent editions of Dickinson's work have begun to consider letters and poems together and as part of the same context.

The letters concordance, too, helps heal the inaccurate and often arbitrary division of the poet's texts into poetry and prose, literature and document. Instead, this reference tool highlights the fluidity

and breakdown of rigid genre boundaries, strategies central to Dickinson's aims and interests as a writer. The forthcoming lexicon project coordinated and edited by Cynthia Hallen should enable scholars to pursue these kinds of intersections (and others) in even more sophisticated ways. And, as MacKenzie reminds us in her Preface, the concordance can "provide scholar, student and general reader alike with endless opportunities to make exciting and unexpected 'discoveries' by way of browsing."

It is good to see that the concordance has found a publisher; however, because of the small print run and hefty price tag, MacKenzie's concordance will most likely not be available or accessible to most students of Dickinson's work—a disappointment that I'm sure many in Dickinson studies will share with me. I understand the realities and restrictions of the publishing industry, particularly for scholarly texts like this one. A hardbound version of such a book is both expensive to produce and likely to appeal to a relatively small, specialized audience. But I think that the University Press of Colorado may have severely underestimated the need for and interest in this important reference tool.

Although it seems unlikely that a paperbound edition is feasible, I hope that the publisher will consider finding a way to make the concordance available more widely, perhaps in CD-ROM form or some form of on-line subscription. Here they would follow the lead of the University of Michigan Press, which has published an electronic version of Marta Werner's 1995 *Radical Scatters: Emily Dickinson's Fragments and Related Texts, 1870-1886* as an electronic archive (see review in the fall 1999 *Bulletin*).

While I make no claims to expertise in this area, an electronic version might, in fact, be preferable to print because it could offer more flexibility. Most CD-ROM concordances I have worked with allow scholars to do searches for patterns of words, phrases, and strings of words with a few clicks of a mouse, as well as ways to highlight and bookmark essential entries—tasks that can be done with a print text but that require much more labor, time, and energy. It would be good

to provide greater and easier access to these materials so that students are not restricted to using the few bound copies locked in major libraries' reference collections.

Stephanie Tingley is professor of English at Youngstown State University.

Mitchell, Domhnall. *Emily Dickinson: Monarch of Perception*. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2000. 336 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-55849-226-7, \$40.00.

Reviewed by Daniel Lombardo

Domhnall Mitchell, professor of nineteenth-century American literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, begins his book with an intriguing epigraph: "One should make a sacrament of the mundane. One should arrange experience in noncausal patterns that point to no action. At best, one may remain a monarch of perception, safe in a world one controls, and insulated from historical process" (Richard Ohmann, *Politics of Letters*).

Mitchell sets forth, however, on a singular exploration of Dickinson in direct contradiction to Ohmann. He views Dickinson as "a monarch of perception" but one firmly aware of both causal patterns and historical processes. His portrayal of her as a politically conservative, fiscally aware mortal, caught between fading and emerging cultures, is daring and vital to the modern understanding of Dickinson.

Unlike most writers who, when seeking Dickinson's relationship to historical context, focus on macro-environments, such as the Civil War or the uncompromising Calvinism of the day, Mitchell begins by choosing three more subtle historical phenomena. He convincingly situates Dickinson within aspects of the Amherst industrial climate, the politics of home, and the social implications of horticulture.

For Dickinson, one way the industrialization of rural America came to her door was in the form of the railroad. Using "I like to see it lap the Miles" (J585), Mitchell reveals the poet's complex reaction to the mechanical beast, one that realizes both the financial solidity it might bring to the Dickinsons (Edward Dickinson was president of the Amherst, Belchertown and

Palmer Railroad) and the personal and aesthetic threat the railroad implied for the poet's world.

Dickinson transforms the fearful into the familiar, using a template Mitchell finds the poet applying to other intersections of the private and the communal. In the poem, the train is domesticated and "laps the miles" like a horse. Like the family's horses, it becomes an extension of family property. As such, the railroad was controllable, and something emblematic of the Dickinsons' social prestige.

According to Mitchell, Dickinson expresses some contempt for the things of this world, but from a decidedly elevated economic position. One of Mitchell's many contributions is to relate the unexplored fragility of the Dickinsons' financial status to the poet's own fears. The promise of the railroad turned into a personal risk for the Dickinsons, one over which they ultimately had little control (a great deal of money was lost by investors). Dickinson took command of this threat within the confines of her poetics. Her poem integrates the modern machine into her world so as not to disturb its already unstable order.

From such industrial pressures, Mitchell turns to Dickinson's experience of home—the structure standing between her and the external world. He uses a close look at "One need not be a Chamber – to be haunted" (J670) to explore home as a space increasingly divided into personal enclosures, as refuge, and as a location within culture. His examination of the household economics—the years living as tenants, the causes of the move away from and the return to the Homestead—lead to his conclusion that Dickinson's refuge was fraught with uncertainty. Dickinson's seclusion, then, was not a form of psychosis but a deliberate strategy "of self-dedication to a 'career' in culture...and as a bulwark against historical forces" (p. 45).

Mitchell then moves closer to the poet by focusing on one of her specific activities within that space: the tending of flowers. He sees Dickinson's interest in horticulture as being partly determined by her gender, education, and class. The luxury of indoor flower culture was, he maintains, used by the poet to distinguish

her activities from those of the capitalist, ethnic, and rural cultures outside the Dickinson Homestead.

The second half of the book goes to the heart of present-day literary debates about Dickinson's work. Mitchell places a historical context around the poet's non-publication and finds Dickinson's attitude toward publication inconsistent. He examines the fascicles (primarily fascicle 20) to test the thesis that poems within fascicles form an intentional structure, and then tests whether fascicles themselves form a narrative whole.

His most provocative chapter takes on current scholars of materiality, those for whom Dickinson's chirography and the shape and spacing of her lines and words are vital to meaning. Mitchell takes careful measurement of such details as line arrangement, word splitting, and the relationship between end words and the right edge of the paper (in both poems and letters) to buttress his conclusions.

The book concludes with a discussion of the relationship between Dickinson's discourse and other societal discourses. Mitchell parts with Mikhail Bakhtin's allegations of an absence of dialogic voices in poetry, an absence of historically specific languages outside of poetry itself. His incisive and often witty text makes a strong case for a Dickinson whose seeming noninvolvement was used to create work that responded decisively to the social unrest, conflict, and tension of her time. Dickinson was a writer of the intimate interior world, and a writer in whose work complex historical and social forces also found intimate expression.

Monarch of Perception is a formidable, often brilliant volume. It is a study imbued with the author's deep cultural and historical understanding, one that should be read by anyone with a serious interest in the genius of Emily Dickinson.

Daniel Lombardo recently retired after seventeen years as curator of Special Collections at the Jones Library in Amherst. His photographic history of Wellfleet, Massachusetts, will be published in May.

Performance reviews, continued from page 5

Ron Morgan Productions. *The Life and Work of Emily Dickinson: Words Like Blades*. Color JSCA, 30 min. 1998. Chip Taylor Communications, 1-800-876-2447; www.chiptaylor.com. \$166.65.

Reviewed by Judith Girardi

An entertaining tribute, Ron Morgan Productions' videorecording paints a picture of Dickinson as a lively, ambitious poet with a strong sense of life's ironies. The video runs chronologically, highlighting milestone events in her life, interspersed with dramatic poetry readings. Biographical segments focus on Dickinson's family relations and her struggles to have her poems published. Poetry readings are accompanied by artistic drawings and light, clear piano solos, creating an effectively textured background. Civil War photographs and selections from Dickinson's letters lend a fine historic context. Perfect for poetry circles, this video is recommended for Dickinson enthusiasts and introductory poetry seminars.

Judith Girardi, an academic librarian at Chaffey College, is pursuing a doctorate in English Literature at Claremont Graduate University.

BRUSSELS MEETS DICKINSON

A February 14 event at the Théâtre National in Brussels introduced Belgians to Emily Dickinson in an evening of "musique et poésie." Presented by several Belgian cultural organizations with the cooperation of the British Council, the program, subtitled "other ways of listening," presented soprano Susan Chilcott performing Aaron Copland's song cycle "Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson," accompanied by pianist Iain Burnside, interspersed with sixteen Dickinson poems read by actress Fiona Shaw. Philippe van Kessel was artistic advisor.

The handsome, large-format program guide offered texts of the poems and songs in English, with French and Dutch translations, along with illustrations of Dickinson, her home, and Amherst scenes.

The *Bulletin* thanks William Luce for sending the program for this event.

WORKING WITH EDIS

One of the major priorities of the EDIS Board during this coming year will be to organize ways for more people to join us in working on the Society's current projects and long-term goals. Many of you have been active in founding local Dickinson societies and in organizing local events. Others have volunteered on an ongoing or one-time basis to help us with publications, various aspects of conference organization, or annual meetings. This summer at our annual meeting in St. Paul, both as a Board and in our business meeting open to all EDIS members, we will discuss specific ways to encourage and maintain open interaction and cooperation between the Board and the general membership.

Activities of the Board are organized through several committees. We currently

have standing committees in the areas of:

- Fund Raising
- Membership
- Publications
- Conference and Programs
- Library
- Publicity
- Nominations

If you have skills, resources, or interests in one of these areas and would like to help us either with current projects and plans or in devising future plans, we would very much like to hear from you. Although all committees work under the direction of the Board, not all are chaired by Board members. Anyone with appropriate skills, experience, or energy might become the coordinating member of an EDIS committee.

You may write me, or any Board member, with an expression of interest. In the case of most committees, probably no significant action can be taken until after the annual meeting in August. In the meantime, however, the more we know about your interests, ideas, energies, and resources, the more fruitful our discussions in August can be.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Cristanne Miller, President of EDIS
Department of English
Pomona College
140 West Sixth Street
Claremont, CA 91711
ccmiller@pomona.edu
fax: 909-621-8296

"Landscapes of Desire," continued from p. 9

become a story of lost innocence in the landscape of the boy's desire. What makes Farr's poems as alive as the works of the artists about whom she writes has to do with that "perception of form" she ascribes to Dickinson at the end of *White*.

Partly that perception of form is conveyed through the electricity of Farr's language, which owes much to her years of reading Dickinson. Listen, for example, to the participials, grammatical components not often noted in Dickinson's poems but that leap out when one begins to focus on them. For example, Dickinson's famous sunset is "*Blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple / Leaping like Leopards to the sky*" (J228) and her train that "laps the Miles" is "*Complaining all the while*" (J585). Just so, in Farr's "Morisot," the jays and peonies are "*riffling...rustling, clustering*." The girl is sweetly "*welcoming*" and "Julie's hair" is "*lilting cornsilk*" (all italics added).

Readers of *Landscapes* will discover another Dickinsonian quality: the unexpected line breaks that make one pay attention to the single word centered between longer lines. Like Dickinson, Farr can spoof the very form in which she writes by crafting a poem of excruciating regularity. I can hear Dickinson's playfully grave voice in Farr's 1983 poem

"Looking-Back Rime or what Poets Used to Do:

A linnet
this minute
did spin it
a song:

Greenly
and cleanly,
serenely
among

The roses

And so forth, to the ending, which deconstructs the poem:

Too little
and brittle,
Time whittles;
they're past.

What is not "past" but "future" is the publication of Judith Farr's *Landscapes of Desire*. When Anthony Hecht read an early version of this collection, he wrote to Farr, in a letter she shared with this reviewer, of his admiration for the task she had "mapped out" for herself, which he described as "astonishingly ambitious." He spoke of the range of artistic expression, noting that it "covers a spectrum so wide and eclectic as to be daunting all by itself." Hecht's words to his friend "Judy" presage the reviews that no doubt will follow the book's publication. To this

reviewer, at least, they are fully deserved.

Richard Eder's praise of Farr's novel, *White*, seems as pertinent to her poetry as to her fiction. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Eder said: "Above all, Farr's portrait of Emily is entirely congruent with the poetry. Her method—each of its own dashes a twig obstructing a hill stream and sending up geysers of spray—confronts us with both a tangible figure and a mystery that remains untouched and unspoiled. Like the [Dickinson] poems, Farr's story is present and elusive."

Elusive or not, "the poets light but lamps." Dickinson's light has included in its disseminated circumference Judith Farr's richly detailed, intricate, and moving poems. As she ended her novel with the mystery of the "master" revealed as muse, so she ends the portrait in poetry of Morisot with words that describe not only Morisot and Dickinson but also Judith Farr: "She lived for art." If it is a muse who is the master in *White*, it is "the eye who was her guest, her lover, / as in her studio, or dining room." When Farr resigned recently from Georgetown in order to write full time, Louis Martz, her dissertation advisor, now eighty-five, came from Yale to honor her—as do I, and as will others lucky enough to read her *Landscapes of Desire*.

Continued on page 27

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Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, associate professor at Concordia University, St. Paul, was a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of Hong Kong last year and lectured on Dickinson in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. She is working on a book on Dickinson's fascicles.

The **Dickinson and Music Conference** announced in the last issue of the *Bulletin* has been postponed until the summer of 2002. Watch for announcements in future issues.

This summer, **Amherst College Library** will sponsor the first of a series of talks by scholars who have used the library's resources for their research. The series is designed to be of particular interest to those who plan to do similar work at the library. **Ellen Louise Hart** will inaugurate the series on July 19 at 11:00 a.m. with a talk on her research for *Open Me Carefully: Emily Dickinson's Intimate Letters to Susan Huntington Dickinson* (co-authored with Martha Nell Smith).

The **Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst** will host its eighth annual "Emily Dickinson's World" weekend on October 6-8. Events include addresses by Polly Longworth and David Porter, tours of the Homestead, the Evergreens, and

the Jones Library, a walking tour, a poetry reading and performance of Dickinson musical settings, a tea at the Amherst History Museum, and a candlelight reading at the Dickinson grave. For information, contact the UU Society of Amherst, P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA 01004-0502, or call 413-253-2848, or unitar@crocker.

This fall, **Julie Harris** will begin a six-month tour of the United States in *The Belle of Amherst*, by William Luce, in celebration of the play's twenty-fifth anniversary. The schedule is not available as the *Bulletin* goes to press, but watch the EDIS Webpage for dates and locations.

Lovers of Michael Bedard's book for children, *Emily*, will be saddened to learn of the death of its illustrator, **Barbara Cooney**, in March. Cooney, 83, had illustrated scores of children's books, for several of which she won prizes.

Registration Form for EDIS Annual Meeting, St. Paul, Minnesota, August 11-13, 2000

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

	(Before June 1)		(After June 1)		Total
	Members	NonMembers*	Members	NonMembers*	
Registration Fee	\$50.00	\$75.00	\$60.00	\$85.00	_____
Fri. Reception/Program	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	_____
Saturday Banquet	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	_____
For room,** breakfast, lunch	\$50.00/day	\$50.00/day	\$55.00/day	\$55.00/day	_____
Literary Tour of St. Paul***	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	_____
Total enclosed:					\$ _____

* For information on becoming a member, see the bottom of page 2.
 ** This price is for one day per person, double occupancy; for single occupancy, add \$10.00 per day.
 *** Focus on F. Scott Fitzgerald; space in trolley is limited; early reservations will be secure.

Please make check payable (in \$U.S.) to EDIS 2000 Annual Meeting, and return by May 30 to: Eleanor Heginbotham, Dept. of English, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN 55104-5494 ; phone: 651-641-8267; e-mail: heginbotham@csp.edu.

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For more information, see the EDIS Website:
<http://www.cwru.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html>

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Emily Dickinson International Society
c/o Georgiana Strickland
133 Lackawanna Road
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