

Bulletin

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

COUNTING DOWN TO ZERO THE TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE

By Cristanne Miller and Domhnall Mitchell

Emily Dickinson thought of November as the "Norway of the year." But 2001 will be the year of Emily Dickinson in Norway, as EDIS holds its fourth international gathering in honor of the poet. Scholars and admirers from fifteen countries will meet at the Britannia Hotel in Trondheim, Norway, August 3-5, to discuss, appropriately, "New Climates for Dickinson Study" under the general title "Zero at the Bone." In addition to a highly varied assortment of panels and workshops (see pages 16-17 of this issue), the conference will feature a banquet, an evening of music, and a buffet luncheon.

The Friday evening banquet will include presentation of the EDIS Distinguished Service Award to Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, emeritus professor of American literature at the University of Oslo, the first woman and the first non-American to receive this prestigious award. The evening will conclude with a presentation by Professor Martha Ackmann of Mount Holyoke College entitled "Morphing Emily Dickinson." Using the Dickinson daguerreotype as her starting point, she will use computer technology to demonstrate the effects of aging on the poet and will discuss their implications for Dickinson study.

Saturday evening's musical offering at the Trondheim Library will include songs known to have been performed by the "Swedish Nightingale," Jenny

Lind, whom Dickinson heard in 1851. The musicians will be among Norway's finest—soprano Kristin Høiseth Rustad, pianist Margaret Stachiewicz, and violinist Renata Kubala.

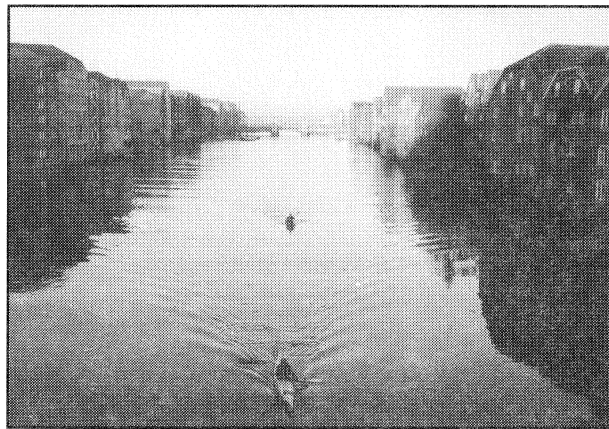


Photo by Lise Utne

Kayaks on the Nidelv River. Some of the wharves lining the river date to the eighteenth century.

"Zero at the Bone" is jointly sponsored by EDIS and the English Department at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. This spirit of international cooperation is reflected in the effort by organizers to foster a dialogic and interactive approach through the use of workshops and short presentations, where much of the emphasis will be on generating responses and discussion. At the close of the conference, Professor Jonathan Morse of the University of Hawaii will reply to some of the issues raised during the conference and will encourage debate and further intellectual exploration. The organizers hope the conference will function as a meeting point for a wide array of scholarly

and theoretical traditions and approaches that will enable contact across and beyond the normal geographic and disciplinary boundaries.

The conference begins Friday afternoon, August 3, but many delegates may want to arrive early to have time to explore the host city. Walking and bus tours of Trondheim are available on Thursday and Friday for a small fee. The walking tours require preregistration; the bus tours do not. See page 20 for details. Whether you tour as a group or on your own, the city, Norway's oldest, has much to offer.

Trondheim—or Nidaros, as it was originally known—was the first capital of Norway, and its cathedral is still the site of the coronation of new monarchs. The Sagas say the city was founded by King Olav Trygvason, Norway's patron saint, at the mouth of Nidelva (the Nid River) in 997. During the city's recent millennium celebrations, King Harald said that if Trondheim were removed from the annals of Norwegian history, nothing would remain but the covers.

Trondheim is also one of the most distinctive cities in Scandinavia. Many of its wooden buildings reflect traditions of craft and design that stretch back to the seventeenth century. The main street grid, designed after the Great Fire of 1681, radiates out from the town center, which is dominated by the statue of Saint Olav.

Situated on the beautiful Trond-

A tentative conference schedule appears on pages 16-17. For information on transportation, housing, and sightseeing and a registration form, see pages 20 and 31. Register now! The deadline is June 1.

heimsfjord, surrounded by wooded hills, and with the Nidelva winding through it, Trondheim is a suitable place for the meeting of diverse elements. Chief among its attractions is Nidaros Cathedral, Norway's national sanctuary and the country's most important monument from the Middle Ages. Built over the grave of Saint Olav, the cathedral site dates back to around 1050, though its oldest extant parts are from the twelfth century. Until the Reformation, it was an important pilgrim destination. It has been rebuilt several times because of damage from fires.

Trondheim has a rich cultural life: Arve Tellefsen, the violinist, and Liv Ullmann, the actress and film director, are two of its most celebrated contemporary ambassadors. The Trondheim Soloists, an instrumental ensemble drawn from the city's symphony orchestra and from the students and staff at the Conservatory of Music at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, regularly record and perform with the renowned German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter.

Of the city's several museums, the Folk Museum at Sverresborg is one of the most impressive and popular. It has around sixty buildings from Trondheim and the Trøndelag region, including a stave church from 1170 and a beautiful hand-ornamented farmhouse dating to the eighteenth century. The urban history section includes a market square surrounded by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings from the old town center, such as a dentist's surgery, a post office, and a shop selling old fashioned sweets. The Ski Museum tells the story of skiing as a competitive sport and as a practical means of transport down the ages. The rural section shows the development of Trøndelag building styles from

the fjord to the mountains and from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century.

Ringve National Museum, which is surrounded by the university's Botanical Gardens, is situated at Ringve estate overlooking the historic Lade peninsula. The estate dates to the 1740s and is built in the style characteristic of the area. There are daily tours of the Manor House, which

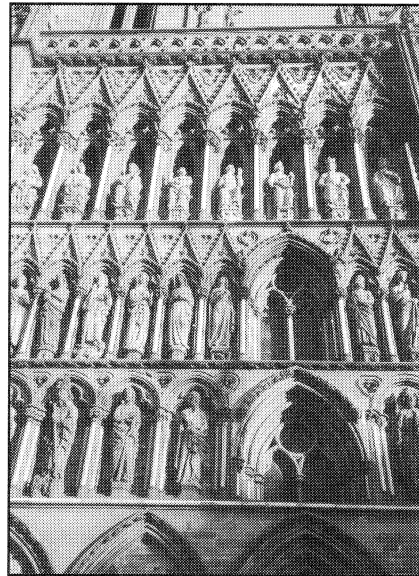


Photo by Lise Utne

The west front of Nidaros Cathedral, built in the late twelfth century.

looks as it did in the 1860s and houses a magnificent collection of historical musical instruments. Guides will demonstrate the instruments and lecture on their use and importance to the history of music. Among the artifacts are some items associated with Jenny Lind.

Delegates interested in material culture will enjoy the National Museum of Decorative Arts, which houses historic and modern collections of furniture, silver, textiles, and much more. Chief among

the exhibits are works in tapestry and glass by three important women artists. Not far from this museum is the Trondheim Kunstmuseum, the city's art gallery, which has a large collection of Norwegian art from around 1800 to the present.

Considering that it is only 500 km south of the Arctic circle, at 63°N and 10°E, Trondheim has a mild climate, but August days can vary anywhere from 10° to 26° Centigrade (50° to 70° Fahrenheit), and precipitation is not uncommon. A sweater and raincoat are strongly recommended, especially for those considering extended visits or planning hiking holidays. For more detailed touring information, see the Trondheim website at <http://www.trondheim.com/engelsk/>.

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, which is cosponsoring the conference, was established in 1996 when it merged and replaced the much older University of Trondheim, the Norwegian Institute of Technology, the College of Arts and Science, and the distinguished Museum of Natural History and Archaeology. It has a student body of around 20,000. A former student of the English Department, Birgit Kvamme-Lundheim, has been commissioned to design posters, brochures, and conference t-shirts.

A registration form for the conference appears on page 31. The deadline for registering is June 1. For continually updated information on the program, registration, accommodations, and transportation, see the conference website: http://www.english.pomona.edu/edis_conf/.

The conference organizers look forward to greeting many of you in this fascinating city of the North, where we will join in toasting Emily Dickinson with "best Norwegian wines."

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“VOLCANOES BE IN SICILY”

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

By Daniel Lombardo

La geografia mi attesta che ci sono
vulcani in Sud America
e in Sicilia—
ma esistono vulcani piu vicini
un gradino de lava ad ogni istante
me sembra di salire—
un cratere io posso contemplare
a casa mia il Vesuvio¹

Volcanoes be in Sicily
And South America
I judge from my Geography
Volcano nearer here
a Lava step at any time
Am I inclined to climb
A Crater I may contemplate
Vesuvius at Home [Fr1691]

I grew up with the sound of my father's mandolin on summer evenings, and the sweet smell of the wine press in the fall. Both my father's and my mother's families were from Sicily. My father was born there in a town called Canicattini Bagni. It was there that he serenaded my mother under her window when she was fifteen. She awoke and thought she had died and was in heaven.

I, on the other hand, was born in New England and find myself in an ambivalent dance between the sensuous south of Italy and the cool, rocky hills of New England. I often wondered, during my years as curator of the Emily Dickinson Collection at the Jones Library, how I could be attracted so powerfully to a poet who seemed anything but Italian. But I kept hearing her words—“Volcanoes be in Sicily /...I may contemplate Vesuvius at Home”—like the tremolo of my father's mandolin. I longed to explore Sicily, to climb volcanoes, and to see what, if anything, of Dickinson was there.

And, more important, what of *me* was there. I expected and hoped I would find home—in the warmth of the people, the warmth of the sun, the flowering almond trees, the lemon groves, the vineyards, and the blue, blue Mediterranean Sea. Home, as Dickinson longed for home, an almost sacred place, a sanctuary.

Having left a career I had followed for more than twenty-one years, I now had the time to return to Sicily for more than a few tempting days. I planned to circle and cross the island for five weeks in March and April 2000. My travel plan was to see my family in my parents' hometown, to delve into the pagan past (of the Sicanis and the Greeks)² to experience the pagan-tinged Christian present of the Easter season, and to climb the legendary Mount Etna and the volcanic island of Stromboli.

Dickinson's metaphoric use of volcanoes is well known. Though referred to in only a half dozen poems,³ the volcano has become firmly identified with the poet—particularly with her simmering anguish and barely contained fury. In poem Fr165 she writes:

If the stillness is Volcanic
In the human face
When upon a pain Titanic
Features keep their place—

In line 13 she speaks of “smouldering anguish,” and in lines 3-6, of the “phlegmatic mountains” bearing within “appalling Ordnance, / Fire, and smoke, and gun—.”

Four of the six volcano poems refer specifically to Italian volcanoes, though their site is not essential to their use as metaphors. But Dickinson's many references to the “blue peninsula,” as she sometimes called Italy, evidence an interest in the country as more than the location of Etna and Vesuvius. There are nearly forty Dickinson poems and about a dozen letters in which Italy is indicated by specific locations (e.g., Rome, Etruscan) or Italian figures (Dante, Titian).

In letter 184, she told John L. Graves that the “skies on me fairer far than Italy, in blue eye look down.” For Dickinson, Italy was sensuous, easeful, a taste of longed for heaven, but with sizzling lava ready at any time to take “Villages for breakfast” (Fr165).

Poem Fr129 has long been a favorite of mine, as it perfectly captures Dickinson's sense of Italy as a place apart:

Our lives are Swiss—
So still—so Cool—
Till some odd afternoon
The Alps neglect their Curtains
And we look farther on!

Italy stands the other side!
While like a guard between—
The solemn Alps—
The siren Alps
Forever intervene!

This poem came vividly alive for me years ago on a train from Switzerland through the Alps to Italy. As we crossed the border, rain, cold clouds, and stiff, buttoned-up railroad conductors gave way suddenly to blue skies and tanned railroad men with shirt collars undone.

Dickinson's awareness of Italy came from a broad variety of sources: her school geographies; contemporary newspaper articles (in the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* and the *Springfield Republican*); the literary articles, fiction, travel and natural history pieces in the family's copies of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and *Scribner's*; and her reading of authors such as the Brownings, James, Howells, Hawthorne, Emerson, the Brontës, Byron, Dante, and Shakespeare. Rebecca Patterson, in her essential essay on “Emily Dickinson's Geography,” notes that “All literate Americans knew that Italy was delicious and decadent.”⁴

Dickinson's enthusiastic reading of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, for example, gave her a portrait of an Italian girl whose Florentine mother died when she was four, and whose father, an “austere Englishman,” brought her to England.

The white walls, the blue hills, my
Italy,
Drawn backward...
...then, England! oh, the frosty cliffs
Looked cold upon me...⁵

Dickinson's “Our lives are Swiss” may have been influenced by Browning's contrast,⁶ or by Byron's *The Giaour*, in which

he wrote of the cold nations of the north and “the lava flood / That boils in Aetna’s breast of flame.”⁷

Dickinson’s comprehension of the Italian/Sicilian character was, to be sure, gathered secondhand. She could, nevertheless, incorporate references to it quite casually, as in a letter to Louise and Fannie Norcross in 1881 (L690): “Vinny’s pussy slept in grass Wednesday – a Sicilian symptom – the sails are set for summer.”

After anticipating my five weeks in Sicily for many years, I landed in Catania on March 18, together with my boyhood friend Tom Golden, who would spend the first two weeks with me. We were met at the airport by my cousin Paolo La Rosa, a handsome, dark-eyed man who had just turned fifty. We would stay with Paolo, Maria, their two teenage children, Gianpaolo and Concitta, and Maria’s parents. Their modern marble and glass home in Canicattini Bagni, outside Siracusa, is on Via Magenta, the street where my father was born.

My father’s mother, Concetta Bordonaro, died when he was three years old. Like Aurora Leigh—and indeed like Dickinson—he felt “the mother-loss.” Fortunately his grandmother, Francesca di Mauro, raised him as only a four-feet-something Sicilian woman can. I had always wanted to know more about my father’s mother, about whom little was ever said. When cousin Nanuzzu brought me to the cemetery to see the grave of my father’s grandmother, I asked him where Concetta was buried. We walked past the marble mausoleums to a ragged field. He gestured to it and said the family had no money, so she had been buried there for a while. Periodically, the bones from there were dug up and incinerated and the ashes dumped out of town. Local boys tell of playing soccer out there and occasionally kicking up bones. As we left the little field, the ground gave way and I nearly fell into

a pauper’s grave. Later, the normally serious Nanuzzu delighted in telling everyone of my near descent into the land of my ancestors.

After several days of being warmly enveloped and overfed by my family, Tom and I set out on our own. We rented a Citroen in Siracusa—the magnificent city founded by the Greeks and still the site of some of the finest Greek theaters,

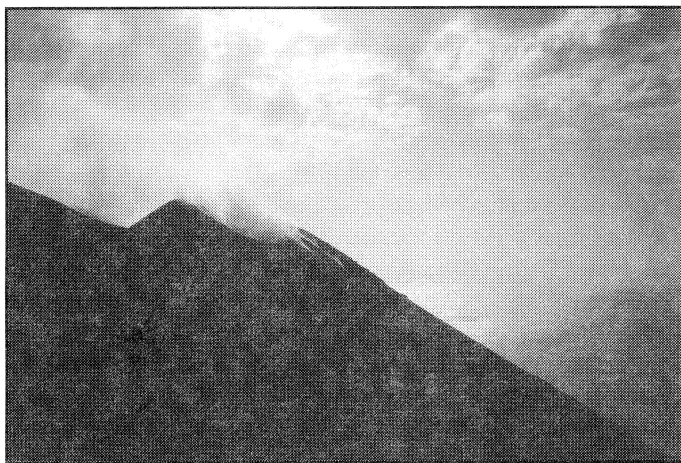


Photo by Dan Lombardo

Stromboli displays its “appalling Ordnance.”

Roman temples, and Christian catacombs. We drove inland, to the very center of Sicily, the mountain town of Enna. To get there we passed Lago di Pergusa, the lake where Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Zeus, was abducted to the underworld by Hades. Demeter searched frantically and negotiated for Persephone’s return. Hades agreed to release her, and all of Sicily flowered, but she was obliged to return to Hades for the winter months, leaving the land desolate. It is her return to Earth each year that brings the spring.

Ironically, we had to leave the coast and travel away from Etna before we could look back and see the volcano. Our first night in Enna was foggy, and we returned to our hotel covered, oddly, with grit. In the morning we learned that Etna—forty miles away—had erupted with more ferocity than it had for nine years, and the ash had reached Enna.

The next morning was a clear, blue Sicilian day as we walked to Castel Lombardia on the edge of town. Rounding the outer wall we gasped at the sudden sight of Etna on the horizon. The volcano seemed to float there, spewing white smoke from four craters, snow surround-

ing the peak and covering most of the north slope. Completely alone, we watched, while nearby birds sang in the fig trees and cows grazed on green grass and wildflowers.

On my volcano grows the Grass
A meditative spot –
An acre for a Bird to choose
Would be the general thought –

How red the Fire rocks below
How insecure the sod
Did I disclose
Would populate with awe my solitude
[Fr1743]

Before climbing Etna, we would circle to the northeast to climb Stromboli. The volcanic island of Stromboli rises abruptly from the crystal blue water off the northern coast of Sicily, among the Aeolian Islands. Legend says the god Vulcan accidentally created the islands when he angrily threw away pieces of rock. Unlike Etna, Stromboli constantly booms and erupts. Few people live in the two towns on the island, and it’s recommended that one hire a guide to navigate the rugged, changing trails.

We stayed at the Avellino, in a white-washed bungalow set beside a courtyard with lemon, orange, and grapefruit trees, roses, and a blooming bird of paradise. With no guides available at that time of year, we studied our maps and started off on the five-hour odyssey. The weather was calm as we started toward the distant booms of the volcano. Halfway up, the crater suddenly came into view. On cue, an exploding cascade of rock and sulphur arced outward and clattered down the scarred slope called the Sciarra del Fuoco. We followed the trail higher, along a thin exposed ridge. By this time the wind had become fierce and we were buffeted by flying grit. Reaching the other end of the ridge, we found ourselves, contrary to the map, *above* the volcano’s main crater.

We stared down into the gaping hole and at the smoking fumaroles on its flanks. Then the mountain let loose—rock and red lava spewed up and away from us, and we were left in a cloud of sulphur.

We retreated down the same windy ridge and rested on a lower slope. For a few minutes it was utterly quiet, except for the squawks of ravens playing back and forth.

From that safer distance we watched the eruptions that came every twelve to fifteen minutes. The rumbles echoed in my chest. I could understand the ancients' belief in the gods and Dickinson's concern with immortality. The sun came out and warmed us and lit up the other Aeolian Islands below.

The reticent volcano keeps
His never slumbering plan;
Confided are his projects pink
To no precarious man. [Fr1776]

By the end of March we were in Taormina, the cliffside town suspended over the Mediterranean on the east coast of Sicily. From the main piazza or, better yet, from the Greek theater, one can see the snow and smoke of nearby Etna. Knowing how many times towns had been destroyed in the past, and how extreme its present eruptions were, we were surprised to find that ascents were still allowed. Only the north face of the volcano was considered dangerous, so on March 29 we drove the two hours to Etna.

The lower flanks of Etna are covered with small towns, vineyards, and lemon groves. These give way to desolate lava fields. Nearing 6,000 feet we stopped the car to watch a perfect smoke ring float away from the crater we couldn't yet see. A cable car took us up to the snowfields at about 8,000 feet, and we hiked to the highest point allowed. We walked a narrow road cut into the snowbanks that were, in places, twelve feet high.

Above the snow line, where warm lava keeps snow from accumulating, we reached a scientific observation station that had been destroyed in previous eruptions. A rope marked the end of our hike. Above was the peak, smoking and booming to the north. Under our feet was warm lava. As we turned and started down, we looked up to see another perfect smoke ring floating away from Etna's great crater. The air currents slowly twisted it into the emblem for infinity, and we watched as it lingered and dissolved.

That night, exhausted and exhilarated, Tom and I drove to the small town of Castelmolo, higher yet above Taormina.

We found a *trattoria* and had seafood and wine on its outdoor piazza. The waiter told us of the spectacular displays Etna often put on for diners on that piazza. Then he went over and turned off the lights. We saw, appearing out of the blackness, deep red lava flowing down Etna.

When Etna basks and purrs
Naples is more afraid
Than when she shows her Garnet
Tooth –
Security is loud – [Fr1161]

It hardly matters that Dickinson sometimes confused geographical details. It's not Etna that threatens Naples, but Vesuvius. In "Volcanoes be in Sicily," her reference to "Vesuvius at home" implies that the volcano is not on the peninsula but on Sicily. In Dickinson's most strik-

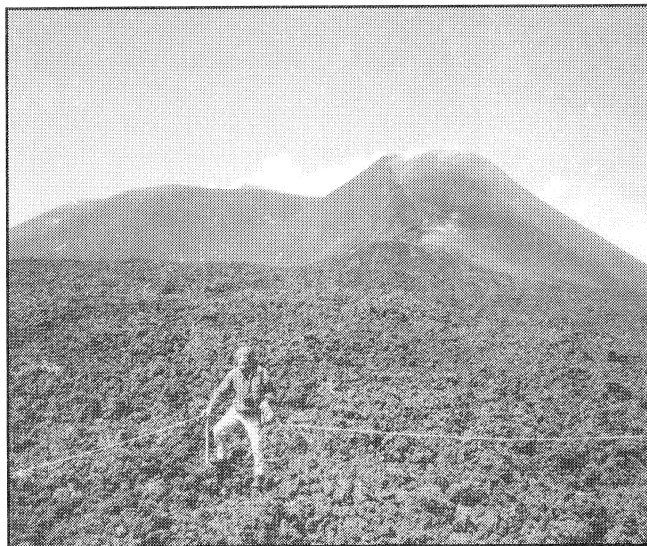


Photo by Tom Golden

Our intrepid author, a "Lava step" from Etna's crater.

ing use of the two volcanoes, she admits to confusing them. In her "Master Letter" of about 1861, she wrote, "Vesuvius dont talk – Etna – dont – one of them – said a syllable – a thousand years ago, and Pompeii heard it, and hid forever – She could'nt look the world in the face, afterward – I suppose – Bashfull Pompeii!" (L233). Here Dickinson becomes Pompeii itself, overwhelmed by Vesuvius. In what was likely the following spring, on April 25, 1862, she wrote to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "I had a terror – since September – I could tell to none – and so I sing, as the Boy does by the Burying Ground – because I am afraid –" (L261). The syllable

from Vesuvius and the terror since September may be linked.⁸

Dickinson's grasp of Italian geography was developed first from childhood texts, such as Samuel G. Goodrich's *Peter Parley's Method of Telling about Geography to Children*⁹ and S. Augustus Mitchell's ancient and modern geographies. In Mitchell's *Ancient Geography Designed for Academies, Schools, and Families...*,¹⁰ she would have read of the Etruscans and Romans. She may have gotten her image of contemporary Italy partially from Mitchell's *A System of Modern Geography...*, which includes this passage: "All parts of this kingdom have a warm climate, and a luxuriant soil. The fig and almond tree, the cotton-plant, and sugar-cane, all flourish; yet the cities and town are filled with beggars, and

persons destitute of employment. The supineness of the government, and the indolence of the people, prevent agriculture, manufactures, or commerce, from being diligently pursued."¹¹ This brings to mind Dickinson's observation that Vinny's cat, asleep in the grass, exhibited "a Sicilian symptom."

Among the many nineteenth-century authors who wrote of Italy and whom Dickinson read was William Dean Howells. A copy

of his *Italian Journeys*¹² was in the Dickinson family library (inscribed, possibly by Emily, "Sue Dec 25th 1867"). If Emily read it, she would have gotten a sophisticated view of the country, replete with references to Ariosto, Tasso, Keats, and Shelley. Howells was not immune to the romance of Italy: "The Villa [a promenade in Naples] is a slender strip of Paradise, a mile long; it is rapture to walk in it, and it comes, in description, to be a garden-grove, with feathery palms, Greekish temples, musical fountains, white statues of the gods, and groups of fair girls in spring silks...the sun is always setting on the bay, and you cannot tell whether

Continued on page 27

BILLY COLLINS TAKES OFF EMILY DICKINSON'S CLOTHES

By Rob McClure Smith

Upon reading Billy Collins's tribute to Emily Dickinson, I made two decisions: that I would include Collins in the Poet to Poet series and that I would ask Rob McClure Smith to write the Collins profile. Fortunately both men accepted my invitations, and Smith even brought Collins from New York to Illinois to give a reading at Knox College in the course of the project. The essay that follows chronicles that visit and offers a fascinating view of Collins and his relationship to Dickinson.

Jonnie Guerra, *Series Editor*

It's a cold November afternoon on the prairie, but considerably warmer in the Red Room of the Knox College library. When Billy Collins steps to the podium, there are well over a hundred undergraduates in the room. Many of them are not at all convinced that a poetry reading is where they want to begin their weekend, at least ideally. Fifty minutes later, though, enraptured by the performance (for Collins is a superb reader of his poetry), they have few regrets. Indeed, the students soon assume what Collins identifies in his poem "The Many Faces of Jazz" as his own "jazz face": "...the whole/head furiously, yet almost imperceptibly / nodding / in total and absolute agreement."

When Collins announces that he will read one final poem, he flicks through his copy of *Sailing Alone Around the Room*, back and forth, rippling the pages. "But which...?" he sighs in mock despair. "They're all so good." The audience, although they are by now well attuned to the poet's wry humor, laugh nervously. This strikes me—at that moment—as a rather puzzling reaction. Collins looks up, grins mischievously, and concludes his reading with the haunting "Nightclub."

Collins was born in 1941 in the same small New York hospital where, he notes, William Carlos Williams once worked as a pediatrician. The son of an electrician,

Collins attended parochial schools and Holy Cross College before earning his doctorate in romantic poetry at the University of California at Riverside. Collins has taught at Lehman College, City University of New York, since the early 1970s, although in recent years he has also participated in the writing programs at Columbia and Sarah Lawrence and conducted summer poetry workshops at University College Galway in Ireland. He lives in Westchester County, New York, with his wife, Diane, an architect.



Photo by Maude Clay

Collins's first published poems appeared in wonderfully obscure journals like *Flying Faucet Review* and *Oink*. Two years after the publication of his first book, *The Apple that Astonished Paris* (1988), his manuscript *Questions About Angels* (1991) was selected by Edward Hirsch as the winner of the annual National Poetry Series competition. Hirsch dubbed Collins "an American original—a metaphysical poet with a funny bone and a sly questioning intelligence...an ironist of the void."

Questions About Angels and *The Art of Drowning* (1995) established Collins as a poet with a significant reputation, a status confirmed by his poems appearing in *Po-*

etry, *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *New Yorker* and being featured in the *Pushcart Prize Anthology* and *The Best American Poetry* for 1992, 1993, and 1997. A past winner of the Bess Hokin Prize, the Frederick Bock Prize, the Oscar Blumenthal Prize and the Levinson Prize, Collins has also received fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Recently, though, Collins's poetry has begun to reach a larger popular audience. A few weeks after the publication of *Picnic, Lightning* (1998), Garrison Keillor, who had read several of Collins's poems during his *Writer's Almanac* feature on National Public Radio, invited Collins to read his poetry on *Prairie Home Companion*. After two appearances on Keillor's show, and following an interview on NPR's *Morning Edition*, sales of *Picnic, Lightning* topped 80,000 and all three of his most recent books assumed permanent residence on the poetry best-seller list at Amazon.com. Collins's spoken verse recording, *The Best Cigarette*, also quickly became one of the country's bestselling poetry CDs.

This sudden popularity culminated in Collins finding himself, in December of 1999, discussed as a figure of controversy on the front page of the *New York Times* under the arresting headline "On Literary Bridge, Poet Hits a Roadblock." After luring Collins away from the University of Pittsburgh Press with a three-book, six-figure contract, and after launching an advertising campaign for his forthcoming volume of new and selected poetry, his publisher, Random House, became embroiled in a significant permissions dispute with Pitt, a dispute that culminated (with accusations flying in the popular press) in the temporary cancellation of the volume despite the fact that galleys had already been printed and bound.

Collins, who uses a worn paperback copy of the unreleased volume at his readings, calls the entire process simulta-

"Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes"

First, her tippet made of tulle,
easily lifted off her shoulders and laid
on the back of a wooden chair.

And her bonnet,
the bow undone with a light forward pull.

Then the long white dress, a more
complicated matter with mother-of-pearl
buttons down the back,
so tiny and numerous that it takes forever
before my hands can part the fabric,
like a swimmer's dividing water,
and slip inside.

You will want to know
that she was standing
by an open window in an upstairs bedroom,
motionless, a little wide-eyed,
looking out at the orchard below,
the white dress puddled at her feet
on the wide-board, hardwood floor.

The complexity of women's undergarments
in nineteenth-century America
is not to be waved off,
and I proceeded like a polar explorer
through clips, clasps, and moorings,
catches, straps, and whalebone stays,
sailing toward the iceberg of her nakedness.

Later, I wrote in a notebook
it was like riding a swan into the night,
but, of course, I cannot tell you everything —
the way she closed her eyes to the orchard,
how her hair tumbled free of its pins,
how there were sudden dashes
whenever we spoke.

What I can tell you is
it was terribly quiet in Amherst
that Sabbath afternoon,
nothing but a carriage passing the house,
a fly buzzing in a windowpane.

So I could plainly hear her exhale
when I undid the very top
hook-and-eye fastener of her corset

and I could hear her sigh when finally it was unloosed,
the way some readers sigh when they realize
that Hope has feathers,
that reason is a plank,
that life is a loaded gun
that looks right at you with a yellow eye.

From *Picnic, Lightning*. Reprinted with permission of the poet.

neously flattering and frustrating: "It's flattering to have two presses fighting over your poems, frustrating to have a book in limbo for a year and a half as a result." The volume, *Sailing Alone Around the Room*, is now slated for release in the summer of 2001.

In retrospect, Collins is delighted that one result of the controversy was his actually having two poems printed in the *New York Times*. At the same time, he is only too aware that the accessibility of his poetry and its crossover appeal to a popular audience may predetermine its eventual critical neglect: "The legacy of modernism is this deep connection between difficulty and quality. The assumption is that if a poem isn't difficult, or opaque, it can't be good. The irony is, of course, that the same people who lament the decline of poetry in our culture are usually also the first to resent its occasional commercial success."

The recurring, perhaps obsessive, theme of Collins's poetry is a quintessentially romantic one—the superiority of the imagination and the wistful pleasures of the contemplative poetic life. "Fishing on the Susquehanna in July" begins: "I have never been fishing on the Susquehanna / or on any river for that matter / to be perfectly honest," while "Budapest" ends with the speaker gazing out of his window imagining "Budapest / or some other city where I have never been."

While Collins's wryly reflective romanticism places him squarely in an American poetic tradition that runs from Emerson through Stevens, and while his poetry is often in playful, sometimes parodic dialogue with the larger literary canon (as poems entitled "Lines Composed Over Three Thousand Miles from Tintern Abbey" and "Musee des Beaux Arts Revisited" would indicate), his work also inevitably brings to mind the work of that other great New York poet of apparently effortless craft, Frank O'Hara. Collins's most memorable poetry, like O'Hara's, is a jazz-inflected conversation evoking a teeming world of museums and literature, a nostalgia for roads not taken, and the melancholia of small pleasures—an empty whiskey glass, Freddie Hubbard's trumpet, the memory of "the best cigarette."

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FINDING “FREEDOM” RESEARCHING EMILY DICKINSON’S BEDROOM

By Kristin Herron

Thousands of people are drawn each year to the Dickinson Homestead to see the place where Emily Dickinson lived and wrote. The highlight of the tour is the visit to her bedroom, where she did most of her work. As her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, wrote: “Her love of being alone up in her room was associated with her feeling for a key, which signified freedom from interruption and the social prevention that beset her downstairs. She would stand looking down, one hand raised, thumb and forefinger closed on an imaginary key, and say, with a quick turn of her wrist, ‘It’s just a turn—and freedom, Matty!’”¹

How can a historic house museum evoke such a powerful feeling in its visitors? That was the challenge I faced in preparing a Historic Furnishings Report for Emily Dickinson’s bedroom, funded by a grant from the Scholar-in-Residence Program, a collaborative program between the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Bay State Historical League.

But what is a Historic Furnishings Report (HFR), and why did the Homestead need one? More than just a guide to decoration, a historic furnishings report provides an analysis of objects and primary and secondary sources, while contextualizing choices in the placement of objects. Context is provided not only through secondary sources but also through information from the people who lived in or visited the Homestead (from letters, memoirs, or oral communications). This report not only provides further information on objects but also helps guide the site in the interpretation of this bedroom.

Having recently finished an interpretive planning process funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Homestead needed to consider the visual representation of its only fully furnished room. The HFR documents the history of this room—functionally, physically, and decoratively. It makes recommendations

on returning the room to the way it may have looked during Dickinson’s occupancy.

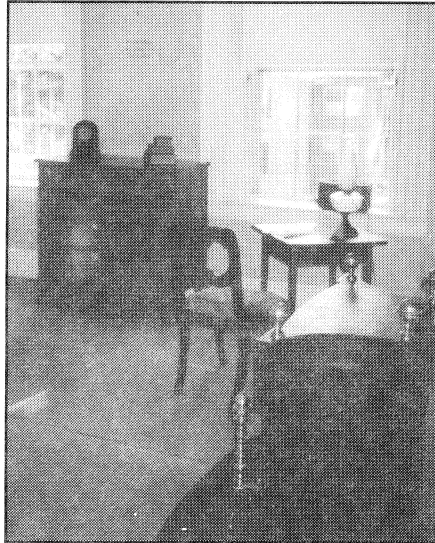


Photo by Cindy Dickinson

Dickinson’s bedroom as arranged in December 2000. The bed is out of camera range at left.

The way it *may* have looked. That may seem a disappointing statement—we all want to be able to visit this room and see exactly how Dickinson lived. We want to see what she kept in her room, where she positioned her desk, how the arrangement of this space may have affected her craft. Despite her nearly 1,800 poems and more than a thousand surviving letters, Dickinson rarely referred to her bedroom. There are no period photographs or drawings, nor are there probate inventories of this room (lists of possessions taken at the time of death). Physical evidence is also slim. Written recollections (especially from Martha Dickinson Bianchi) exist, yet their accuracy is limited by the writer’s memory.

Because of the limited primary evidence for the furnishing of Emily Dickinson’s bedroom, the recommendations for altering the presentation of the room were based on what evidence has been unearthed, combined with information from period sources, including trade catalogs, probate inventories from New England

households of the same era, and prescriptive literature (i.e., home decorating advice). Because the Homestead is now a museum, additional consideration had to be given to protection of the artifacts in the room and the traffic pattern of visitors.

Knowledge of the Dickinson family suggests that, after the remodeling of the Homestead in 1855, when Edward Dickinson repurchased the house, it is unlikely that any major decorative changes occurred up to the poet’s death in 1886. Thus an emphasis was placed on mid-nineteenth-century evidence. This posed its own challenges. For example, in 1855 Dickinson would likely have used a whale oil lamp for additional light at her desk. Nearer to the time of her death a kerosene lamp would more likely have been in use.

Still, some exciting discoveries have been made. During one of my site visits, Cindy Dickinson, director of the Homestead, and I were reviewing documentary resources. One of those was an inventory of the Evergreens written in Martha Dickinson Bianchi’s hand with additional notes in another hand. This inventory included the following entry: “On piano. Currier & Ives of/Windsor Castle which/hung in Emily’s Room—.” A single word, written in the other hand, to the right of the entry, read: “Harvard.”

This intrigued us greatly! Why would Dickinson have an image of Windsor Castle in her room? Was it a gift from someone? Could this in any way relate to Fr256: “Because I see—New Englandly—/The Queen, discerns like me—/Provincially—”? Happily, a later Bianchi manuscript also referenced this print. During my research trip to the Houghton Library, I mentioned this to Leslie Morris, curator of manuscripts, who checked the collection. Unfortunately, she could not locate the print, nor does it currently exist in the Dickinson Homestead collection or the collection of the Evergreens.

A quick look into the catalogue raisonné of Currier and Ives at the Winterthur

Museum Library revealed that they did indeed produce an image of Windsor Castle, similarly described. Its date is unknown, although a copy exists in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. If any reader knows of a relationship between Emily and Windsor Castle, the Homestead would be interested in using this information to enhance interpretation of the room.

Equally exciting were wallpaper fragments discovered during the work on the Historic Structure Report (HSR) completed in 1999 by Myron Stachiw and Associates. The fragment discovered above the current ceiling in Dickinson's bedroom has been identified as from ca. 1880-90. The Historic Structures Report notes that the ceiling was lowered around 1916. Although this paper, which features a grid of "Vs and arrows in thin black lines overprinted with vines and leaves on [an] off white field," hung in her room, it could well date to after her death and thus would be an inaccurate choice for restoration.

Luckily a fragment discovered in what was another bedroom (now a bathroom) dates to ca. 1855-60. As described in the HSR, this paper shows a "pattern of alternating outline curvilinear shapes with Gothic references including pointed tops and inner trefoils. [The] shapes contain floral sprays on variously colored fields including light gray, dark brown and bright blue. Shapes [are] surrounded by irregular green vermiform motifs on light gray field. [The] fields include leaf and berry forms of off-white outlined in thin yellow-orange lines." Highly appropriate for a bedroom and for the era in which the Dickinsons returned to the Homestead, this is the wallpaper recommended for reproduction. While we have no direct evidence that such wallpaper hung on her walls, the pattern is appropriate, and it was a paper selected by the Dickinson family.

Most of the changes involve rearranging furniture currently located in Dick-

inson's bedroom. Much of the support for these changes comes from Bianchi's recollections as analyzed against period literature. An unpublished manuscript, written by Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson,² provided key insights into furnishings arrangements. Surprising to Cindy and me, Bianchi places Dickinson's chest of drawers in a very different location from where visitors have seen it. Bianchi wrote: "Between the two South windows was her white-mahogany bureau, with its 'swell-front' and inlaid border of satinwood." This change affects the placement of the bed and washstand. With no real knowledge of where they were located, we have had to rely on physical reality. A couple of options were made available to the Homestead, which is currently trying out these ideas and noting visitor responses.

Other objects have not been moved. The Franklin stove remains in its location on the west wall, and it is recommended that the mantel, which the Homestead still owns and which was located behind the stove, be reinstalled. Dickinson's desk

will not be moved, either. Bianchi notes that the desk was "in the corner, by the 'window facing West.'" Such directions help in placing the object. The trouble is, there are *two* windows facing west. I have recommended keeping the desk in the same position because in the southwest corner Dickinson could have peered out of both windows. An inkwell and dip pen are also recommended for the desk.

Additions will include prints and photographs, new bed coverings, carpeting, new window treat-

ments, and silk reproductions of hyacinths. Evidence suggests that Dickinson's wall had more images—a painting by her mother and images of family and friends, in addition to the Currier and Ives print and the images of George Eliot, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Thomas Carlyle, reproductions of which currently hang in the room. The

current bed coverings are not appropriate to the mid-nineteenth century. I have also suggested options for seasonal changes, as the bed coverings would change depending on the weather. Floor coverings would also change seasonally. While matting similar to that currently on the floor would have been in use, ingrain carpeting likely covered the matting in colder months. Holland shades—roller blinds—would have been used at the windows.

Bianchi recalled her aunt caring for plants in her room and noted that the room was "forever associated for me with the odor of hyacinths, for the way of a bulb in the sunshine had an uncanny fascination for her, their little pots crowding all four window-sills to bring a reluctant spring upon the air. From the first prick of the green above the earth she detected every minute sign of growth."³ Reproductions are recommended because fresh flowers can attract insect infestations and damage can occur from accidental spills or increases in the room's humidity.

While full restoration of Dickinson's bedroom will take time, furniture has already been rearranged. The next time you visit the Homestead you are likely to be surprised by the bedroom. While we may never know what the room really looked like during the poet's tenure in the space, we hope the results of the Historic Furnishings Report and further restoration of the room will get us closer to finding Dickinson's "freedom" for ourselves.

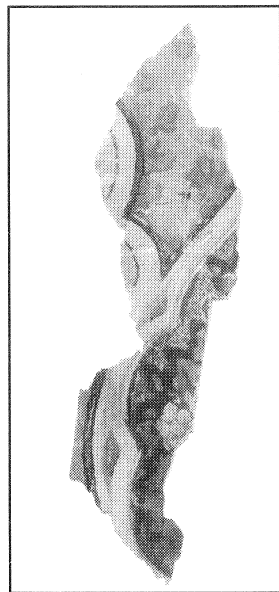
Notes

1. *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), 66.

2. "Emily Dickinson: Her Life, Lineage and Legacy" (unpublished ms, ca. 1940s, collection of Barton Levi St. Armand). Special thanks are due to Polly Longworth for pointing out the relevant sections of this ms, and to Bart St. Armand for permission to quote it.

3. *Face to Face*, 45.

Kristin Herron has been a consultant for the past year at the Dickinson Homestead for both the Historic Furnishing Report and the NEH Interpretive Planning Project. She is Director of the Museum Program of the New York State Council on the Arts in New York City. *Cindy Dickinson* is Director of the Emily Dickinson Homestead.



The Dickinson Homestead

“THAT THE HOUSE BE TAKEN DOWN TO THE CELLAR” HOW THE EVERGREENS WAS SAVED

By Gregory Farmer

Like many New England properties, the Evergreens has an intangible value that far exceeds its worth as real estate. But the history of the property is a subtle tale of family pride that almost ended in disaster. It is mainly through the foresight and determination of its last resident, Mary Landis Hampson, that the Evergreens was saved from destruction.

Martha Gilbert Dickinson's marriage to a Russian cavalry officer, Alexander Emmanuel Bianchi, in 1903 seemed a harbinger of new life for the Evergreens. Captain Bianchi was able to arrange an administrative appointment from the Russian government that gave him an office in Boston. He and Martha subsequently moved into the Evergreens with the widowed Susan Dickinson and began upgrading the house to modern standards by installing electricity, a telephone, a more efficient coal-burning cookstove, and new plumbing fixtures.

Captain Bianchi's private business ventures (including the sale of American-made electric cars to the European market) began to sour in 1905. By 1907 he was being hounded by creditors who threatened to seize not only the Evergreens but also the Dickinson Homestead, to which Martha had inherited an interest after Lavinia Dickinson's death in 1899.

Susan and Martha were advised by legal counsel to confirm their title to the Evergreens and to clarify the boundary between the two houses. Captain Bianchi subsequently fled the country to avoid his creditors. The Dickinson properties were left intact, but Susan and Martha could not easily forget how close they had come to losing their family home.

The financial and emotional trauma resulting from the Bianchi affair persuaded Susan and Martha to rent out the Dickinson Homestead for several years, and it was eventually sold outright in 1916. Although Martha gave up title to the Homestead, she retained ownership of the large lawn between the two houses as a buffer

and a reminder of more pleasant family times. Her own title to the Evergreens came through inheritance from Austin and later Susan, and was confirmed by the probate court.

Beginning with the publication of *The Single Hound* in 1914, Martha gradually set aside her own writing career to meet the growing interest in the work of her Aunt Emily. In 1920 she enlisted a young Boston tenor, Alfred Leete Hampson, to serve as her literary assistant and eventual co-editor. Together, they carried the banner of Emily Dickinson against all challengers.



Alfred Leete Hampson, ca. 1920. Courtesy of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust.

By the time she turned seventy, Martha was acutely conscious of the need for a suitable memorial to Emily Dickinson and an appropriate repository for the manuscript poems and letters in her own possession. In a series of letters to Alfred in 1936, Martha referred to their discussions: “I have asked [attorney] Welch to change two clauses in my will....In case anything happens to me, refer him to my letter of today [October 31, 1936]—in which I say I wish the Estate ultimately to be used as a Memorial foundation such as we, you and I, have talked of this year.”

In a birthday greeting to Alfred dated

November 15, 1936, Martha was more specific:

While you are in Boston I write a few suggestions to supplement my will in detail. We are so in accord as to the hope of keeping the Evergreens intact, as the Dickinson Memorial—that I need not go into that again.

You realize how I feel about the manuscripts and about the two books we have yet to do together, if I live. I have certainty of mind with this trust in your hands. It may be best to *build* a small fireproof building on the place: in which case the present home could be taken down. I want to live to do this myself—and “Hope is the thing with feathers!”

I don't want to tie you up to living conditions that might prove uncongenial—you will arrange the number of months a year you wish to live here as seems best to you. It is understood between us that the Evergreens shall remain a Dickinson Memorial;—Never let Emily Dickinson and Amherst College consolidate in any way, even the most remote. She is above and beyond all that. Her fame is never to be smothered in Foot Ball memorabilia. We feel alike about this.

Martha's dedication to the memory of Emily Dickinson was sincere. In addition to publishing Emily's poems and letters as well as her own reminiscences, Martha spoke widely about the poet and personally entertained “pilgrims” who came to call at the Evergreens. She even approached the Carnegie Corporation in search of support for a Dickinson Memorial at the Evergreens, but historic preservation was still in its infancy and the significance of the Evergreens was not immediately apparent.

Two years later, in November of 1938, Martha revised her will and sought to preserve the integrity of the Evergreens:

I give to Alfred L. Hampson..., my

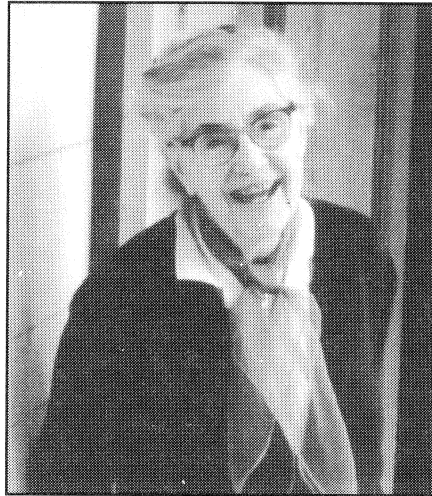
real estate situate at No. 214 Main St., in Amherst, Massachusetts, and known as the Evergreens. This devise is subject to the condition that the house shall not be occupied or used by anyone other than said Alfred L. Hampson, the members of his family, guests and servants, and if said property should be sold the house shall be razed before the transfer of title to said land. It is my intention and will that the said Alfred L. Hampson receive the fee to said land by this devise, but for sentimental reasons I do not want my dwelling house occupied by anyone else ...and when the property is no longer desired for occupancy by those mentioned above..., the said house shall be razed before the purchaser secures a good title to said land. To satisfy this condition it is not sufficient that the house be removed and placed upon some other land. It is my will that the house be taken down to the cellar.

It is likely that Martha's concern about the house if it should leave Alfred Hampson's hands was that it might be converted to a teahouse, a student residence, or a fraternity. The houses of other old Amherst families had already suffered such a fate, and Martha was adamant that the Evergreens would not succumb. It would be preferable for the house to be demolished completely. Still, she held out hope for a Dickinson memorial. On November 9, 1940, and again on July 7, 1941, she added notations confirming the intentions expressed in her letter to Alfred of November 15, 1936.

Despite his fondness for the Evergreens and the treasures it contained, Alfred Hampson found it hard to comply with Martha's wishes. Although he was only fifty-four when Martha died in December 1943, Alfred's own health was deteriorating rapidly from heavy drinking and severe attacks of hepatitis. When Alfred mysteriously disappeared from the train during a trip from New York to Amherst, he was rescued from his kidnappers in Springfield by Mary Landis, an old friend of his and Martha's from the National Arts Club in New York.

It was clear that Alfred needed a guardian, and Mary Landis stepped into the breach. Mary, whom Martha had nick-

named "the Bird," was a Smith College graduate (class of 1918) and a companion to the noted Chicago artist Harriet Blackstone. Although the foursome had enjoyed each other's company on many occasions, Alfred Hampson had brushed off Martha's suggestion that he consider Mary as a suitable life-match. Still, fate has a way of bringing things around.



Mary Landis Hampson, ca. 1975. Courtesy of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust.

Alfred Hampson and Mary Landis were married in April 1947 and reopened the Evergreens as their permanent residence. Despite Mary's constant care and attention, Alfred's health continued to decline, and he worried constantly about how to fulfill his obligation and Martha's wishes. As the medical bills piled up, Alfred devised a partial solution in 1950. He arranged to sell 958 of Emily Dickinson's manuscript poems, together with an assortment of Dickinson family correspondence, part of the library, and some of the personal furnishings to an old friend of Martha's, New York attorney Gilbert Holland Montague, with the understanding that the items would then be donated to the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Alfred could continue to receive his much needed medical care, and the preservation of the most important Dickinson materials would be assured.

The transfer of Dickinson manuscripts and library books continued through 1951, but Alfred had little strength to devote to the remaining issues. He died in May 1952 without ever resolving the future of the Evergreens or the intended Dickinson Memorial. Ownership of the Evergreens

devolved to Mary Landis Hampson, but the title was anything but clear. Mary was well aware of the demolition clause in Martha Dickinson Bianchi's will and devoted the rest of her life to finding a way to insure preservation of the Evergreens.

Mary sought out expert advice from attorneys in Amherst, Boston, and New York. In a search for worthy partners, she contacted the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and even Amherst College. The Amherst College connection looked promising when a private donor spearheaded a drive to raise money to purchase "either the Homestead or the Evergreens," but the fundraising fell short of the challenge. Mary's attitude toward Amherst College soured with the college's subsequent acceptance of Mabel Loomis Todd's "stolen" Dickinson manuscripts from Mabel's daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, in 1956.

Finding a lukewarm reception from other organizations, Mary struck out on her own path. With the help of Amherst attorney Winthrop "Toby" Dakin, she crafted a testamentary trust that would continue ownership of the property beyond her death and thereby prevent the property from being sold. In outlining the purpose of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, Mary was quite clear about priorities:

Its purpose shall be to establish "The Evergreens"...and its contents as a charitable and cultural facility ...associated with the American author Martha Dickinson Bianchi, maintained as nearly as may be as when it was occupied by her, for the enjoyment and/or cultural interest or fare of scholars and/or the general public, it being requisite that none of the present contents of "The Evergreens" be moved therefrom....

Mary Hampson's focus on Martha's own career as a writer adds an interesting twist to the property and reveals her personal loyalties. Mary felt that Martha's creative *oeuvre* had been unfairly eclipsed and that Martha's own complex poetic imagery would stand the test of time against Aunt Emily's "Mother Goosey" verse. Her judgment echoed an undated letter from Ned Dickinson to his sister

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“DRAMA’S VITALLEST EXPRESSION” A CONVERSATION WITH WILLIAM LUCE

By Georgiana Strickland

Most admirers of Emily Dickinson know William Luce as the author of *The Belle of Amherst*, which took the American stage by storm in 1976 and made Dickinson’s name a household word among theatre-goers. Yet few have any idea of Luce’s background or the extent of his subsequent career—a career that has produced an extraordinary parade of biographical works for stage and screen, won him a string of awards, and provided virtuoso vehicles for some of our greatest actors.

Last year Luce, a longtime member of EDIS, kindly responded to my inquiries about his new work, *My Business Is to Love* (Dickinson in words and music), which was performed at New York’s Lincoln Center (reviewed in the Spring 2000 *Bulletin*). We also corresponded about Julie Harris’s current twenty-fifth anniversary tour in *The Belle of Amherst* (reviewed in the Fall 2000 *Bulletin*). More recently Luce agreed to be interviewed. Since he lives in Oregon and I in Kentucky, we talked across the intervening 2,000 miles by phone while my little tape recorder rolled. Emily Dickinson would have appreciated modern technology.

I began by asking Luce about his background and what led to his career in theatre. He didn’t start out to be a playwright, but many things in his early life suggest the course he eventually took. He was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, which “seemed then a smaller place, a kind of residential city where we’d ride our bikes great distances and come home from school for lunch.” His parents read to Bill and his sister from an early age, “sometimes big books, a chapter a night. Books were really ingrained in us.” Bill read “the classics, everything.” Poetry was an important part of the reading fare at the Luce home. His sister could recite *A Child’s Garden of Verses* at an early age, and Bill learned Eugene Field’s poetry. Equally significant is the fact that biographies and journals and diaries early became his favorite reading.

Performances were another early experience. “We started saying poems for guests,” and later, when Bill began music lessons at age ten, piano performances were added. “The guests must have been ambivalent about coming to our house,” he remarks with an audible grin. “Those Luce children will likely perform.”



Photo by Rebekah Ryan

Luce recently recalled that when he was in sixth grade he wrote a play that his class acted out. One of his happiest memories is of his high school English teacher, Miss Lydia Anderson, who was “more than a teacher, she was an educator.” After his freshman year in her class, Miss Anderson made sure Luce was assigned to her classes every year and gave him special assignments, principally poetry. She submitted Luce’s poems to student competitions and young people’s poetry anthologies, and during his final year sent a poem of his to an *Atlantic Monthly* competition, where it received an award and was published. “That was a big event in my high school,” he notes.

More important, “It was Emily Dickinson she introduced me to, and that was a major gift to me for the rest of my life.” Years later Luce made sure Miss Anderson got to the New York premiere of *Belle*,

and she afterward wrote him a letter of gratitude “for making the circle complete in her life as a teacher.”

Despite his early leanings toward poetry and biography, Luce’s path toward the theatre was an indirect one. Music became his main focus. At Boston University, the University of Washington, and Lewis and Clark College he majored in piano and studied voice. After college he became a full-time church organist and accompanied singers and instrumentalists in concert. He continued writing poetry and added song lyrics to his repertoire. He also became friends with Norman Luboff and sang in his choir on national tours, as well as doing sound tracks and television performances—even gigs in Vegas, at the Tropicana. “Now, *that’s* a big jump for a church organist,” he remarks. This in turn led to performances with the Roger Wagner and Robert Shaw Chorales and tours as backup singer for several stars, including Johnny Mathis.

Two of Luce’s most enduring friendships came about while he was singing with the Ray Charles Singers on an ABC variety show. There he met Timothy Helgeson, who was working on the show. Helgeson learned that Luce wrote poetry and lyrics and loved Dickinson’s work. “And that was the big thing, the link.” The two became lifelong friends. Helgeson then introduced Luce to actor/director Charles Nelson Reilly, a meeting that was to prove the turning point in Luce’s career and to establish a collaboration that continues to this day. Reilly jokes that he pulled Luce “out of the chorus line.”

The story of how *The Belle of Amherst* came into being is a fascinating study in serendipity and the workings of the creative mind. It has been told before (see my interview with Julie Harris in the Spring 1991 *Bulletin*, for example), but Luce filled in the story. At the time Luce met Reilly, he learned that Harris and Reilly had been talking for several years about creating a play on Emily Dickinson. In the 1960s,

Reilly had attended a benefit reading of Dickinson poems and letters that Harris did in New York. "Charles was less than familiar with Dickinson's poems, but after hearing Julie perform them, he rushed backstage and told her, 'Those words are theatrical. They belong on the stage.'"

So when Reilly later met Luce and "learned that I loved Emily and wrote poetry, he asked if I would be interested in trying my hand at a play. I said, 'Well, yes, I would. But I've never written a play. Maybe I should go to UCLA and take some courses.' 'Don't be silly,' Reilly replied. 'We know more than they do. We'll teach you.'"

Not long after this, Luce met for the first time with Julie Harris. "I came in with two shopping bags full of books on Emily and spread them out. She had read all of them." That was in 1973, and it marked the beginning of another lifetime friendship and creative collaboration.

The first effort by this team was a multi-character play for television. "When it was finished, Julie and Charles took it to sponsors likely to be interested in the subject, but they met with no success after a year. So the project became dormant." Then, when Reilly was again working in New York, he happened to dine one night at a table at Sardi's next to Don Gregory and Mike Merrick, the producers of *Clarence Darrow*, the successful one-man play starring Henry Fonda. "They talked between the tables and told Charles they were interested in a one-woman play. Did he have any ideas? Charles said, 'Yes. Julie Harris as Emily Dickinson.'" Gregory and Merrick were intrigued, so they said, "Have Bill Luce get in touch with us."

Luce reworked the play as a one-character piece and took his first draft to Gregory and Merrick's office, where he read it aloud to them—the whole play. "I was terribly nervous," he admits. "And they said, 'It's too poetic, too lyrical, and there's no humor.'" Luce smiles at this now, but at the time "I was *so* depressed. But they said, 'Try again. Keep those things in mind. Keep it real. She's a real person. And the poetry will speak for itself. You don't have to make everything else lyrical.'"

What happened next exemplifies the extraordinary capacity of the creative mind. Tired out from this encounter, Luce

went home, took a nap, and had a dream. "I dreamed of Julie walking out on stage, down to the footlights, and she was carrying lilies. (Of course, I'd read Higginson's account of his meeting with Emily.) And she extended them to the audience and said, 'Forgive me if I'm frightened. I never see strangers and hardly know what I say.'"

"In the *dream*?" I asked, astonished.

"In the dream! And I didn't have that in the play. I woke up, and those were the opening lines. So I wrote nonstop, and it came easily because I'd done so much research. For over a year I'd read, read, read, taken notes, done all the groundwork. So it came easily. That's something I'll never forget—that week with the answer." When Luce took the new script to the producers, they said, "This is *exactly* what will work on stage." "So that's how the play took its shape," says Luce. (Reilly later suggested changing from lilies to black cake. "It will keep Julie's feet on the ground.")

I asked Luce what especially attracted him to the project. "It wasn't only the magic of it and the mystery of Dickinson's life. It was the prospect of doing drama, and the theatre, which I'd always loved but never felt I would be involved in. This was the application of imagination to a real life. Biography has been repeatedly and historically a favorite subject in the theatre, and biography was my favorite kind of reading, so it seemed tailored for my interests."

Luce makes clear that the creation of *Belle* was very much a collaborative effort. "We called ourselves the Emily Committee—Julie, Charles, Timothy, and me. Every one of us had a wonderful input into the play. It was really a formative time when we worked on the script, all of us. Julie, with her long-lived acquaintance with Dickinson, had favorite things to use and say. And I discovered, particularly with Charles' real genius as a director, what techniques and devices work with a single performer."

"How much was the play revised in rehearsals and during its trial run?" I asked.

"Very much," says Luce. "Charles would say, 'We need a new opening for Act II' or 'Let's move this anecdote.' And Julie would say she'd like to add a poem

or take one away. Even for this twenty-fifth anniversary tour, we made alterations during rehearsals. Not major changes. But there was one section in which I said, 'I don't like this poem here. It interrupts the scene.' You see, during the second tour Charles had found an old Hoover sweeper, the first model—a long pole with a feather duster on the end. It really said 'Hoover' on it. So Julie added the poem about the spider (J605) in the middle of the section where Father is coming home to lunch, and it divided up the story, so I asked that it be moved to the end of the scene."

In its initial run, *Belle* had a nine-week pre-Broadway tour, beginning in Seattle. The Denver performances came at an opportune moment, preceded a week earlier by another play on Dickinson, one that suggested incest between Emily and Austin. "It received negative reviews, so in a sense they paved the way for us," says Luce. "Denver critics breathed a sigh of relief that ours was a more palatable Emily for their consumption."

Asked if he would write the play differently if he were doing so today, Luce replies without hesitation, "Oh yes. I don't think of it as Holy Writ, because the scholarship on Emily has changed in twenty-five years. Certainly I would change the Master. At that time there was, I think, a lot more consensus in favor of Wadsworth. And I could have left it in limbo. But when you do something on stage, you have to make choices."

Luce does extensive research for each of his plays and has great respect for scholarship. "The scholar is needed to keep focus on facts in biography and documentaries. On the other hand, the biographical dramatist adheres creatively, not slavishly, to facts—as witness the disparity between the historical Richard III and Shakespeare's version. The dramatist puts a fact onstage, then he dreams with it. And that's drama. He also infuses the ingredient of his own ideas and concerns."

Luce recalls the reaction of one woman who saw *Belle* in Boston. "She said, 'I know a secret that no one else knows. I see you in the play too.' And that was the biggest compliment I think I had. All playwrights put themselves in their

plays,” he adds. “Otherwise it’s just an exercise in research.”

Although *Belle* has been enormously successful—it won Harris her fifth Tony, her recording won a Grammy, and the play has been performed in translation in more than twenty countries—Luce is aware that it has had adverse criticism from some Dickinson scholars. “I knew that from the very beginning,” he says. One Dickinson scholar complained that the lesbian theme didn’t make it into the televised version, “and it got into the press that I had skirted that issue.” Luce wrote to the scholar, explaining that that had been deleted, as many other things had, for the sake of squeezing the play into an hour and a half. “But I said I had made a subtle reference to it in the part of the play about Sue: ‘It’s dangerous to love as I do’ and ‘Bliss is so unnatural.’ In my mind I was addressing that issue.”

“Some other Dickinson scholars have complained that your play makes Emily ‘too domestic,’” I pointed out.

“Well,” Lucereplied, “anyone who reads Emily’s letters must know that much of her daily life involved the ‘prickly art’ of housekeeping—washing dishes, baking, gardening, caring for an ailing mother, reading the morning paper, haying for the horse, filling a window with hyacinths, making wine jelly. I find her poetic genius enhanced, not diminished, by a morning paper or wine jelly. Then too, Emily herself said that ‘Drama’s vitallest Expression is the Common Day / That arise and set about Us’ [J741]. The best ‘theatre’ is real life. For her, I believe, everyday life was a sacrament, a deliberate covenant with art.

“I also know,” he adds, “that some Dickinson aficionados have been unhappy with the play and have launched out and written their own—which I think is wonderful. Sometimes what is perceived as a definitive play discourages other attempts, but this shouldn’t be so—especially with Emily’s life. A woman of such consequence is adaptive to several theatrical interpretations, I should think.”

Negative reviews in the media are, of course, part of life for anyone in the theatre. Luce’s plays have had their share. *Belle* had rave reviews everywhere pre-Broadway, but “in New York they were mixed the first week. Then along came

Walter Kerr with a Sunday review in the *New York Times* that was a valentine. And then came Rex Reed and *Newsweek* and *Time*. So we knew at last that our little play had acquired ‘that precarious Gait / Some call Experience.’”

Luce says he never responds to reviews. “You can’t let them be that important. Theatre critics are not part of the theatre community, they’re part of the journalistic community, and you mustn’t be affected. Censure or praise mustn’t seem important, either one, to one’s work. I think the secret to not being affected by bad reviews is not being affected by *good* ones.”

“That must be harder,” I said.

“It *is* harder,” Luce agreed, and we shared a laugh. “It’s just one coin, and you have to not pay attention to either side.” He acknowledges, however, that constructive criticism from reputable theatre critics has sometimes been very helpful to him.

If Luce thought *Belle* was the end of the playwriting road for him, he soon found out otherwise. His list of works for the stage and screen now approaches a score. “And it all came because of *Belle*. That has been the touchstone for me. Julie wanted me to do *Brontë* for her, for Masterpiece Radio Theatre. That came right after *Belle*.” Luce suggested including the entire Brontë family, but Harris said, “No, I want it a one-woman play. Now I know I can do it.” Though it never went to Broadway, *Brontë* won a Peabody Award, an Ohio State Award, and Columbia University’s Armstrong Award.

Perhaps the most unexpected follow-up to *Belle* was an invitation from George C. Scott to do a screenplay for CBS, *The Last Days of Patton*. When Luce asked why Scott had approached him, he replied, “Because I saw *The Belle of Amherst*.” “Well, there’s a big difference between Emily Dickinson and George S. Patton,” said Luce. “You’d be surprised,” responded Scott.” When Luce met with the actor, Scott described Patton as a closet poet and “a man afraid of being afraid. The façade of ‘Old Blood and Guts’ Patton was false, a front. And that made it interesting to me.” Luce was nominated for a Writers Guild Award for the Patton film. “It’s a very unlikely spin-

off from the Emily Dickinson project, but that’s the way it’s been over the past twenty-five years. It’s all linked. Imperceptibly so, but it is.”

Still another result of *Belle* was *Lillian*, Luce’s one-woman play about playwright Lillian Hellman, which starred Tony-Award actress Zoe Caldwell. When Luce first met with Hellman, “She said she had called Julie (who had starred in Hellman’s adaptation of *The Lark*) to see if I was amicable to work with, whereas *I* was the one who should have been doing the calling.” (Hellman was notoriously difficult. Even Joseph McCarthy regretted subpoenaing her to appear before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee.) Hellman gave Luce rights to use material from her three published memoirs but insisted on script approval. “I wouldn’t do that again,” he says. “There were things I didn’t dare bring up with her.” Asked if he’ll ever revise *Lillian*, now that Hellman has died, Luce says, “No. I just go on.”

And go on he has. *Lucifer’s Child*, his play about Isak Dinesen, won Julie Harris another Tony nomination. Luce has recently revised the play, and Harris will tour in it next year under its new title, *The Last Safari*. Another one-woman drama, *The Last Flapper*, focuses on Zelda Fitzgerald. Multicharacter *Chanel*, Luce’s play on French fashion designer Coco Chanel, was a hit in Japan. And his CBS movie *The Woman He Loved*, about the Duchess of Windsor, won Luce another Writers Guild Award nomination. “I love to write about women,” he says. “I admire their strength and depth of accomplishment—sometimes stoicism is there—but most of the time vulnerability, candor.” Luce’s plays have been especially popular in Japan. “Women there love stories of women of strength who break free of tradition and come into their own.” *Lillian* has been produced there three times.

But male subjects also attract Luce. One of his most successful plays has been *Barrymore*, based on the life of John Barrymore, for which Christopher Plummer won a Tony. *Nijinsky*, which premiered in Tokyo last year, and *Bravo, Caruso!* (both multicharacter plays) also deal with performing artists. His *Portrait of William Shakespeare* for National Public Radio and his newest play,

Baptiste, focus on playwrights. *Baptiste*, based on the life of Molière, was commissioned by the Hartford Stage Company and will premiere there on May 30th. "So I'm balancing it out, the men and the women."

Luce's plays have provided superb vehicles for some of our finest actors. When Vincent Canby reviewed *Barrymore* for the *New York Times*, he complained that "William Luce depends too heavily on the virtuosity of his actor." Reading this, Luce wondered, "What other kind of actor does a playwright want?" He says he finds "joy, in working with talented actors and directors—in all the discoveries that happen in the metamorphosis from script to live performance. It's thrilling to hear fine actors give dimension to the words on the page, filling out the characters, finding the humor—and new meanings that I had written in without knowing it."

Luce's early training as a musician has fed into his involvement in the lyric theatre. His music-theatre work *The Divine Orlando* (on the life of Orlando di Lasso) was performed off-Broadway, and he wrote the libretto for the musical *Sayonara*, based on the James Michener novel. Last year his script for *My Business Is to Love* was performed at New York's Lincoln Center by Harris and soprano Renée Fleming, then in London's Barbican Centre by Claire Bloom and Fleming. For Fleming's recent solo special in the "Live from Lincoln Center" series, Luce co-scripted the show with Charles Nelson Reilly, who directed both performances.

Luce's newest work, *Song of Eden*, is in the tradition of narrator/symphony orchestra pieces. The score will be by Henry Mollicone, composer of the operas *Face on the Barroom Floor* and *Coyote Tales*. Julie Harris will perform the work with various orchestras. Like *My Business*, which was organized around the months, *Song of Eden* will have a seasonal theme drawn from Dickinson's letters and poems. "The metaphors of Eden—Song—Singer—Orpheus—Cadence—Love—Bliss—Home—these conjoined in my mind," explains Luce. He and Mollicone earlier collaborated on *A Rat's Tale*, "the Pied Piper story told from the viewpoint of a rat." Their next collaboration will be an opera, Luce's first, slated for a 2003 premiere.

Nearly all of Luce's works deal with either creative or performing artists, often at a crucial point in their lives or as they approach the decline of their creative powers, even death. "Some of them have their greatest success just before they die," says Luce, "and they have so much more to tell. With Emily, there's little Gilbert, there's Judge Lord, and so many things that culminated near the end of her life—the sad things too. Those are times you choose when you're dramatizing something—times of conflict, or when there's a decision to be made. Those are points of power on the stage."

Asked if he sees a common theme in his plays, Luce replies, "That's something others must find. It's ineffable to me. I only know that language has a fierce attraction for me, language that evokes the feelings I need to experience. In theater it's not possible to capture audiences with intellectuality or scholastic prowess. The responses of the human heart—and mind—end up being quite simply reached. Drama can untangle many complexities—emotional, psychological—the way a picture is said to supplant a thousand words."

Luce is grateful for the many theatre people who have served as his mentors. Julie Harris and Charles Nelson Reilly are the most significant. George C. Scott was another. "I consider those people to be catalysts in my life. You're lucky to have one in an entire lifetime, but I've had so many. They offer help, and that's a beautiful way to learn—in the doing of a thing."

I asked Luce which of the many prizes his plays have won has most meaning for him. "Well, of course I'm very pleased about the Tony awards that Julie won [for *Belle*] and Christopher [Plummer] for *Barrymore*, and the nominations too. I'm very happy with the Peabody Award for *Brontë*. Awards are gratifying in one sense. They come from peers and are an acknowledgment of one's work. But the joy comes in seeing an audience respond to your work."

Does Luce have a favorite among his plays? No, he says, it's whatever he's working on at a given time. "But my favorite subject is Emily. My favorite subject will always be Emily. It always will be Emily," he emphasizes. "I'm happy to be a part of replacing that earlier perception

of her as a mysterious little hermit—closeted away in seclusion, having but a single occupation—with a wider truth."

Asked if he still reads Dickinson's poetry frequently, Luce responds, "I have it right here beside me. I probably know about a hundred poems by heart. Julie, of course, knows many more. She told me once that if you memorize poems, you'll never be lonely because you'll have the distillation of real art within you all the time." Luce no longer writes poetry, however. "The trouble is, I've been so influenced by Emily's poetry that even now I'd still write in rhymed quatrains."

Luce now lives in a small town (population 850) on the Oregon coast, in sight of a bay with its own pod of about fifty whales—"resident whales—they don't migrate," he explains. He's glad to be back in his native state.

By any measure, William Luce is one of America's most distinguished dramatists. His devotion to his craft is evident in his every utterance. Yet anyone talking with him soon comes to realize that he hasn't allowed fame to spoil him. He takes his work seriously but, like G.K. Chesterton's angels, he takes himself lightly. He enjoys telling wry stories about his own flubs, and any conversation with him is apt to be punctuated with good-humored laughter—much as his plays are for his audiences. He has even written a spoof of his own work, *Luce Women*, in which the five literary women he has portrayed on the stage come down off the bookshelves and tell the author not to write any more plays about women. "The shelves are getting too crowded," they complain. But no one else is complaining. Luce's plays continue to attract outstanding performers and enthusiastic audiences.

In his preface to *The Belle of Amherst*, Luce writes, "The strange faces of genius are enigmatic to the structured mind, probing for final answers." One thing that is clear to Luce's audiences is that he possesses a heart and mind capable of probing the great creative minds of the past, of untangling their complexities and distilling their essences for our age, of creating lenses that brilliantly "disseminate their Circumference."

Georgiana Strickland edits the Bulletin.

ZERO AT THE BONE

BRITANNIA HOTEL, TRONDHEIM, NORWAY

CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

2:00-7:00 REGISTRATION

11:00-3:00 **Walking tours of Trondheim**
(Requires preregistration; see page 20.)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

10:00-2:00 REGISTRATION

11:00-3:00 **Walking tours of Trondheim**
(Requires preregistration; see page 20.)

3:30-4:45 **PANELS AND WORKSHOP**

"Cognitive Approaches to the Economy of Language in Dickinson's Poetry"

"Human Immortality and Love Eternity in Dickinson and Lesya Ukrainka" (Anna Chesnokova, Kyiv State Linguistic Univ.); "The T-Unit as a Measure of Syntactic Complexity in Selected Dickinson Poems" (Cynthia Hallen, Brigham Young Univ.); "The Degree Zero of Spatiality": Time-Space and Audience in Dickinson's Vacuity Scenes" (Lilach Lachman, Tel-Aviv Univ.).

"Dickinson among Late Twentieth-Century Poets"

"But tell it slant": How(e) to Read Dickinson" (Nick Selby, Univ. of Glasgow); "Owning Dickinson: 'My Emily Dickinson'" (Kurt Ozment, Univ. of California, Irvine); "Zero as Target: Dickinson and Ted Hughes on 'The dark hold of the head'" (Taffy Martin, Univ. of Poitiers).

Workshop A: "The Dickinson Electronic Archives and Technologies of Distribution"

Discussion leaders: Martha Nell Smith (Univ. of Maryland); Lara Vetter (Univ. of Maryland, via remote). *Participants:* "Give Peace a Chance: A Proposal to End the 'Dickinson Wars'" (Martha Nell Smith); "Back to the Future: The Electronic 'Return' to the Manuscript Page" (Lena Christenson, Lund Univ.); "Real Audio and 'Titanic Operas': Poets' Responses to Dickinson's Legacy" (Laura Lauth, Univ. of Maryland); "The Classroom Electric: Dickinson, Whitman, and American Culture Online" (Geoffrey Schramm, National Endowment for the Humanities); "Dickinson and Photography" (Marta Werner, D'Youville College).

5:00-7:00 **Opening Plenary Session**

"Filling in the Circle: Dickinson in the Nineteenth Century"

Welcoming remarks: Domhnall Mitchell (Norwegian Univ. of Science and Technology). *Speakers:* Mary Loeffelholz, Northeastern Univ., "Plied from Nought to Nought: The Field of Dickinson's Refusals"; Shira Wolosky, Hebrew Univ., "Being in the Body"; Christa Buschen-dorf, Goethe Univ., "That precarious gait": Dickinson's Poetics of Experiment."

7:30-9:30 **Buffet Dinner**

Presentation of the EDIS Distinguished Service Award to Brita Lindberg-Seyersted. *Speaker:* Martha Ackmann, Mount Holyoke College, "Morphing Emily Dickinson."

10:00-12:00 **Dancing, Britannia Hotel**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

9:00-10:15 **PANELS AND WORKSHOP**

"Dickinson's Nineteenth-Century Community of Women"

"Emily Dickinson and the Community of Women" (Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate Univ.); "Silver Balls and Golden Bowls: Dickinson's Valuable Echoes" (Cheryl Walker, Scripps College); "As if for you to choose - ": Conflicting Textual Economies in Dickinson's Correspondence with Helen Hunt Jackson" (Paul Crumbley, Utah State Univ.).

"Language Approaching Zero"

"'Tropic Show,' or Dickinson's Heliotropes" (Antoine Cazé, Univ. of Orléans); "After Zero: The Dickinson 'Effect'" (Daniel Fineman, Occidental College); "Toward the 'Zero at the Bone': The Dickinson Sublime in Context" (Burt Hatlen, Univ. of Maine).

"Pain and Consolation"

"Merger Not Outdone by AOL and Time-Warner: Dickinson and Pain" (Lois Kaufman, independent scholar); "'The Hour of Lead': Suffering through Suffering" (Ann Davis, Pomona College); "'Attended or Alone': Suffering and Pain in the Poetry of Dickinson and Rich" (Cheri Langdell, California Baptist University).

Workshop B: "The Fleeing of the Biographed: Finding Dickinson among Her Poems and Letters."

Discussion leader: Polly Longworth. *Participants:* "Finding Dickinson among

Her Poems and Letters" (Natalya Bezrebra, Kyiv State Linguistic Univ.); "Emily Dickinson as Woman of Letters" (Stephanie Tingley, Youngstown State Univ.); "Presence in Absence: The Challenges of Telling Dickinson's Story at the Homestead" (Cindy Dickinson, Director, Dickinson Homestead); "The Life and Health of Dickinson: A Physician Considers the Evidence" (Norbert Hirschhorn, M.D.); "Openness and Closure in Dickinson's Lyric" (Lesley Wheeler, Washington and Lee Univ.).

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

10:45-12:00 **PANELS AND WORKSHOP**

"Dickinson and the Moderns"

"'The wholesomeness of the life': Marianne Moore on Dickinson" (Vivian Pollak, Washington Univ.); "'The Bible is an antique Volume': Dickinson, H.D., and the Hermeneutics of Heresy" (Caitriona O'Reilly, Trinity College, Dublin); "An Arctic Region of the Mind: Reading Dickinson after the Holocaust" (Benjamin Friedlander, Univ. of Maine).

"Dickinson's Fluid Texts and Processes"

"The Higher Dialectic: Multiple Surfaces of Truth in Dickinson's 'Worksheet' Poems" (Fred White, Santa Clara Univ.); "Climates of the Poet's Creative Process: Dickinson's Epistolary Journal" (Connie Ann Kirk, Mansfield Univ.); "Now I lay thee down to Sleep": The Problematic Co-existence of Variant Meanings and Readings" (Idilko Csorba, Pazmany Peter Catholic Univ.).

"'Seeing' Dickinson in Her Time"

"'Seeing' Dickinson's Dr. Williams Through Another Patient's Experiences" (Karen Dandurand, Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania); "Dickinson's Master Figure, William Smith Clark: 'Neighbor—and friend—and Bridegroom'" (Ruth Jones, independent scholar); "Geology in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" (Hiroko Uno, Kobe College).

Workshop C: "'We do not play on Graves'—or Do We? Gravity and Levity in Dickinson"

Discussion leader: Eleanor Heginbotham (Concordia Univ.). *Participants:* "Dickinson's koans: Paradox as a Means of Play-

SCHEDULE

NEW CLIMATES FOR DICKINSON STUDY

AUGUST 2-5, 2001

ing Serious" (Gudrun Grabher, Univ. of Innsbruck); "The Elegiac Moods of Emily Dickinson" (Patricia Thompson Rizzo, Univ. of Cà Foscari de Venezia); "Dickinson's Playful Gothicism" (Eve Gerken, Indiana Univ.); "Playing and Reality in Dickinson's 'We dont cry – Tim and I'" (Steve and Rise Axelrod, Univ. of California, Riverside; California State Univ., San Bernardino); "Playing on Graves" (Eleanor Heginbotham).

12:00-1:30 LUNCH ON THE TOWN

1:30-2:45 Second Plenary Session
"Neither Even nor Odd: Poetry's Manuscripts"

"The Poetry of Possibilities: Dickinson's Texts" (Philip Horne, Univ. College, London); "Thirds and Generals: Dickinson, Peirce, and Howe" (Susan Howe, State Univ. of New York, Buffalo).

2:45-3:15 BREAK

3:15-4:30 PANELS AND WORKSHOP
"Dickinson and Late Twentieth-Century Literature"

"Dickinson and Melusina: A.S. Byatt's Christabel LaMotte" (Nancy Chinn, Baylor Univ.); "Is God a 'Trickster': Annie Dillard Revisiting Emily Dickinson's Circumference" (Martina Antretter, Univ. of Innsbruck); "Dickinson on the Stage" (Maria Anita Stefanelli, Univ. of Rome).

"Remaking the Puritan Word"

"Between 'Brocade' and 'Sackcloth': Dickinson's Apocalyptic Imaginary" (Sylvia Mikkelsen, Univ. of Aarhus); "'The Enchantless Pod': Ghostly Types and Anti-Types in Dickinson's Remaking of Puritan Typological Tradition" (Jennifer Leader, Claremont Graduate Univ.); "'My Dear, Deare Lord': Addresses to God in Edward Taylor and Emily Dickinson" (Faith Barrett, California State Polytechnic Univ., Pomona).

"Dickinson and the Challenges of Race, Class, and Gender"

"We think of others possessing you with the throes of Othello": Dickinson Playing Othello, Race, and Tommaso Salvini" (Paraic Finnerty, Univ. of Kent); "The Class and Racial Climate" (Aife Murray, Institute for Global Communications); "Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman:

Framing Dickinson" (Katharine Nicholson Ings, Manchester Univ.).

Workshop D: "Translating Dickinson's 'I stepped from Plank to Plank'"

Discussion leader: Margaret Freeman. [Papers will not be distributed in advance; all are welcome to bring their own translations and thoughts about translation.]

4:30-5:00 BREAK

5:00-6:15 PANELS AND WORKSHOP
"Alterity, Interiority, and Ethics in Dickinson"

"The Event of Interiority: Dickinson and Emmanuel Levinas' Phenomenology of the House" (Magalena Zapadowska, Adam Mickiewicz Univ.); "Alterity and Death in Emily Dickinson" (Hyesook Son, Univ. of Massachusetts); "'Capitalizing Despair': The Ethics of Ecstasy in Dickinson's Poetry" (Rachel Quastel, Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev).

"Dickinson and the Lyric Reader: Contract and Address"

"I see thee better – in the Dark –": Addressing Dickinson's Address" (David Sullivan, Cabrillo College); "Emily Dickinson's Apostrophe" (Bryan C. Short, Northern Arizona Univ.); "Dickinson and the 'Literal' Language of Law" (James Guthrie, Wright State Univ.).

Workshop E: "'The Soul has Bandaged Moments': Interpretation in the Arts, Criticism, and Translation"

Discussion leader: Jonnie Guerra (Cabrini College). *Participants:* "Moments of the Soul: Theatrics, Choreographies" (Suzanne Juhasz, Univ. of Colorado); "The Romantic Drama of Self" (Michael Yetman, Purdue Univ.); "Roni Horn and Emily Dickinson: The Poem as Place" (Eva Heisler, Univ. of Maryland); "Lesley Dill's Art of 'Bandaged Moments'" (Jonnie Guerra).

6:15-8:00 DINNER ON THE TOWN

8:00-10:00

"Airs of Exile: A Musical Evening"
Town Hall Room, Trondheim Library

10:00-12:00 Dancing, Britannia Hotel

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

9:00- 10:15 PANELS AND WORKSHOP

"The Politics of the Sublime"

"Dickinson's Inner Bataille: The Riddle

and Definition Poems" (Jed Deppman, Eastern Kentucky Univ.); "Possession: Dickinson as the Sublime" (Shawn Alfrey, independent scholar); "The Anti-Politics of Awe" (Gary Stonum, Case Western Reserve Univ.). *Respondent:* Donald Pease (Dartmouth College).

"Science and the Imagination"

"Emily Dickinson as Natural Alchemist" (Sheila Coghill, Minnesota State Univ.); "Living Emily: Psychoanalysis and the Neuro Sciences in the Eyes of Emily Dickinson" (Matthias Brettschneider, Free Univ. of Berlin); "The Bee in Her 'Animaginative' Bonnet: A Case-Study of Dickinson's Animalizing Imagination" (Per Serritslev Petersen, Univ. of Aarhus).

"Presenting Dickinson's Presentations"

"In Her Own Class: Dickinson's Voice as Queen" (Chanthana Chaichit, Chulalongkorn Univ.); "The Gothic in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" (Edina Szalay, College of Nyiregyhaza); "Untranslatable? Presenting Dickinson to Children" (Masako Takeda, Osaka Shoin Women's College).

Workshop F: "Dickinson and Calvin's God"

Discussion leader: Jane Donahue Eberwein (Oakland Univ.). *Participants:* "Dickinson and Early Calvinist Training" (Sandra McChesney, Pennsylvania State Univ.); "Dickinson and God: 'I am standing alone in rebellion'" (Lena Koski, Abo Akademi Univ.); "Puritan, Poet, Woman: Dickinson Comes Full Circle" (Susan Kerr, independent scholar); "Dickinson's Calvinist and Romantic Metaphors of Totality" (Marianne Noble, American Univ.); "The Noted Clergyman Speaks? Reading Dickinson Reading Scripture" (Emily Seelbinder, Queen's College); "'Rhythm Slim'? Dickinson, Calvinism, and Poetic Form" (Michael Manson, Anna Maria College); "What Happened to God's Arm?" (Jane Eberwein).

10:15-10:45 BREAK

10:45-12:00 Closing Plenary Session
"Retrospection Is Prospect's Half"

A summary discussion with Jonathan Morse (Univ. of Hawaii).

12:00-1:30 EDIS Annual Meeting and Buffet Luncheon

CARLOS DAGHLIAN: OUR MAN IN BRAZIL

By George Monteiro

George Monteiro, whose insightful readings of Dickinson and many other American writers are much appreciated, is actively engaged in the Evergreens preservation project as a trustee of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust. Now professor emeritus of English and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at Brown University, this versatile scholar has pursued interests in both Portuguese and American literature since 1969, when he first reached São Paulo as a Fulbright professor of American literature. Monteiro was keynote speaker at the 1986 conference on Emily Dickinson held at the Federal University of Bahia and returned to Brazil in 1999 to teach a seminar on the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Frost at the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

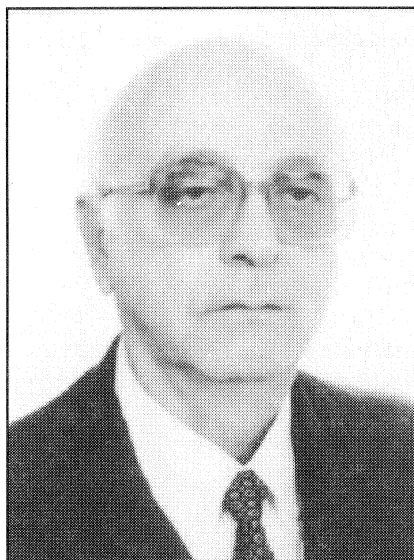
Jane Donahue Eberwein, *Series Editor*

Born in Jaú, São Paulo, Brazil, on January 11, 1938, Carlos Daghlían—teacher, translator, scholar, and administrator—is the dean of American literature scholars in Brazil. From the beginning of his professional career in the 1960s he has been tireless in performing the good offices of his profession, from organizing conferences, chairing departments, presiding over the creation of faculties, and directing theses and dissertations, to traveling throughout the vast reaches of Brazil to serve on commissions and examining boards of all sorts.

Throughout all of this service—university, governmental, professional—he has continued in the classroom, teaching English and American literature, with special emphasis on the latter. At the graduate and postgraduate levels, as a senior professor, he has directed research and writing on such English and American subjects as John Updike, William Golding, Somerset Maugham, Sean O’Casey, Herman Melville, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett, Richard Wright, Kate Chopin, H.P. Lovecraft, Graham Greene, Eudora Welty, Thomas Pynchon, and Laurence Sterne.

Daghlían holds two degrees from the

University of São Paulo (USP): the B.A. in English, Portuguese, and Latin in 1962, and the Ph.D. in 1972 with a dissertation titled “Persuasive Techniques in *Moby-Dick*.” In between, in 1965, he earned his master’s in speech at Pepperdine University in California with a thesis titled “Joaquim Nabuco: American Speeches,” published in 1988 in Recife, Brazil, under the title *Os Discursos Americanos de Joaquim Nabuco*. Since 1967, he has been professor of American literature at the State University of São Paulo (UNESP), at the São José do Rio Preto campus.



A founding member in 1970 of the Brazilian Association of University Professors of English (ABRAPUI), he has served as its president since 1976 as well as editing its journal, *Estudos Anglo-Americanos*. This annual, published since 1977, is one of the primary sources in Brazil for the publication of scholarship in the area of English literary and language studies.

A constant presence in Daghlían’s own scholarship, which includes the publication of articles and book chapters on Melville, Poe, and Shakespeare, has been Emily Dickinson. Daghlían first read Dickinson’s poetry in 1957, his last year in high school, in the first bilingual an-

thology of her poems, with translations by Olívia Krähenbühl. Subsequent professional interest, which took him to the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1978 to conduct research on Dickinson from a comparative perspective, has led him to deliver numerous papers on Dickinson at seminars and conferences and to conduct minicourses throughout Brazil in which Dickinson has often been featured.

In 1985, for the São Paulo publisher Perspectiva, Daghlían edited a pioneering volume titled *Poesia e Música*, to which he also contributed a study of the poet’s use of the hymns of Isaac Watts.

Two years later, in the first culmination of his work on Dickinson, Daghlían presented and defended at UNESP “A Obsessão Irônica na Poesia de Emily Dickinson,” a postdoctoral dissertation. In this work, the first of its kind on the subject of Dickinson’s poetry in the Portuguese-speaking world, he focused on the poet’s employment of self-reflexive irony, the ironic aspects of her world vision when she turns to the external aspects of existence (human knowledge, systems of belief, nature, society, and personal situation), her employment of metaphysical irony in poems reflecting on the mysteries of the cosmos as well as those of her own cultural universe, and the place of irony in Dickinson’s poetics. Incorporated are nearly sixty translations into Portuguese of Dickinson poems by Daghlían and Rogério E. Chociay. On the opposite page is their typically felicitous rendition of “After great pain.”

In 1988 Carlos Daghlían participated in Brazil’s first national conference on Emily Dickinson, held at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Salvador, to commemorate the centenary year of the poet’s death. Besides serving as one of the invited speakers and as a judge in an undergraduate competition for translations of Dickinson poems, he contributed a poem of his own to the proceedings, “Emily, ao modo de Emily.”

Carlos Daghlían’s major Dickinson project, however, is his comprehensive

listing of Dickinson poems in translation throughout the world, to appear as a CD Rom. In addition to the rich bibliographical data it provides, this catalog will enable the retrieval, by means of Johnson numbers, of information regarding the languages into which each poem has been translated, the identity of translators, and the date when each translation was published. This catalog promises to be an enormously useful resource for the study of Dickinson's reputation worldwide. It will also serve as a basal starting point, with its listing of hundreds upon hundreds of texts in dozens of languages, for the comparative study of translations across national and linguistic borders.

Besides his membership in the American author societies devoted to Melville, Poe, and Mark Twain, Daghlían has belonged to the Emily Dickinson Society (1970-1993) and, since 1990, to the Emily Dickinson International Society, participating in EDIS conferences held in Washington, D.C., in 1992 and at Mount Holyoke College in 1999.

In recent years, besides essays in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* in 1997, he has translated William Faulkner's story "Dry September" for *Os Herdeiros de Poe*, an anthology of twentieth-century American stories published in São Paulo in 1998, and has contributed the chapter on Poe in Brazil to *Poe Abroad: Influences, Reputations, Affinities*, published by the University of Iowa Press in 1999.

Daghlían's future plans call for revising translations of some seventy Dickinson poems and preparing portions of his dissertation on Dickinson for publication.

Carlos Daghlían on Emily Dickinson

"Emily Dickinson and Fernando Pessoa: Two Poets for Posterity." *Emily Dickinson Bulletin*, no. 18 (Sept. 1971): 66-73.

"Emily Dickinson in the Brazilian Classroom." *Emily Dickinson Bulletin*, no. 24 (Second Half, 1973): 227-30.

Depois de grande dor

Depois de grande dor, vem um
sentimento formal –
Os Nervos sentam-se cerimonia-
samente, como Túmulos –
O Coração rijo pergunta se foi Ele,
que padeceu,
E se Ontem, ou Séculos atrás?

Os Pés, mecânicos, giram –
Ao redor do Chão, ou do Ar, ou de
Nada –
Num caminho de Madeira
Aberto sem querer,
Um contentamento de Quartzo, como
pedra –

Esta é a Hora do Chumbo –
Lembrada, se sobrevivida,
Como pessoas que se Congelam
lembram-se da Neve –
Primeiro – Calafrio – depois Estupor –
depois o deixar-se-ir –

After great pain

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions 'was it He,
that bore,'
And 'Yesterday, or Centuries before'?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
A Wooden way
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the
Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor – then
the letting go – [Fr372]

"Nota Bibliográfica: Poemas de Emily Dickinson em Português." *Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, no. 2 (1978): 97-98.

[With Rogério E. Chociay]. "Poems by Emily Dickinson in Portuguese: Translations and Bibliographical Notice." *Higginson Journal of Poetry*, no. 43 (Second Half, 1985): 3-13.

"Musicalidade na Poesia de Emily Dickinson: Influência e Repercussão." In *Poesia e Música*, ed. Carlos Daghlían. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1985, 163-84.

"Abstract: 'A Obsessão Irônica na Poesia de Emily Dickinson.'" *Dickinson Studies*, no. 66 (Second Half, 1988): 6.

"Emily, a Mulher mais Popular da Nova Inglaterra." *A Notícia* (São José do Rio Preto), September 29, 1985, 8.

"Emily Dickinson's Poem J252: 'I Can Wade Grief.'" In *Anais do XXI Seminário Nacional de Professores Universitários de Literaturas de Língua Inglesa* (Universidade Estadual de Maringá, 1989), 114-18; also in *CTJ Journal* (Brasília), 1989.

[With Rogério E. Chociay]. "Addendum to 'Poems by Emily Dickinson in Portu-

guese: Bibliographical Notice.'" *Dickinson Studies*, no. 71 (Second Half, 1989): 39-41.

"A reclusão de Emily Dickinson vista sob novo ângulo." *Estudos Linguísticos e Literários (UFBA)*, no. 9 (March 1989): 137-43.

"Emily, ao Modo de Emily." *Estudos Linguísticos Literários (UFBA)*, no. 9 (March 1989): 205.

"Translating 'Split the Lark.'" *Emily Dickinson Journal* 6, no. 2 (1997): 118-19.

"Re-Visions: New Voices, New Perspectives on Dickinson's Poetry—Rescuing Dickinson's 'After great pain' (J341) for the Portuguese Language Reader." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 6, no. 2 (1997): 158-65.

"Contexts and Comrades VI." *EDIS Bulletin* 11 (Nov./Dec. 1999): 13-14.

MEMBERS' NEWS

"ZERO AT THE BONE": TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND TOURING

If you have not yet registered for the conference, you should do so as soon as possible. **The deadline for receiving your registration and fees is June 1.** See the registration form on page 31. Note that the registration fee covers the banquet and buffet luncheon. Additional tickets for those meals are required only for traveling companions who are not registering for the conference.

As announced in the last *Bulletin*, Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) is offering a special fare for delegates to the conference traveling economy class. To obtain this rate, you should contact SAS as soon as possible at <http://www.flysas.com/booking/findex.htm>, or by phone. For further information, including phone numbers for calling SAS from many countries, see the conference website. To get the special rate be sure to give SAS the following reference number: NO0105 (en oh zero one zero five).

Reservations at the Britannia Hotel (the

EDIS conference website: http://www.english.pomona.edu/edis_conf/

conference site) or, for less expensive accommodations, at the Trondheim Vandrerhjem (Youth Hostel) should be booked directly with the hotels. The Britannia can be reached at <http://www.britannia.no/engelsk> or by phone at 47 73 80 08 00. Room rates are 650 kroner single, 850 kroner double, both including breakfast. The Youth Hostel offers much lower rates and provides an acceptable standard. The e-mail address is tr-vanas@online.no. The website is <http://www.trondheim-vandrerhjem.no>. For general information on hotels, see the Trondheim website at http://www.srs-worldhotels.com/norway/trondheim/hotel_trdbri.html.

The conference organizers are arranging opportunities for sightseeing in Trondheim on Thursday and Friday. Two-hour walking tours beginning at 11:00, 12:00,

and 1:00, with guides who speak English, French, or German, must be reserved in advance but paid for (in cash) at the time of the tour. The cost is 775 kroner per group, with a maximum of fifteen persons per group. To reserve a place, contact Domhnall Mitchell at the address below. Be sure to tell him the preferred time and language. Coach tours, also two hours, will have multilingual guides and cost 145 kroner per person. These need not be reserved in advance; a coach leaves the town square every day at noon, and anyone interested in the tour (which combines sightseeing with a history of the city) should meet at the tourist office before noon. More information will be provided at registration and during the conference.

For additional information on travel, touring, or accommodations, contact Domhnall Mitchell, Department of English, N.U.S.T., N-7491 Dragvoll, Trondheim, Norway, or via e-mail at Domhnall.Mitchell@hf.ntnu.no.

Academic Meetings

EDIS will sponsor two sessions at this year's meeting of the **American Literature Association**, to be held May 24-27 at the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, Massachusetts. One session will focus on "Emily Dickinson and Material Culture," with Bethany Reid, Everett Community College, as chair. Speakers will be Connie Ann Kirk, Mansfield University, on "'I check my busy pencil': Dickinson's Imagery of the Writer's Instrument"; Cindy MacKenzie, University of Regina, on "'Syllables of Velvet, Sentences of Plush': Dickinson's Tactile Poetics"; and Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Amherst College, on "Poetic Display."

The other session, chaired by Betsy Erkkila, Northwestern University, will focus on "Emily Dickinson's Reception." Speakers will be Mary Loeffelholz, Northeastern University, on "The Belle's Wild Nights: The Politics of Sexual Truth in Dickinson Bio-dramas"; Vivian Pollak, Washington University, on "Marianne Moore's Dickinson Phobia"; and Kath-

erine Rodier, Marshall University, on "Mabel Loomis Todd: Authorizing Emily Dickinson?"

For further information on the conference, see the ALA website: www.americanliterature.org. Or contact the conference organizer, Maria Karafilis, at mkarafi@calstatela.edu.

The first international conference sponsored by the **Society for the Study of American Women Writers** was held February 14-17 in San Antonio, Texas, with 300 in attendance. The two Dickinson sessions were filled to capacity. The first, "Dickinson and Women Writers," chaired by Eleanor Heginbotham, included papers by Connie Ann Kirk, who linked Anne Bradstreet's imagery in "On the Burning" to Dickinson's images of architecture; Marcy Tanter, who traced the possible mutual influences of Dickinson and Helen Hunt Jackson; and Martha Nell Smith, who reviewed the riches to be found on the home page for "Titanic Operas."

In the second session, "Emily Dickinson and Her Critics," chaired by Jane Eberwein, papers by Paula Bennett on "'The Negro never knew': Dickinson and the Question of Race," and Betsy Erkkila on "The Dickinson Wars," discussing recent debate on critical theories related to the manuscripts, evoked particularly lively discussion. Vivian Pollak's "The Wholesomeness of the Life," which traced Marianne Moore's evolving critical stance on Dickinson, rounded out the session.

A second SSAWW conference is now being planned for the fall of 2003. Those wishing to join SSAWW and receive the organization's newsletter should contact Jane Eberwein at jeberwei@Oakland.edu, or see the organization's website: <http://www.unl.edu/legacy/SSAWW1.html>.

The **Modern Language Association** meeting, to be held in New Orleans, December 27-30, will include two sessions sponsored by EDIS. The first, "Mourning Dickinson," will be chaired by Shirley

Continued at right

EDIS BULLETIN

Scholar in Amherst Program

The Scholar in Amherst Program announced a year ago is now seeking applicants. Designed to support research on Dickinson at institutions in the Amherst area, the fellowship offers a stipend of \$2,000 to be used for such expenses as travel, accommodations, a rental car, and expenses related to research. A minimum stay of one week in Amherst is required. Preference will be given to persons who are in the early stages of their careers with demonstrable need to do research in Amherst institutions.

The program was inaugurated by a generous donation from Sylvia F. Rogosa, made in honor of her daughter, Vivian Pollak, second president of EDIS. The first recipient will be designated the "Rogosa EDIS Scholar in Amherst."

To apply, please send three copies of a curriculum vitae, a letter of introduction, and a two-page project proposal to Ellen Louise Hart, Cowell College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 USA. You can also contact Hart at ehart@cats.ucsc.edu, or Jonnie Guerra at jguerra@cabrini.edu. Deadline for submissions is October 15, 2001.

Academic Meetings, continued

Samuels of Cornell University. Panelists will be Ellen Louise Hart, University of California at Santa Cruz, speaking on "Dickinson's Literature of Consolation and Condolence: Editing the Letters"; Monika Cassel, University of Michigan, on "The 'Silver Principle': Dickinson's Memorials of Elizabeth Barrett Browning"; and Vivian Pollak, Washington University, on "Dickinson, Moore, Bishop, and the Arts of Losing."

The second session, titled "Remembering Dickinson," chaired by Mary Loeffelholz of Northeastern University, will include papers by Marianne Noble, American University, on "Dickinson's *écriture féminine* and the Problem of Desire"; Jim von der Heydt, Harvard University, on "Dickinson's Shoreline Emersonianism"; and Erika Scheurer, University of St. Thomas, on "Balking the Professors: Dickinson Teaching Us How to Teach (Dickinson)." Timothy Morris of the University of Texas at Arlington will offer a

Chapter News

The **Minnesota Chapter**, in conjunction with the Friends of the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Public Libraries, is sponsoring several events this spring. Workshops on Dickinson on April 17 and 24 were led by Eleanor Heginbotham and Erika Scheurer, the first focusing on the poems, the second on the letters. On May 5, the Minneapolis Central Library will present an original dramatic reading entitled "Charged with Life," with actors Elizabeth Dickinson and Christopher Childs. The script, by Elizabeth Dickinson, uses the correspondence between Emily Dickinson and T. W. Higginson. From May 1 through June 15, the Minneapolis Public Library will present an exhibit of their nineteenth-century holdings, including holographs of several Dickinson letters.

The **Saskatchewan Chapter** participated in National Poetry Month by convening

a group of readers to discuss a selection of Dickinson's poems. Each participant submitted a favorite Dickinson poem and was given a ribbon-tied booklet of the assembled selections to consider before the roundtable discussion in the library of the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina. The response was most enthusiastic.

The **Los Angeles Chapter** met April 11 at Pomona College. Cris Miller's Whitman/Dickinson class performed selected Dickinson poems and letters. Performers included ten students, Miller, and Miller's eleven-year-old daughter, Maxi. The reading was divided into five sections: Becoming a Poet, Friends and Lovers, Finding an Audience, Pain and Confusion, and Death and the Power of Poetry. About forty persons attended. The reading was followed by refreshments and conversation.

Notes & Queries

Work is now under way on the **Kitchen Tour Center** at the Dickinson Homestead. The project will convert the rear ell of the house, originally the kitchen, pantry, laundry room, and privy, to a visitor reception area that will include a gift shop and restroom. The renovation will retain elements, including the chimney, that suggest the room's former use as a kitchen. Construction began March 16 and with luck will be substantially completed in time for the May 12 Poetry Walk. A new orientation exhibit and reading nook will be installed in a nearby area by early fall.

This project, is funded by a generous donation from John and Elizabeth Armstrong, residents of Amherst, and other loyal fans.

coda entitled "Dickinson and Memory."

For more information, contact Mary Loeffelholz at m.loeffelholz@neu.edu.

Two additional MLA sessions will include Dickinson-related papers. In the panel "Archival Research and New Technologies," sponsored by the Nineteenth-Century American Literature Section, Lara Vetter of the Maryland Institute for

For those following the case of the **new photo** thought to be of Emily Dickinson, Philip Gura, who purchased the albumen print from eBay, an online auction site, has released the report of the forensic anthropologists who compared it with the known daguerreotype of the poet: "Based on our analysis," they say, "the [two] photographs do exhibit a consistent pattern and relationship between the identified cranial landmarks and gross morphological figures. Overall, the images are consistent, and we are unable to exclude the individual in the [new] photograph." Gura continues to seek a match for the handwriting on the back of the photo with its ambiguous message. Stay tuned for further developments.

Technology in the Humanities (MITH), University of Maryland, will speak on "*The Dickinson Electronic Archives: Technologies and Textualities*." For the panel sponsored by the MLA Publications Committee, Martha Nell Smith, also of MITH, will discuss "*The Dickinson Electronic Archives* Projects: Evolutions of a Dynamic Edition(s)."

OBITUARIES

Robert F. Lucas (1942-2001)

By Daniel Lombardo

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Bob Lucas, for twenty-five years one of the finest antiquarian booksellers in New England. He specialized in Dickinson, Thoreau, Poe, and nineteenth-century Americana. Born in Westfield, Massachusetts, Bob earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst in forestry and botany. His abiding love of the outdoors kept him botanizing, fishing, and hunting for endless contented hours.

Bob developed a deep interest in antique books, paper, etc., while working as education director at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and as director of the Children's Museum at Dartmouth, Massachusetts. He established Robert Lucas Antiquarian Books, and over the years his expertise and generosity became legendary. The catalogs he created for special offerings of Dickinson, Thoreau, and Poe are invaluable reference sources. He located many a rare treasure and liked nothing more than to place "an Antique Book – / In just the Dress his Century wore" in the hands of the eager book lover.

Bob was one of those rare booksellers for whom the words and lives of the poets shaped how he lived his life and how he conducted his business. It was more important for him to see Dickinson material return to the town and be available to scholars and poetry lovers than to maximize profit. Bob didn't deal in merchandise, he searched the undergrowth for overlooked treasures of the poets and brought them to light, just as he searched the forests for rare mushrooms.

Many of you will remember the treasures he and fellow bookseller Fred Marks presented at the 1992 EDIS conference in Washington, D.C. Bob drove both Fred and me to Washington, laughing as we pulled into the Walt Whitman Rest Stop on the hideous New Jersey Turnpike.

During my last year as curator at the Jones Library, it was only with Bob's generous assistance that we acquired the Norcross Family Letters. He helped me,

and so many others of us, in myriad ways.

Bob succumbed to lymphoma on February 9. On the 25th, a memorial service was held in Huntington, Massachusetts. Despite the worst ice storm of the season, people came from as far away as Pennsylvania. Many couldn't make it, including Doris Abramson, who was to read six Dickinson poems. Bob's daughter Jessica stepped in and did a spirited reading. It included "Each that we lose takes part of us" (Fr1634) and the very appropriate "A precious – mouldering pleasure 'tis / To meet an Antique Book" (Fr569). Daughter Sheila read Poe's "The Raven," and Bob's wife, Pat, read passages from Bob's own nature writings, found in his desk.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Friends of the Library Endowment Fund, W.E.B. DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts, 154 Hicks Way, Amherst, MA 01003.

Eugene Anderson (1926-2000)

Many EDIS members will recall Eugene Anderson's presence at Society meetings over the past several years. Gene, a retired physician from Kankakee, Illinois, with a long-time interest in Dickinson, served as a panel moderator at the 1999 Mount Holyoke conference and was active at annual meetings in other years, where his knowledge of Dickinson and science combined to make unique contributions to our discussions. He viewed his involvement in EDIS and his study of Dickinson as a second career.

Gene died November 1, 2000. His daughters read several Dickinson poems at his funeral, including "We grow accustomed to the Dark." The family also had printed on a memorial card the words of "That it will never come again / Is what makes life so sweet."

A graduate of the University of Chicago and a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II, Gene is survived by his wife, Evelyn, five children, and many grand- and great-grandchildren. He will be missed at future EDIS meetings.

New Appointments at the Evergreens and Jones Library

Two new appointments at Amherst institutions will be of interest to Dickinson scholars and admirers. The Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust has named Jane Wald as Director of the Evergreens, the home of Austin and Susan Dickinson, and Tevis Kimball has been named Curator of Special Collections at Amherst's Jones Library.

Jane Wald comes to the Evergreens from Old Sturbridge Village, an outdoor "living history" museum in central Massachusetts that portrays everyday life in New England in the decade of Emily Dickinson's birth. There she was a grant writer and researcher and, for the last five years, assistant director of Development and Membership. A graduate of Bryn Mawr College and Princeton University, she also studied historical archaeology at the College of William and Mary.

Wald sees her appointment at the Evergreens as an opportunity to better understand the social, cultural, literary, and material world of Dickinson and her family. Among her priorities, she says, will be the continuing restoration of the building and its furnishings and landscape, and increasing public appreciation of the unique resources of this historic house. She hopes to expand visiting hours and interpretive programs and to work collaboratively with Cindy Dickinson at the Homestead next door.

Tevis Kimball recently assumed the curatorship of the Dickinson Collection, the Robert Frost Collection, and others at the Jones Library. A former resident of Amherst, Kimball was most recently on the staff of the University of Massachusetts Library at Dartmouth and at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library. Before that she held management positions in corporate America.

Kimball says Amherst has "always been a magical place for me." In her new position, her primary focus will be on improving access to the material in the collections and on creating a welcoming atmosphere for researchers.

EDIS welcomes these two well qualified professionals to the Dickinson circle in Amherst.

EMILY DICKINSON IN UKRAINIAN LITERARY STUDIES

By Anna Chesnokova

I was delighted to meet Anna Chesnokova when my husband, Don, and I were invited by Kyiv State Linguistic University to give a series of lectures in Ukraine last fall. As she explains in the following article, Anna is one of the few people in Ukraine who have engaged in the study of Emily Dickinson's poetry in spite of the difficulty of obtaining books and other scholarly materials. She is currently directing a Ph.D. dissertation by Natalya Bezrebra on Dickinson's life and works. Anna has also taken on the responsibility of coordinating the first EDIS chapter in Ukraine, the first in Eastern Europe.

Margaret Freeman

Sometimes it happens that an author who is universally accepted as a classic in one country remains practically unknown in another, or is recognized there by only a narrow circle of connoisseurs. This is the unfortunate situation with Emily Dickinson's literary reputation in Ukraine. No matter how famous she is in the United States and many other countries, very few Ukrainian scholars have given her the scholarly attention she deserves. This fact is partially explained by the very limited number of her poems that have been translated into Ukrainian.

Although American literature has enjoyed considerable critical acclaim in Ukraine, Emily Dickinson's work remains relatively unknown. Until recently, information on her life and literary activity could be found only in American or Western European studies (some few of which have been translated into Russian) or in a few works by Russian scholars such as I. Kashkin, *Emily Dickinson*, 1968; D. Intskirveli, *The Poetic Way of Emily Dickinson*, 1975; Ye. Oseneva, *The Three Classics of American Poetry*, 1976; A. Zverev, *Emily Dickinson and the Problems of American Late Romanticism*, 1982.

The first Ukrainian research dealing with Dickinson's verse is Solomiya Pavlychko's dissertation "Philosophic Poetry of American Romanticism: Poetic Activity of Ralph Waldo Emerson and

Emily Dickinson" (1984). In 1988 this was published as *Philosophic Poetry of American Romanticism: Emerson, Whitman, Dickinson*. The study was and probably remains the only profound exploration acquainting Ukrainian readers with the world of Dickinson, although the author's principal attention is on the philosophic undercurrents of the poet's verse.

Accepting Emerson's works as the "foundation of poetry of thinking in American literature," Pavlychko argues that both Emerson and Dickinson insist on the principle of content dominating form and image as more important than meter or rhyme. Pavlychko constantly compares Dickinson with Emerson, and thus his work is basically a comparative literary study. For example, in dealing with time, he argues that, unlike Emerson, whose attention was on the future, Dickinson's mind was focused on the past, the only time-related object of interest for her.

In 1991, Pavlychko collected the majority of Ukrainian translations of Dickinson's poems into a book, *Lyrics*, an invaluable gift to all Ukrainian Dickinsonians. Those who do not know English well enough to enjoy the beauty of the poet's mysterious world can now not only be introduced to her poems but also compare various translations of some of the verses. This opens the possibility of speculating on different interpretations of seemingly ambiguous lines.

The preface to this edition ("Emily Dickinson: The Poetry of the Skeptic Mind") is worth attention, for here Pavlychko gives a detailed outline of the development of Dickinson studies in the United States, delicately ignoring the absence of such researches in Ukraine.

After a considerable break in innovative works on Dickinson, there appeared in 1999 my dissertation, "Lyrical Poetry of Lesya Ukrainka and Emily Dickinson: Typology and National Peculiarities." For a number of reasons, comparative studies are the least developed branch of

Ukrainian literary criticism. Especially rare are researches in which works by Ukrainian and American authors are analyzed for their contrasts and similarities. Still, it is well known that native literature can be understood more deeply when evaluated together with foreign literature, and vice versa; it is possible to study a foreign literature profoundly only when one's native literature is well understood, for any eminent writer is in one way or another connected to world literary traditions.

My comparative analysis of the lyrical verse of Emily Dickinson and Lesya Ukrainka (one of the most prominent of Ukrainian classic poets) is prompted by a number of factors: the romanticism/neoromanticism of their poetic visions, the explicit national character of their works, and the obvious similarity of their dramatic and tragic fates as female poets, which are transformed into outstanding artistic tropes, imagery, and plots. In my research, I draw attention to the noticeable resemblance between the lifestyles of the two poets (no matter how physically remote their native countries), and the resulting similarity of their literary motives. I define historical, cultural, individual, and biographical factors, as well as literary and philosophical traditions, that are sources of the likenesses and dissimilarities in their work.

Today, Ukrainian Dickinsonians remain in an unfortunate state of suspense. We can only hope that in the near future new research on the American poet will emerge, thus renewing interest in her work in Ukraine and prompting more scholars to dedicate their study to a poet who is indeed worthy of their attention—Emily Dickinson.

Anna Chesnokova teaches at Kyiv State Linguistic University. She will present a comparative analysis of Dickinson and Lesya Ukrainka at the Trondheim conference.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Chaichit, Chanthana. *Emily Dickinson: The Role and Functions of the Poet.* 2 vols. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn Univ., 2000. 446 pp.; 571 pp. Paper, ISBN 974-333-875-6, 1,000 baht (U.S. \$25.00).

In her study of Dickinson's life and work, written in Thai, Chaichit translates and analyzes nearly 600 poems and a selection of letters dating from 1842 to 1886. Emphasizing the poet's literary canon, the author examines the poems and letters for their elliptical syntax, irregular punctuation, and unorthodox diction and expression, finding that Dickinson's role and function as a poet is "to create originality and to tell the truth about life." Creating spiritual and original works, Dickinson is portrayed as a "poet/artist" who "indirectly but functionally sets literary rules of unconventional modern poetry."

Ciuraru, Carmela, ed. *First Loves: Poets Introduce the Essential Poems That Captivated and Inspired Them.* New York: Scribner/Simon & Schuster, 2000. 268 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-684-86438-X, \$22.00.

Sixty-eight poets, from Margaret Atwood to Richard Wilbur, celebrate their first serious, sometimes humorous, encounters with poems by Auden, Dickinson, Roethke, Shakespeare, Stevens, Yeats, and others. Sophie Cabot Black fell in love with Dickinson's poetry as a pre-teen, citing "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun" as a poem that combines "an ancestor diction (hymnal beats, fierce asceticism) with the high pitch of desire." A teacher introduced Elizabeth Spire to "I died for Beauty....," a poem that says "in the plainest and yet most profoundly metaphysical way, everything there is to say about why poetry is written. It's a twelve-line monument to the absolute....I try to wring a kind of final meaning out of the poem, but it resists me. It always resists me. Which is exactly what a great poem

should do." These engaging personal essays, each introducing a specific poem, provide an opportunity to discover previously overlooked poems and to read old favorites from a fresh perspective.

Coghill, Sheila, and Thom Tamaro, eds. *Visiting Emily: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Emily Dickinson.* Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2000. 126 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-87745-734-4, \$34.95; paper, ISBN 0-87745-739-5, \$14.95.

This anthology gathers the work of eighty poets for whom Emily Dickinson is the "American muse *par excellence*." Drawing from her life and her work, poets from Hart Crane and Yvor Winters to Amy Clampitt and Alice Fulton pay homage to Dickinson with a wide range of poetry, from traditional to experimental, from meditative to blunt and bawdy. In his introduction, Robert Bly refers to Dickinson as a warrior who "goes into battle covered with blood. This is not someone who stands around waiting for reinforcements to arrive." In "Spelunking," Lola Haskins finds Dickinson and her white dress in the dark recesses of a rocky cave where "The one who / holds the clearest light is / Emily." In "Emily Dickinson's Sestina for Molly Bloom," Barbara F. Lefcovitz contributes a jazzlike riff of a poem modeling Molly Bloom's monologue in Joyce's *Ulysses*, ending with "Yes!" Not to be missed is the humor in Jayne Relaford Brown's "Emily Dickinson Attends a Writing Workshop," Andrea Carlisle's "Emily Dickinson's To-Do List," Billy Collins's "Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes," X.J. Kennedy's "Emily Dickinson Leaves a Message to the World, Now That Her Homestead in Amherst Has an Answering Machine," Galway Kinnell's "The Deconstruction of Emily Dickinson," and Maxine Kumin's "After the Poetry Reading," in which she

muses on Dickinson in the 1990s: "how Emily'd / master Microsoft, how she'd / fax the versicles that Higginson / advised her not to print to MS." For anyone who appreciates Dickinson, this is a unique gem of a collection.

Dickinson, Cynthia, and Douglas C. Wilson, eds. *Emily Dickinson: The Poet at Home.* Amherst, Mass.: The Dickinson Homestead, 2000. 18 pp. Paper, \$5.00.

Generously illustrated with archival photographs, this booklet gives a clear overview of Dickinson's life, her writing style, and the history of the Dickinson houses. Quotations from the poet's work are woven effectively through three short essays: Karen Sánchez-Eppler's "To live is so startling," Christopher Benfey's "A fairer House than Prose," and David Dillon's "Home is Where the House Is." The editors and designer Allison W. Bell have created a handsome and informative booklet with a removable sepia-toned cover depicting the Homestead in winter, ca. 1886. Intended for visitors to the Homestead, the booklet may also be ordered by mail. Send a check for \$7.00 (includes shipping and handling) to the Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main St., Amherst, MA 01002 USA. Checks should be made payable to Amherst College.

Gilroy, Amanda, and W.M. Verhoeven, eds. *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture.* Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 2000. 231 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8139-1944-4, \$57.50; paper, ISBN 0-8139-1973-8, \$18.50.

Nine essays emphasize cultural-historical readings of mainly Anglo-American epistolary texts from the seventeenth century to the present, including Turkish travelogues and the letters of Mary Queen of Scots, Dickinson, Melville, Hawthorne,

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.

and contemporary epistolary innovators. A "postscript" follows each essay, allowing contributors to respond to each other in epistolary form. In "Suppressing the Books of Susan in Emily Dickinson," Martha Nell Smith argues that Susan's role in Dickinson's literary production was far more important than has been acknowledged. Much has been made of the three Master Letters and Dickinson's possible male mentors, but her approximately 500 writings to Susan during fifty years would fill a 700-page book. Smith suggests that if the writings had been between Dickinson and Higginson, the exchanges "would have been at the center of Dickinson studies." Dickinson's hand-crafted fascicles seem less eccentric in the context of the nineteenth-century culture Smith describes. She concludes that Dickinson was introduced to the world via a machine-made book and editorializing that "plowed under the relationship that was at the center of her literary production."

Ioannou, Costas. *Emily Dickinson: Epi-Grammata*. Koropi, Greece: Kropia Editions, 2000. 82 pp. Paper, ISBN 960-8137-02-0, Euro 6.10 (U.S. \$5.75).

Intending to show Greek readers that Dickinson's letters exhibit the rhythm and style found in her poems, Ioannou selects and translates into Greek 100 fragments from 87 letters, drawing his selections mostly from William H. Shurr's *New Poems of Emily Dickinson*. "Grammatica" in Greek means letters; thus the dash in the title has a literal or punning sense, showing the relationship between the fragments and the letters. Ioannou states that the fragments are epigrams without having been written to play such a role. Included are a short introduction and an appendix with a Dickinson biography and explanatory notes.

Kilcup, Karen L., ed. *Soft Canons: American Women Writers and Masculine Tradition*. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1999. 345 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-87745-688-7, \$39.95; paper, ISBN 0-87745-689-5, \$19.95.

Sixteen scholars reconsider nineteenth-century American literary and cultural

history and the "masculine tradition" within which women wrote. With the goal of closing the divide between male and female traditions, their essays explore not only differences evolving from race, gender, and culture but also connections and influences. In "How Conscious Could Consciousness Grow? Emily Dickinson and William James," Susan Manning discusses more than a dozen Dickinson poems to show how the poet anticipated James's study of the nature of consciousness thirty years later, though she states that their connection is "one of confluence rather than influence." Manning defines their intellectual journey as a "secularized form of Puritan introspection that post-Calvinist cultures raised to an art form." Their philosophical concerns may have evolved from Emerson's idealism, but James sought connections while Dickinson emphasized disjunctions. Manning's essay offers a substantive discussion of Dickinson's concept of consciousness and the literary and cultural background that shaped it.

Knight, Brenda. *Women Who Love Books Too Much: Bibliophiles, Blue-stockings, and Prolific Pens from the Algonquin Hotel to the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*. Berkeley, Calif.: Conari Press, 2000. 276 pp. Paper, ISBN 1-57324-024-9, \$16.95.

A "basket of literary bonbons" intended for "feisty bibliophile[s]," this well designed collection profiles nearly 100 women writers from the medieval mystics to contemporary J.K. Rowling. Knight's bright and breezy style is both entertaining and informative; sidebars contain interesting literary lists, quotations, trivia, and graphics. Section headings are "First Ladies of Literature," "Ink in their Veins," "Mystics and Madwomen," "Banned, Blacklisted, and Arrested," "Prolific Pens," "Salonists and Culture Makers," and "Women Whose Books Are Loved Too Much." The four-page profile of Dickinson includes Lavinia's story of "Emily bluffing her way through a mathematics testshe went to the blackboard and gave such a glib exposition of imaginary figures that the dazed teacher passed her with the highest mark." Placing Dickinson

among the mystics and madwomen, Knight calls her "one of the first female literary 'superstars'—a rather unusual fate for a housebound recluse." Though the profile sustains biographical myths about Dickinson, Knight conveys a contagious enthusiasm for the poet and for the other literary women she celebrates.

Takeda, Masako, Nobuko Shimomura, and Tomomi Hatqkeyama, eds. *Romantic Women Poets*. Tokyo: Eihosha Ltd., 2000. 151 pp. Paper, ISBN 4-269-06048-4, ¥2000.

This anthology represents the work of forty-seven well known and less familiar English and American women poets, arranged chronologically from Anna Seward to Charlotte Mew and from Anne Bradstreet to Edith Wharton. Translated into Japanese with English transcriptions set on facing pages, the poems include a wide range of voices and topics, from Anna Letitia Barbauld's "The Snowdrop" to Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Included are twelve Dickinson poems: Fr64, 271, 278, 340, 479, 487, 554, 589, 591, 603, 930, and 1779. Small black and white oval portraits of the poets and assorted photographs and drawings illustrate the text.

Book Reviews

Conrad, Angela. *The Wayward Nun of Amherst: Emily Dickinson and Medieval Mystic Women*. New York: Garland/Taylor & Francis Group, 2000. 186 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8153-3913-5, \$53.00.

Reviewed by Emily Seelbinder

That Emily Dickinson had mystical tendencies and a more-than-passing awareness of Roman Catholic rituals has long been intriguing to her readers. In 1944 Sister Mary James Power went so far as to suggest that Dickinson may have had such an affinity for Catholic tradition that she secretly styled herself a nun (*In the Name of the Bee*). Angela Conrad makes no such claim here. As she demonstrates in this volume, however, there are striking parallels between Dickinson's life and work and the lives and work of some of the medieval mystic women in whom there has been much recent schol-

arly and popular interest: Hildegard of Bingen, Gertrude the Great, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich, and Dame Margery Kempe.

These parallels help to put some of Dickinson's mythical quirks into perspective. Conrad argues that, like her predecessors, Dickinson may have turned to mysticism as a means of claiming authority within a patriarchy that denied her authority by other, more direct methods. Like Margery Kempe, she may have chosen to wear white "so that all could see that she was special, spiritually different, chosen" (37) and thus make "her voice more powerful" (42). And like medieval anchorites, Dickinson may have chosen seclusion as a means to heightened awareness and "the depths of contemplation necessary for her work" (48).

Late in her study, Conrad suggests that the parallels between Dickinson's descriptions of ecstasy and accounts "of being in the presence of God...by medieval female visionaries" are so similar that they have led her "to the conclusion that the poet actually did have an experience of the Transcendent so powerful that it changed her attitude and gave her confidence to reject the church and choose her own, more independently defined religion" (127).

The "limited scope" of her study makes it "impossible," Conrad says, "to prove any biographical facts about Dickinson," but she does "suggest the possibility that the poet's illness and prolific poetic output of 1862...was for her a psychic incident that a religious woman of the Middle Ages would have identified as a revelation" (127).

Though Conrad's conclusion is plausible, it is doubtful that even a work of much broader scope than this one could "prove" it. Yet throughout her book, Conrad offers such parallels as definitive proofs of Dickinson's intentions. Though she acknowledges that Dickinson could not have been influenced by the medieval mystic women who preceded her—indeed, most of them would have been unknown to her—Conrad insists in her preface that the connections she makes "should put to rest the mystic/non-mystic conflict among Dickinson scholars" and

explain both "Dickinson's mystical stance and her recluse lifestyle" [sic] (xviii).

Would that the riddle of Emily Dickinson could be so easily solved. In making such claims, Conrad raises the question of whether the scope of her study is overly limited. I found her reading of Dickinson's religious imagery to be naive in its understanding of nineteenth-century Calvinist practices and beliefs. The notes and bibliography make no mention of work by Jane Donahue Eberwein, whose *Strategies of Limitation* explores much of the ground that Conrad implies is undiscovered territory. Numerous errors in proofreading and uneven, sometimes pedestrian writing suggest also that this study may have been too hastily prepared. These flaws diminish an otherwise useful contribution to the placement of Emily Dickinson in a female poetic tradition.

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

Harris, Morag, *Emily Dickinson in Time: Experience and Its Analysis in Progressive Verbal Form*. London: Karnac Books (distributed by Other Press, New York), 1999. 190 pp. Paper, ISBN 1-85575-185-2, \$32.00.

Reviewed by Margaret H. Freeman

Readers of Dickinson's poems and letters have tended to accept the dates Thomas H. Johnson assigned to them, as revised by Ralph W. Franklin, even though Johnson himself warned that, with a few exceptions, "all assigned dates are tentative and will always remain so."¹ In recent years, some attempts have been initiated to establish independently the reliability of Johnson's and Franklin's dating. These include Susanne Shapiro's graphological project and Richard Forsyth's application of a computer-based program that distinguishes changing use of language styles throughout Dickinson's life.

In this book, Morag Harris adopts yet another approach. By exploring the development of poetic diction in those letters that can be dated with some certainty, Harris believes that it might be possible to "develop a periodic table for the evolu-

tion of [Dickinson's] poetic diction."

Harris's book is, in her own words, a pilot study for such a research project. Her method is to analyze closely the language and diction of three letters, reliably dated and written approximately ten years apart, that have qualities typical of the different phases of Dickinson's writing. Theoretically, Harris acknowledges her debt to Susanne K. Langer's philosophy, especially to Langer's belief that genius, unlike talent, is not innate but develops over time. In addition, Harris's indebtedness to Coleridge's literary theory is evident throughout in the extensive quotations from his work.

The first chapter reviews the problems of dating and its consequent problems. A postscript to the main section of the book lists "points of contact in progression" with examples of passages from other letters. In two appendixes, Harris explores Dickinson's relation to Keats and analyzes Dickinson's "Loaded Gun" poem.

The letters Harris has chosen are the August 19, 1851, letter to Abiah Root (L50), the August 1861 letter to Mary Bowles (L235), and the late January 1875 letter to Mrs. Holland (L432). Although she does not mention it, Harris apparently took care to choose correspondence that was addressed to women, presumably on the premise that poetic diction may be affected by gender.

In her preface, Harris notes that the book is "a correlation of nearly twenty years' exercise and concern with language," and this shows in the detailed and extensive analyses she provides for each of the letters. From an early style in which genuine feeling is "quite drowned by the language," Dickinson develops a "poetic form, in the sense that the writer's meaning is sought, elaborated, and sustained by metaphors that interweave throughout the letter and lead on to later work." By the time of Dickinson's letter to Mrs. Holland, Harris writes, "the more one looks at her progressing work, the more it seems that she increasingly used words, not in the fixed way Coleridge feared would lead to the degeneration of meaning, but in themselves as if they were 'things-hovering-between-images.'"

It is an ambitious undertaking to at-

tempt to link poetic forms of expression in the letters to those that appear in the poems. Increasingly, critics are seeing the intimate relationships between the two literary forms, especially in those instances described as letter-poems. Whether or not the eleven items Harris identifies in her chart, "Proposal for a Type of Periodic Table," are discrete enough to contribute to the question of dating the poems, Harris has certainly succeeded in tracing the development of Dickinson's thought and style over the three periods she has investigated.

Note

1. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1955), lxii.

Margaret Freeman is professor of English at Los Angeles Valley College and a specialist in cognitive poetics. She was a founder of EDIS and its first president.

Book Notes

A revised edition of **Costas Ioannou's** *Emily Dickinson: The Poetess of Times to Come* [Kropia Editions, 2000. 274 pp. Paper, ISBN 960-8137-01-2, Euro 15.25 (U.S. \$14.50)] adopts the Franklin numbering and text but retains the Johnson dash and includes an index collating Franklin and Johnson numbers. (See review in Fall 1997 *Bulletin*.)

Modern Library's *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* is available in a new paperback edition that includes an introduction by Billy Collins, Conrad Aiken's 1924 essay on Dickinson, and Modern Library's Reading Group Guide for Dickinson. These are the 1890s versions of the poems. ISBN 0-679-78335-0, \$9.95. (See review in Fall 1997 *Bulletin*.)

"That the House Be Taken Down," continued from page 11

regarding the publication of Martha's poem "Life" in the *New England Magazine*: "Your Aunt [Lavinia] was pleased with your olive branch... But she is to dine with us tonight, and we will speak of Emily's poems, which seem very wraith-like, and impossible beside her stronger, and saner niece's."

When Mary Hampson died at the age of ninety-three in January 1988, she had devoted more than forty years of her life to sorting, annotating, cataloging, and preserving the contents of the Evergreens. Since she had no direct heirs, her estate was subjected to probate, and the future of the Evergreens was thrown into doubt once again.

Martha Dickinson Bianchi's will clearly called for the demolition of the Evergreens when Alfred Hampson and his family no longer lived in it and before the property could be sold. Harvard University, which had preserved the Dickinson manuscripts, books, and furnishings removed from the Evergreens in 1950, stepped in to argue for the safe transfer of additional material. The Smith College Art Museum, which had stored the Evergreens paintings for several years, and the Vineland (New Jersey) Historical Society, representing Mary Landis Hampson's hometown, were advised of the pending probate action, since both organizations were designated as beneficiaries of the estate if the Trust failed to proceed. Brown University, named in an earlier clause of Mary Hampson's will as the recipient of "diaries, letters, books, manuscripts, and anything else" pertaining to Martha Dickinson Bianchi, sought clarification as to the nature of the bequest, especially in light of the condition that "none of the present contents of the Evergreens be moved therefrom." Since Toby Dakin had passed away as well, the attorney who drafted the will was unable to clarify it.

The Probate Court of Hampshire County, Massachusetts, after lengthy consideration, affirmed the establishment of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust and provided clear title to the Evergreens and its contents. Under the conditions of Mary Hampson's will, the Trust was granted a period of three years to arrange for the permanent preservation of the Evergreens. If the Trust proved infeasible or if the Evergreens were destroyed by fire or other casualty within that time, the remaining assets would be distributed to other organizations.

When the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust assumed title to the Evergreens in 1990, the trustees recognized the need for immediate intervention to prevent cata-

strophic decay. While crucial physical repairs were in progress, the Trust moved forward on several legal and regulatory fronts to insure that the site would never again be threatened with demolition or redevelopment. A full boundary survey and an initial topographical survey helped establish the boundaries of Austin and Susan Dickinson's land. The next step was to file a confirmatory deed—the first recorded deed in the building's entire history—to strengthen the chain of title and clarify the history of ownership.

The Evergreens was already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Dickinson Historic District in 1977, but that designation alone provided only a modest level of protection for the property. With the assistance of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Evergreens was designated a "totally preserved building" under the Massachusetts State Building Code in 1996. A preservation restriction on the property and the land was then granted in perpetuity to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to support the ongoing process of preservation and restoration.

Most recently, the Evergreens was designated an official project of Save America's Treasures, a joint program of the White House Millennium Committee and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This partnership offers tremendous potential to highlight the significance of the Dickinson property and to insure its preservation for generations to come.

Gregory Farmer is Project Manager for the Evergreens.

Volcanoes Be in Sicily," continued from page 5

this sunset is cooled by the water or the water is warmed by the golden light upon it, and upon the city, and upon all the soft mountain-heights around."¹³ It was in this spirit that Dickinson wrote to Otis P. Lord on April 30, 1882: "The Air is soft as Italy, but when it touches me, I spurn it with a Sigh, because it is not you" (L750).

Dickinson could hardly avoid Italy in her wide reading. The same issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, for example, in which she read Higginson's "Letter to a Young

Contributor" (April 1862) contained "Our Artists in Italy" and a piece of fiction called "Agnes of Sorrento." Her school texts and personal reading led her around the globe.¹⁴ Dickinson's work is rich in the metaphorical use of many parts of Europe and of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Italy, though referenced disproportionately, had no personal significance for Dickinson, other than as a rich mine of allusion for mapping the interior of her own heart.¹⁵

Italy, and particularly Sicily, is for me undeniably personal and deeply instinctual. After leaving my friend Tom at the airport in Catania for his return to the United States, I began a three-week journey into the past and into myself. From the east coast of Sicily I went to the extreme west, to the remote Sicilian island of Levanzo. In a grotto there, prehistoric drawings from the Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic periods have been found: deer, bison, tuna, dolphin, men and women in ritual dance.

To get to Levanzo I stayed in the coastal town of Trapani. My hotel was in the sickle-shaped peninsula of the old section, formed when Demeter, goddess of the earth's fertility, dropped her sickle while desperately soaring over Sicily in search of her daughter Persephone.

In mid-April, I took the ferry from Trapani to Levanzo, where it docked in the turquoise harbor, with its one white-washed town above it. My guidebook told me the coastal trail to the west would bring me to the Grotta del Genovese, the site of the cave paintings. To my right as I hiked I could see mountain goats on the limestone cliffs. Before I could see them, I detected the scent of wild rosemary and fennel. Close by were agave cactuses, source of tequilla. On my left were purple grottoes carved out of the coast. Out to sea was the island of Marettimo on the horizon, beyond which lay Tunisia. ("The Mail from Tunis.../An easy Morning's Ride—" [Fr1489].)

Without a soul in sight, with no indication of the Grotta del Genovese, the trail gave out. Following twisted goat paths, I reached the other side of the island, where I was to learn more than if I had reached my original destination.

The famed Italian warmth and exuber-

ance, which I had felt with my Sicilian family, was hard to find outside *la famiglia*, the family circle. Traveling alone, I'd hoped to meet Sicilians in cafes, on trains, but I was met instead with suspicion. I had expected this in Palermo, a city long in the thrall of local corruption and international drug trafficking. But even the people of lovely Monreale or little Cefalu had learned to keep their distance, to distrust a stranger. Centuries of domination by the Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Germanic Vandals, Arabs, Normans, Angevins, and Spanish have exhausted the people's sense of trust. Recent generations of inward-turning mafia subjugation have made it unwise to greet anyone outside *la famiglia* with open smiles.

Finding myself alone, at the opposite end of Levanzo from civilization, and unsure of where I was (I hesitate to say "lost"), I spotted a group of young men and women in the distance. As I approached, they gathered and began to move on. I introduced myself and asked the way to the cave paintings. An unsmiling man of about thirty-five told me the cave was closed, and the group began to walk away. But several turned toward me and beckoned me to go along with them. Immediately Carmello, the previously unsmiling one, and Allesandro began pointing out wildflowers to me. I was introduced to their teacher, Gigi, leader of this class of nature guides.

We hiked down to the cave, which was indeed closed, and somewhere along the way I became one of the crowd. Gigi, a handsome Sicilian near forty, teased, joked, and laughed with all of us. I was taken in turn by several students and shown wild orchids, asphodel, wild gladiolus, and nests of gull eggs. After a picnic near the Grotta del Genovese, I tried to say goodbye, but Carmello and Gigi simultaneously insisted, "No, no, come with us." I was most moved when, on behalf of the class, Concetta, a shy student, presented me with a copy of their splendid class botany, *La Flora Mediterranea*.

This pattern—initial wariness followed by enveloping warmth and generosity—repeated itself endlessly in Sicily. I later went down the western coast to Marsala, to see the Lombardo Winery. Approaching the gate on a lonely road by the water,

I was stopped by the *carabinieri*. While one called my passport information in to headquarters, another examined my arms for evidence of drug use. After I was cleared, they smiled and said, "Ei, your name is Lombardo. Are you Sicilian?" and wished me *buon viaggio*. I stepped into the vineyard and walked along the palm-tree-lined drive until someone stepped out and asked me what my business was. When I said my name was Lombardo and I had come to see the vineyard, I was immediately introduced to Ermelinda Lombardo and given a tour of every building and a lesson in making Marsala. Her brother Orazio Lombardo presented me with bottles of their finest liqueurs and gave me a ride back into town.

Slowly circling back to the east coast of Sicily, I stopped for several days in Agrigento. The ancient walled hilltown on the south coast looks down over the Valley of Temples and out to the Mediterranean. Its Temple of Concord, one of the best preserved of all Greek temples, is surrounded by temples to Zeus, Hera, Castor and Pollux, Heracles, and on and on. I spent an afternoon in an olive and almond grove looking at these from a distance before taking them in, one by one.

The oldest of Agrigento's sacred sites was the one I wanted to see most, but it was not open to the public. The Santuario di Demetra, devoted to the cult of Demeter and Persephone, was hidden on the side of a cliff, below a chapel built on the ruins of the Temple of Demeter. I followed a trail downward, climbed a small iron gate, and spent several hours among the stone ruins, overgrown with wildflowers, cactus, and pines.¹⁶ It's among such remnants that the imagination peoples the island. Sicily is a poor, tortured, often invaded place of infinite beauty and infinite possibility:

Partake as doth the Bee –
Abstemiously –
A Rose is an Estate
In Sicily – [Fr806]

The pagan past merges seamlessly with the Christian present in Sicily. On Palm Sunday in Agrigento, the town celebrated the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. The streets were lined with palms, church bells rang, and everyone carried olive branches.

In the street an old priest handed me an olive branch and said, "Buona Pasqua." Two white doves flew to an arched window above the crowd. A procession came down Via Garibaldi to the Chiesa d'Adolorata, led by Jesus—a young robed man on a donkey. This was only one of four processions I saw that morning.

After noon I boarded a train to complete the circle of the island and return to my family. Off in the distance, as we approached Catania, I saw Etna throwing a huge white plume of smoke and steam across the clear blue sky. This "reticent volcano" was shouting "His never slumbering plan."

I returned to Paolo and Maria's house on Via Magenta in Canicattini Bagni. During my final days I talked to the old people—Nella, Giovanni, Nanuzzu—about their lives. I asked about photos from their youth, old photos of the town, until I understood that—in a place rich in lemons, grapes, and olives—it's only recently that cars and cameras have replaced donkeys and storytelling.

Fulfilling a promise I had made to my mother, on my last night I gathered all the relatives and friends together for a dinner in Siracusa. At Ristorante da Piero, large platters of grilled swordfish, octopus with lemon, stuffed squid, baby clams, myriad pasta shapes and colors and sauces, and bottles of local wine covered the tables. Like the food, the teasing, the laughter, and the stories went on till nearly midnight.

On my last day, I walked along Via Magenta looking for the house where my father had been born. Eighteen years earlier I had taken a photo of him in the doorway of the house. It was still standing then but was being used for storage. Chickens walked through its single room, and pictures of the Virgin Mary were still on the walls. I found it again. It hadn't been touched. The window on the left was broken and there was some loose metal scaffolding before it. I could see my father standing in the doorway.

I went to this island, to this home with the ghost of my father leaning against the doorjamb, to see if it was *my* home. I felt the warmth of family and the anger of volcanoes. I walked in magical places where pagan temples dedicated to the goddess

Demeter were steps from shops exhibiting Easter lambs made of colored almond paste.

Dickinson wrote to her brother, Austin, in the autumn of 1851, "Home is a holy thing – nothing of doubt or distrust can enter" (L59). But Emily admitted that home is not necessarily in a single house. To Samuel Bowles she wrote in August 1862, "How sweet it must be to one to come home, whose Home is in so many Houses" (L272).

I left Sicily knowing that, like Dickinson, ultimately "I see – New Englandly" (Fr256). Now I've picked up my father's mandolin and I'm learning to play the songs that he played as I "contemplate Vesuvius at Home."

Notes

1. *Emily Dickinson: Tutte le Poesie*, ed. with an introduction by Marisa Bulgheroni (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1997), 1587.

2. Dickinson sometimes referred to herself as "but a Pagan." See Richard B. Sewall, *The Life of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 590.

3. Fr165, 517, 1161, 1691, 1743, 1776.

4. Rebecca Patterson, *Emily Dickinson's Imagery*, ed. Margaret H. Freeman (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1979), 169.

5. New York: C.S. Francis, 1859), 8-9.

6. Dickinson herself notes this contrast in Browning by naming her "the Anglo-Florentine" in Fr600.

7. Lines 1101-02.

8. An Italian reference occurs in the first Master Letter as well: "I wish I were great, like Mr. Michael Angelo, and could paint for you" (L187).

9. New York, 1843.

10. Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwaite, 1847.

11. Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwaite, 1848, 269.

12. New York, 1867.

13. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1901, 71.

14. Dickinson's reading of Greek and Latin authors gave her the grounding for two fascinating references to the Etruscans: in L478, "Please consult the bees –

they are the only authority on Etruscan matters." In L1021 she calls the marriage of Eugenia Hall "the Etruscan Experiment." The Etruscans, from the area now known as Tuscany, would have been known to Dickinson for their accomplished religious ceremonies, and for their funerary cult and its concern with immortality.

15. It's unlikely that Dickinson knew anyone from Italy personally. The first Italian family to move to Amherst was that of John and Candida Musante. In October 1882 they opened a fruit, nut, and candy stand on the sidewalk at South Pleasant Street. On November 1, Dickinson may have read this complaint titled "The Peanut Fiend" in the *Amherst Record*: "Let the peanut seller pay a certain sum to those menials who gather up the fruits of their sales from school-room, hall and church. No building or room can be neat and tidy when infested with the peanut eater." It wasn't until after Dickinson's death that more than one hundred Italian laborers arrived in Amherst to work on the Massachusetts Central Railroad, in 1887.

16. Among other sources, Dickinson would certainly have been familiar with Demeter and Persephone from Thomas Wentworth Higginson's article "The Greek Goddesses" (*Atlantic Monthly*, 1869). In L330a, Higginson invited the poet to go to Boston to hear him read this paper; she of course declined. In the written version, he extends the myth from one of seasons and fertility to one that embodies the archetype of motherhood. Dickinson commented neither on this nor on his more startling claim: "The Roman Catholic church, with more wisdom of adaptation, has kept one goddess from the Greek, and transformed Demeter with her miraculously born child, which is now become masculine, presiding over every altar." T.W. Higginson, *Atlantic Essays* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1874), 294.

Daniel Lombardo recently retired as Curator of Special Collections at the Jones Library in Amherst. He is the author of A Hedge Away: The Other Side of Emily Dickinson's Amherst.

The warmth of Collins's lyric voice, and especially the sly, affectionate humor that saturates his verse, inevitably establish a brooding intimacy with his reader. The reciprocation of that intimate affection is evident in Annie Proulx's observation that she has "never felt possessive about a poet, but I am fiercely glad that Billy Collins is ours"; in John Updike's remark that Collins's poems are "lovely in a way almost nobody's since Roethke's are"; and in Gerald Stern's simple and yet so apt characterization of the verse as, ultimately, "heartbreakingly beautiful."

Collins has always admired Dickinson's poetry and admits to being first taken as an undergraduate reader by her strange "New England surrealism" and "the way her poems seem to leap out of time the way Blake's do." Confessing that he always got a "super-thrill from Dickinson's descriptions," Collins points, as an example, to the chilling intensification of the speaker's vulnerability in Poem J712 ("Because I could not stop for Death"): "There's a wonderful moment where the speaker feels chilly, where she's literally—'For only Gossamer, my Gown — / My tippet — only Tulle'—undressed for death." The unforgettable title of the poem reprinted here came first and provided, as Collins puts it, "the DNA for the rest of the poem."

"Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes" has already proven somewhat controversial. After its initial publication in *Poetry*, a reprinting in *Harper's* prompted a number of letters from irate readers who, with the curiously possessive sensitivity that so often characterizes the cultish appreciation of Dickinson, found the poem's mild salaciousness rather offensive, if not positively sacrilegious. One reader was moved to compose a parody entitled "Taking Off Billy Collins' Clothes." Another suggested that the poem revealed a typically male morbid interest in dead women, a remark that moves Collins to ponder, "If I'd written 'Taking off Sharon Olds' or Louise Gluck's Clothes' would that have made it O.K.?"

Indeed, Collins imagines his playful rendition of poetic/literary sex with Dickinson as an audacious counter to the

pernicious speculation about her sexuality: "It just occurred to me that people don't know how to take off Emily Dickinson's clothes." As opposed to the ostentatious sexual overtiness of Whitman, her only nineteenth-century poetic peer, Dickinson's "sexual mystery" has provoked only mindless controversy that, for Collins, results in an occasional "critical clouding" of the poetry itself. "Does it really matter whether she was a virgin or a lesbian or had some unknown male lover?" he asks.

The temptation to biographical misdirection is an issue to which Collins has obviously given considerable thought. As he wrote recently in his introduction to the Modern Library Classics edition of *The Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, "However tempting it is to search through the biographical evidence for a solution to the enigma of Emily Dickinson's life, we must remember that no such curiosity would exist were it not for the poems themselves" (xi). Elsewhere, in a brilliant poem titled "Marginalia," the narrator recalls once "trying to imagine what the person must look like / who wrote 'Don't be a ninny' / alongside a paragraph in *The Life of Emily Dickinson*."

Collins observes in his introductory essay that "in her strange reclusiveness, she serves as a counterweight to today's emphasis on the public demonstration of poetry. In the age of the workshop, the reading, the poetry conference and festival, Dickinson reminds us of the deeply private nature of literary art" (xix). More alert readers, Collins trusts, will recognize the ambiguity of his peculiar tribute to Dickinson, his poem's straddling of the playful and the serious, the mixing of sly deconstruction and profound appreciation. Certainly the poem is, to say the least, one of the more subtly intimate poetic appreciations of Dickinson of recent years.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when the first selected edition of Collins's poetry was published in Britain earlier this year, the publisher chose to entitle the collection *Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes*. On reflection, it might well be impossible for a poetry lover to avoid browsing a collection bearing that title.

In the buzz after Collins's poetry read-

ing at Knox College, with the memory of the closing of his signature poem "Nightclub" lingering in the air ("We are all so foolish, / my long bebop solo begins by saying, / so damn foolish / we have become beautiful without even knowing it"), and with the book signing now proceeding apace, an overheard conversation brings home to me—finally—the reason for the nervous laughter toward the conclusion of the performance. One young student, walking by the circulation desk, turns and confides to her friend: "The thing was, though, the poems were, like, all so good. So it wasn't as if the guy was kidding or anything...."

She's right, of course. Out into the chill midwestern evening we spill, all the beautiful fools, thinking beautiful foolish thoughts, some of those concerning Emily Dickinson perchance. Billy Collins, I can report, played extremely well in the vicinity of Peoria. Presumably he can now, as they say in these parts, play anywhere.

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Editor's Note

I apologize for two errors that appeared in Bert Hirschhorn's report on the Bliss family in Lebanon in the last issue. The author of the monograph *Latin Scholars*

at the *Academy* should have been listed as Grace E. Perkinson (not Perkins), and Emily Dickinson's herbarium is in the collection of the Houghton Library at Harvard

University, not the Amherst College Archives as stated in the article.

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