

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

TO OWN THE ART WITHIN THE SOUL EMILY DICKINSON AND CREATIVE WRITING

By Jed Deppman

"I ended dreaming—when I died—"

If that were the first line of an 8-16 line Dickinson poem, then what would the rest of it be? That was a question I asked my class at Oberlin College in the spring of 2004; Darcy Gervasio, then a sophomore, responded with the poems on page three. But it is also fair to ask the more general question: are such creative exercises pedagogically useful? The answer is self-evident neither to teachers nor students, but for a variety of reasons I would say yes.

Some benefits are easy to see. The finish-the-poem exercise, since it requires one to work within the basic rhythms and ideas of Dickinson, teaches one how difficult or easy that is, how limiting or liberating, how personally viable. Moreover, to do the assignment responsibly means not just performing the usual interpretive and critical tasks of finding out how Dickinson's poems work but also productively applying one's imagination, perhaps one's whole being, to a specific task. Think of the kinds of questions one must address just to get started: what do I (Dickinson) really mean to say, and why? How will I say it, in what words and syntax? What am I likely or prepared to say next, and why? A few minutes alone with those questions and the Franklin edition, and suddenly one has a better, more complex personal relationship with

Dickinson's forms and ideas.

Other important reasons are less intuitive, especially those that help pull students beyond widely-held but limiting ideas about the basic nature and worth of lyric poetry. To bring these into view, it will help to back up briefly to the question of what cultural forces are currently encouraging, discouraging, or otherwise informing the teach-

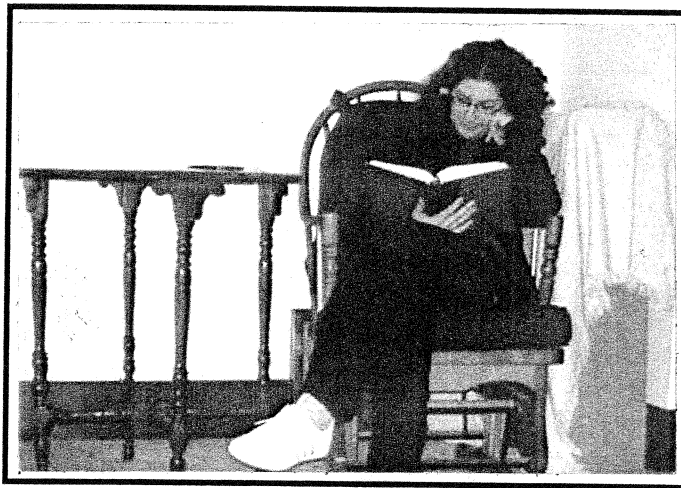


Photo by Dane Gervasio

ing of literature. The topic is vast, but John Guillory's 1993 book *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* has addressed it by cogently arguing that literature is taught at colleges because the wider public recognizes it as an important form of cultural capital. To the extent that professors regulate access to that capital, they justify their profession. And their success, such as it is, is largely determined by the idea of the canon; in fact Guillory argues that authors and individual works

truly serve a college's social, regulatory function only when they are presented as unproblematically canonical (269).

"Unproblematically" is precisely the problem, for as decades of canon wars have shown, the competition for canonical status has had destabilizing effects on everything from the general profile of the humanities to departmental hires, syllabi, lectures, discussions, and individual writing assignments. The cover of Guillory's book is itself revealing: a photograph of a university building with stone pillars and the engraved names of "Cicero" and "Vergil." High above, attached with strings, is a cloth banner bearing the names "Dickinson" and "Woolf." The contrasts could not be stronger: permanence vs. transience, male vs. female, old vs. new, built-in vs. added-on. As someone who tends to teach

the cloth rather than the stone authors I am inspired by the banner, but I also understand that cloth can and will inevitably be displaced or supplemented by another medium higher up.

Accepting the replaceability of writers is salutary for the way it teaches us to listen to new voices, but it also makes it possible for skeptics to claim that literature and its authors appear on syllabi as a function of social ideology. Guillory patiently describes the key premises of this conspiracy theory, which today attracts varying degrees

of conviction: literature represents little more than a society's dominant values, and "the aesthetic" as a category has the function, purely ideological, of concealing "the fact that the canonization of a work is nothing but the affirmation of the social values expressed in the work" (270). A student of any political or religious background may arrive in the classroom believing, or almost ready to believe, that teachers and writers do little more than channel or contest the ideologies of their time.

Thus an important consequence of the finish-the-poem exercise is that it puts these kinds of ideas to rout. When one legitimately tries to share a voice and join one's thought to the reflective and expressive patterns, modes, and vocabularies of a poet like Dickinson, then faith in the sweeping power of ideology quickly dissolves. Every choice is a risk and the mind is alive with possibility; under the imperious

demands for genuine invention and feeling, the idea that one is somehow unknowingly responding to one's surrounding socio-cultural values seems paltry. This is especially true if one cares deeply about the subject matter; then the process involves so much reading, listening, and thinking before writing that it returns poetry to the wholeness of existence. Poetry then viscerally includes life's private and inexplicable aspects as well as the public and communicable ones, all at once.

This brings me to the second point: to finish a poem in a voice simultaneously one's own and not one's own is to overcome the argument, advanced in various forms by Paul de Man and others, that literature is basically unteachable and unlearnable and that under its name professors teach other things, usually material from easier, more theoretically coherent and systematic subjects like biography, sociology, politics, history, rhetoric, or psychology. Writing a Dickinson poem does not erase the value of other disciplines and contexts, but it decisively subordinates them and melts them into a single act, defying them to supply the next

word or image. If the poem I am writing demands that I relinquish a cherished image or idea about Dickinson, then perhaps it is worth trading a general truth for a specific one.

Drawing upon the foregoing, I would suggest finally that creative exercises have a real potential to initiate a paradigm shift: they can help transform the relationship of consumer/reader/interpreter of a work into that of participant and co-creator of a text. "I can delight in reading and re-reading," says Roland Barthes along these lines, but "this pleasure, no matter how keen and even when free from all prejudice, remains in part . . . a pleasure of consumption; for if I can read these authors, I also know that I cannot re-write them . . ." (163). But what if one does rewrite them, I ask? Then—perhaps only then—one opens oneself to the "pleasure without separation," the *jouissance* of coexisting with a preexisting text (164). And that can be instructive indeed.

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ON WRITING IN THE STYLE OF EMILY DICKINSON

By Darcy Gervasio

I wrote these two poems as a class assignment last Spring for Jed Deppman's seminar on Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. The assignment: to write 8-16 lines in the style of Emily Dickinson. The prompt: "I ended dreaming—when I died—."

Immediately, the prompt offered me two directions, and I knew I had to overachieve and write two poems. The first direction involved the possibility of dreaming after death, in the grave. This struck me right away as a Dickinsonian idea. In poems like "It was not Death for I stood up" and "Because I could not stop for Death," Emily Dickinson dwells in the moment of discovery when a deceased speaker finds out that Death is not stationary or unconscious. Assuming a person can dream after death, I asked myself: what would she dream about? While I did not base my poems on any particular Dickinson poem, I remember reading "Doom is the House without the Door" sometime beforehand. Dickinson writes of death:

Tis varied by the Dream
Of what they do outside—
Where Squirrels play—and
Berries dye—
and Hemlocks—bow—to God—
(J765)

In my first homage poem, I borrowed this idea of a dead person dreaming of the natural world she no longer belongs to.

The second path opened by the prompt was of death cutting off a dream. Instead of dreaming in the grave, the speaker's death is an awakening from dreams. In "We dream—it is good we are dreaming," Dickinson tiptoes between waking and dreaming, drama and death. Lines three and four of the second stanza, "But we—are dying in Drama—/ And Drama—is never dead—" were the inspiration for my allusions to *Hamlet* in my sec-

ond poem. The connection between the famous "what dreams may come" and "we dream—it is good we are dreaming" was irresistible. Hamlet refused suicide because he could not be sure what awaited him after death. My dreamer in the second poem, like many Dickinson speakers, must decide whether to go with Death and leave the confines of the grave or remain and resume her interrupted dream. Hamlet feared hellish dreams, but wouldn't it be worse if no dreams came at all to vary eternity?

In class, Professor Deppman discussed the perspective common to Dickinson poems of a corpse leaving the grave, seeing a world beyond, then returning to the grave in a final twist. A good example is "I heard a Fly buzz when I died." The deceased hears a fly during her funeral, consciously watches the entire proceeding, and then disturbingly returns to herself as the "windows failed—and then/I could not see to see—."

Aside from incorporating this unusual perspective, the images I used in my poems flowed directly from the language. I began with words rather than scenes, and they built on each other symbiotically. In the first poem, after asking myself what a dead Dickinson speaker would dream of, I came up with the second line, "of Possibility," and the rest of the poem followed. *Possibility* struck me as a quintessential Dickinson word. Her death poems always turn on *mights* and *coulds*. Death is not quite afterlife, not quite desolate, but full of possibility for both. Dickinson asks: What if you can think after you're dead? Or dream? Or see? What if you remain in your coffin? What if you leave and take an endless carriage ride? I drew from a collection of Dickinson's images only after I drew from her words.

What I find continually intriguing about Emily Dickinson's poetry is the relationship between words and

thought, between the sound and the cerebral. One of my favorite Dickinson poems "The Brain is Wider than the Sky." The final stanza continues to blow me away:

The Brain is just the weight of God
For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—
And they will differ—if they do
As Syllable from Sound—

(J514)

Months later, I'm still unsure what distinguishes Syllable from Sound, but the line's consonance and rhythm are so pleasing that I don't mind not understanding.

Playing with language was my primary attraction to the assignment in the first place. I made a mental list of Dickinsonian words to use in my poem,

1.
*I ended dreaming—when I died—
Of Possibility
That dressed the windows of the Room—
Eternal Tapestry—*

*From sudden thought a feather grew—
I quivered in my sleep—
Awaking—I strapped on the wings
of Immortality*

*I fluttered round the Garden Stones
The blooms—a Diadem
Of fragrance—such I near forgot
'Twas I—encompassed—them*

2.
*I ended dreaming—when I died—
Death cut short my Dream—
Inviting me to glance abroad
And promenade with Him*

*Comfort lies in Slumber's arms
But Finite dreaming done—
I vacillate—as Hamlet did—
Should Dreams neglect to come*

big, abstract, mathematical words that my creative writing teachers would have called "prosy." The short list included *possibility*, *Immortality* (required in a death poem!), *circumference*, and *diadem*. I didn't know what a diadem was until reading Dickinson, and I was very happy to find a place for it in my poem. Most often, words emerged as the poem required rather than from my arbitrary list. *Tapestry*, *vacillate*, and *encompassed* all occurred to me as I was creating images and felt apt. *Encompassed* resembles *circumference* and is crucial to the inside-the-grave image at the end of my first poem.

Dickinson's punctuation was the other side of the language coin. I had

fun capitalizing regular nouns, and the dashes were quite liberating. I did not insert dashes and capitals randomly but tried to use them for emphasis and breath as Dickinson did.

Writing these poems was an exercise in speaking another woman's personal language. In order to borrow Dickinson's voice, I had to internalize her rhythm. I'm not sure exactly how I did this, but after reading many of her poems, often aloud, the rhythm suddenly felt comfortable. It became an alternative pattern for my thoughts. I'd written strained sonnets in iambic pentameter before, counting syllables and stresses on my fingers, but the meter of these two Dickinson poems

just *happened*. I didn't have to fiddle or cheat to get it right, partly because Dickinson used meter in a more flexible way, but partly because I had absorbed her meter into my head until it felt natural.

I hope these two homages to Emily Dickinson read like verses discovered in a lost letter to a neighbor or friend. If they achieve what I hope, it is because I tried my best to write poems not parodies.

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THE WAYS OF POSSIBILITY

EMILY DICKINSON AND DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

By Cynthia L. Hallen

The year 2005 marks the centenary celebration of the birthday of the Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld, author of the book *Markings* and reader of Emily Dickinson's poems. Although they lived in different countries and centuries, interesting similarities exist between Dickinson and Hammarskjöld. Both lived to be 56 years old, and both recorded their writings over a span of 36 years. Both writers loved nature and the outdoors. Both never married. Both writers experienced a kind of sacred calling in their middle years. Both spent lives of sacrifice and service to family and others. Both wrote for personal reasons rather than publication, and both kept their writings in a drawer for loved ones to find and release after death.

Dickinson and Hammarskjöld each had roots in a heritage of intellectual discipline, religious devotion, national loyalty, and civic duty. Hammarskjöld was born into a family with long tradi-

tions of community service. His mother's ancestors included "scholars and clergymen," and his father's lineage included "soldiers and public officials" (Heller 11). After a distinguished career in Sweden, Hammarskjöld was elected in 1953 as the Secretary General of the United Nations, and in that role he "brought about reconciliations by his sheer integrity" (Kelen 42). He possessed the kind of "moral rectitude" that is a "great untapped source of power in practical politics" (84). Dag served with distinction until he died on a peacekeeping mission to Africa in September 1961. In December of that year, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize posthumously for outstanding diplomacy and extraordinary international leadership.

Both Dickinson and Hammarskjöld had opportunities conducive to literacy and education. As a young man, Hammarskjöld studied humanities at

Uppsala University, with interests in linguistics, literature, and history. He had a "wide acquaintance with both classical and modern literature," including the poetry of Emily Dickinson (Van Dusen 23). When he first read Dickinson in the early 1920s, he was so impressed that he recommended her poems to fellow students (Heller 10). He later enjoyed collecting fine books, and his personal copy of *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* is part of the Dag Hammarskjöld collection at the Royal Library in Stockholm. The book is a 1947 London reprint of the 1937 version edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. According to reference librarian Lena Treter, the Royal Library copy contains no annotations.

Dickinson's closely-packed lyric verses may have been a source of inspiration for *Markings*, Hammarskjöld's book of prose aphorisms and short poems. Near the time of his gradua-

tion from college in 1925, Dag began to record contemplations in a secret manuscript, unknown to family, friends, or colleagues. Hammarskjöld mentioned the diary just once, to one friend, Leif Belfrage (Kelen 276). Close associate Per Lind found 175 typewritten pages, with a preface letter addressed to Belfrage, in the drawer of a bed table after Dag's death (Van Dusen 32). One can only wish that Dickinson had left such a letter for a friend or family member!

Dear Leif:

Perhaps you remember I once told you that, in spite of everything, I kept a diary which I wanted you to take charge of some day.

Here it is.

It was begun without a thought of anybody else reading it. But, what with my later history and all that has been said and written about me, the situation has changed. These entries provide the only true "profile" that can be drawn. That is why, during recent years, I have reckoned with the possibility of publication, though I have continued to write for myself, not for the public.

If you find them worth publishing, you have my permission to do so—as a sort of white book concerning my negotiations with myself—and with God.

Dag (Stolpe 5-6)

Poets Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden (also a fan of Dickinson) translated the 1963 Swedish edition of the book into English, and Alfred A. Knopf published it in 1964 with the title *Markings*. Like Dickinson's poems, the style of Hammarskjöld's entries is concise, condensed, cryptic, enigmatic, and yet simple (Aulén 5). The book quickly became a bestseller and was hailed as "one of the most remarkable manuscripts" of the day (Van Dusen 32).

The Swedish title *Vägmärken* literally means "way markers" and suggests a collection of metaphorical signposts, trail marks, or cairns (Van Dusen 32-33). The concept of road markers re-

flects Dag's love of travel, hiking, and mountaineering. Furthermore, *Markings* is a work that reveals the journey of a "profoundly mystical and religious inner man" (Heller 7). The trail markers or road signs suggest a "Via Sacra" or "Way of the Cross" in Hammarskjöld's life-long spiritual quest.

Both Hammarskjöld and Dickinson quoted the Bible frequently and certainly knew the words of Isaiah: "And a highway shall there be, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8). A tangible manifestation of Dag's trek on the way of holiness was inaugurated this past September 2004, when a "Hammarskjöldleden" memorial hiking trail opened in northern Sweden with citations from *Markings* posted along the way. The "Emily Dickinson Trail" recently established in Amherst, Massachusetts, will likewise function as a pilgrimage path with poetic inscriptions.

Not surprisingly, the works of Hammarskjöld and Dickinson refer to mountain climbing figuratively, comparing the ascending of heights to challenges in life. For Hammarskjöld, mountaineering was not just an outlet for exercise, adventure, and photography—it was "a shaper of character" in the course of one's life (Van Dusen 26). Mountains represent problems to be solved, with grand vistas as a reward for the effort.

In the entry for July 6, 1961, an inner voice urges the climber to endure the demands of the Way in spite of isolation and fatigue:

Tired
And lonely,
So tired
The heart aches.
Meltwater trickles
Down the rocks,
The fingers are numb,
The knees tremble.
It is now,
Now, that you must not give in.

On the path of others

Are resting places,
Places in the sun
Where they can meet.
But this
Is your path,
And it is now,
Now that you must not fail.

Weep
If you can,
Weep,
But do not complain.
The way chose you—
And you must be thankful.

(S&A 209)

Hammarskjöld emphasizes that the route chooses the climber just as much as the climber chooses the route (S&A 115). The "way" is a person as well as a path since the Lord identifies himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). "The way chose you" paraphrases Christ's statement to his disciples in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Dickinson paraphrases the same scripture in Fr 871 (J85). As Dickinson and Hammarskjöld read in Thomas à Kempis, the high way of the soul is emulation or imitation of Christ.

Dickinson discusses the rigor and solitude of the soul's high road in an 1863 poem that appears in the Bianchi and Hampson edition that Dag read:

The Soul's superior instants
Occur to Her alone,
When friend and earth's occasion
Have infinite withdrawn.

Or she, Herself, ascended
To too remote a height,
For lower recognition
Than Her Omnipotent.
(B&H 232-233; see Fr 630/J306)

Dickinson's use of the word "superior" in line one suggests that the highest moments of the soul occur when friends withdraw, as when the disciples of Christ slept and then fled from the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:45-56). Or, the most sublime events occur when the soul rises to such a

height that no one can fully comprehend except Deity, as when Christ was lifted up on the cross, then rose up from the dead and ascended into heaven.

The persona of an 1862 Dickinson poem is a master climber that sacrifices his life to persuade a novice climber to ascend the uphill pitch before her. In this instance, the student is reluctant to answer "Yes" to the invitation:

I showed her heights she never
saw—
"Wouldst climb?" I said,
She said "Not so"—
With me?" I said, "With me?"
I showed her secrets
Morning's nest,
The rope that Nights were put
across—
And now, "Wouldst have me for a
Guest?"
She could not find her yes—
And then, I brake my life, and Lo!
A light for her, did solemn glow,
The larger, as her face withdrew—
And could she, further, "No?"
(B&H 266; see Fr346/J446)

The way of ascent and assent is a type of the path that mortals may choose in order to follow in the footsteps of the Master. All are welcome to tread there, but it takes courage to make a commitment to follow the leader.

Both Dickinson and Hammarskjöld discuss the difficulties inherent in scaling life's slopes, but in an entry dated Whitsunday 1961, Dag shows the power of saying "Yes" to the way of the Master. In addition to the general momentum of the "Life is a Journey" metaphor (Freeman 262), a special kind of purpose and energy comes from surrendering to the will of the Lord:

I don't know Who—or what—put
the question, I don't know when it
was put. I don't even remember
answering. But at some moment I
did answer Yes to Someone—or
Something—and from that hour I
was certain that existence is mean-

ingful and that, therefore, my life,
in self-surrender, had a goal . . . I
realized that the way leads to a
triumph which is a catastrophe,
and to a catastrophe which is a
triumph

(S&A 201)

At first Hammarskjöld was not certain who called him when he answered "Yes" to the Way, but he gains confidence in the Master as the journey continues:

As I continued along the Way, I
learned, step by step, word by word,
that behind every sentence spoken
by the hero of the Gospels, stands
one man and one man's experi-
ence. Also behind the prayer that
the cup might pass from him and
his promise to drink it. Also behind
each of the words of the Cross.
(Aulén 8)

The trail of the truth-seeker is more than a day hike or a pleasure trip. For those who dare to enter, the way of holiness includes a birth which leads to the cup of pain, and a cross which leads to the victory of rebirth.

Dickinson acknowledges that "life's penurious round" may include the anguish of Gethsemane and the scalding agony of Calvary (B&H 25; see Fr283/J313). She recommends the Good Shepherd as a sherpa for life's ultimate high-risk adventure in an 1863 poem:

Life is what we make it,
Death we do not know;
Christ's acquaintance with him
Justifies him, though.

He would trust no stranger,
Other could betray,
Just his own endorsement
That sufficeth me.

All the other distance
He hath traversed first,
No new mile remaineth
Far as Paradise.

His sure feet preceding,
Tender Pioneer—
Base must be the cowards
Dare not venture now.

(B&H 329-330; see Fr727/J698)

Like an Everest or "Himmaleh" veteran, Dickinson never dodges the fear and danger that wayfarers must face in order to progress.

Hammarskjöld straightforwardly confronts the loneliness of a calling that may include a period of abstinence from intimacy that others often take for granted:

For him who has responded to the call of the Way of Possibility, loneliness may be obligatory. Such loneliness, it is true, may lead to a communion closer and deeper than any achieved by the union of two bodies, but your body is not going to let itself be fobbed off by a bluff: whatever you deny it, in order to follow this call, it will claim back if you fail, and claim back in forms which it will no longer be in your power to select.
(S&J 115)

One of the consequences of self-denial is that those who do not understand may make insensitive misrepresentations of the sacrifices that a "solo" experience requires. Since it was not typical for a public figure to be single and chaste, Hammarskjöld was pained by unfounded speculations about sexual orientation during his lifetime (Heller 4-5).

As promised in the "true profile" sentence of the Belfrage preface, Dag frankly explains his unmarried status in a 1952 entry:

Incapable of being blinded by
desire,
Feeling that I have no right to intrude
upon another,
Afraid of exposing my own
nakedness,
Demanding complete accord as a con-
dition for life together:
How could things have gone
otherwise?

(S&A 80)

Just as Dickinson selected “her own Society” (B&H 8; see Fr 409/J303), Hammarskjöld was a “naturally remote man” who “loathed personal publicity” (Kelen 49, 57). Although his circumference was international rather than domestic, Dag “fiercely protected his privacy from attempted invasions by well-meaning friends and colleagues” (Urquhart 27).

Notwithstanding the threat of present loneliness and misunderstanding, the call to serve is a “Way of Possibility,” not a dead end of endless isolation and cheerless austerity. Service is its own reward when viewed from an eternal perspective, a view that comes not only from climbing mountains but also from learning how to move them:

That our pains and longings are thousandfold and can be anesthetized in a thousand different ways is as commonplace a truth as that, in the end, they are all one, and can only be overcome in one way. What you most need is to feel—or believe you feel—that you are needed.

Fated or chosen—in the end, the vista of future loneliness only allows a choice between two alternatives: either to despair in desolation, or to stake so high on the “possibility” that one acquires the right to life in a transcendental co-inherence. But doesn’t choosing the second call for the kind of faith which moves mountains?

(S&A 63)

He asserts the fellowship of those who choose the “Way” of freedom, responsibility, and righteousness (S&A 48). He affirms a need for a circle of human intimacy where “power expresses itself in meaningful and beautiful forms” (S&A 93). Beyond the circumference of political power, he chose to be a poet, one who “Distills amazing sense / From ordinary meanings” (B&H 281; see Fr446/J448).

For Dag, the “road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action” with the goal of negotiating peace and good will on earth (S&A 117; Luke 2:14). For Dickinson the way of holiness naturally leads to the house of poetry

with the goal of establishing paradise and good words on earth:

I dwell in Possibility,
A fairer house than Prose,
More numerous of windows,
Superior of doors . . .

Of visitors—the fairest—
For occupation—this—
The spreading wide my narrow
hand

To gather Paradise.

(B&H 289; see Fr466/J657) Although Hammarskjöld playfully refers to his private journal as a government report or “whitebook,” he chooses to express himself in haiku and other verse forms. Saying “Yes” to that which is possible through faith rather than fact, through radiance rather than reason, gives new significance to life’s journey (S&A 51, 79, 120).

Nominated and elected to be a poet, Dickinson wore white as a symbol of her spiritual candidacy. Instead of donning the “spangled gowns” of fame, she consciously decided to forego the fanfare of publication and opted for “nothing commoner than snow” (B&H 194; see Fr328/J325):

Publication is the auction
Of the mind of man,
Poverty be justifying
For so foul a thing.

Possibly, —but we would rather
From our garret go
White unto the White Creator,
Than invest our snow.

Thought belongs to Him who gave
it—
Then to him who bear
Its corporeal illustration.
Sell the Royal air
In the parcel, —be the merchant
Of the Heavenly Grace,
But reduce no human spirit
To disgrace of price!

(B&H 277; see Fr788/J709)

Hammarskjöld never sought to publish his “somber, personal, religious,

and mystical autobiography” (Heller 10) in his lifetime. Like Dickinson, he sealed up his “spiritual testament” (Van Dusen 32) in a drawer to come forth at a later time for new generations, for us. If we read Dickinson and Hammarskjöld with “respect for the word,” their works can guide us in the quest for intellectual, emotional, and moral maturity (S&A 106). If we read with “scrupulous care and an incorruptible heartfelt love of truth” (S&A 107), we may hear Hammarskjöld singing with Dickinson and other members in the fellowship of soloists:

Our journey had advanced;
Our feet were almost come
To that odd fork in Being’s road,
Eternity by term . . .

Retreat was out of hope, —
Behind, a sealed route,
Eternity’s white flag before,
And God at every gate.

(B&H p. 185; see Fr453/J615)

Happy 100th Birthday to Dag this July 2005! Happy 175th Birthday to Emily this December 2005!

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LITERARY STUDIES IN UKRAINE

DICKINSON AND BEYOND

By Anna Chesnokova

Almost a year has passed since the Ukrainian chapter of EDIS reported about its current developments in Dickinson studies, but this time not only brought plenty of inspiration, but also marked a number of landmark events where local scholars and students could meet each other to discuss their progress. (See *Bulletin* 14, no. 2 [2002] pages 10-11 and 16, no. 1 [2004] page 21 for earlier reports.)

"The best way to invent the future is to predict it," a wise man once said. Young people from all over the world (Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Brazil, Greece, the U.S.A., etc.) jointly with their professors were investigating the future at the International seminar "Cultural Research: Challenges for the 3rd Millennium" that took place in Kyiv from April 30 till May 8, 2004. The event was organized by an enthusiastic team from Kyiv National Linguistic University (Kyiv, Ukraine), and two more institutions—Ludwig Maksimillian University (Munich, Germany) and the University of Alberta (Edmonton, Canada)—participated in it within the framework of the REDES (Research and Development of Empirical Studies) project.

Research papers presented at the seminar demonstrated that indeed we are true citizens of the world with the same interests, issues and hopes. During the 8-day event, several papers focusing on Dickinson's poetics were presented. Most fascinating were the projects jointly conducted by professors and students of different nationalities, hence combining different national backgrounds, experience, and research approaches to ensure the most coherent and in-depth delving into the issues.

Nine days flew by unnoticed, leaving the scent of Kyiv's blooming chestnut trees, newly established intercultural friendships, and feeling of accomplishment. The future does not

seem that uncertain and unpredictable when you have people from around the globe to create and further share it!

The tradition of comparative/contrastive studies of the Ukrainian and American literatures is now carried on, as it gives plenty of inspiration and real scholarly pleasure when the results reveal these seemingly absent closeness of literatures. This might not only open new vistas in literary studies, but

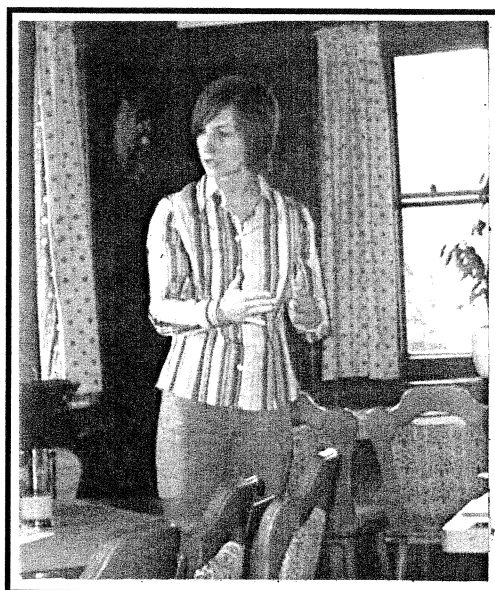


Photo by Victor Chesnokov

also is really valuable from the point of view of contemporary political and social changes in Ukraine as the country moves into the global community. Encouraged by the changes, post-graduate students dare embark on investigating Dickinson's verse from various angles. Inna Redka is working on her Ph.D. research on synaesthesia in Dickinson and other female American authors (the outline of the project was successfully presented at the twenty-fourth PALA conference at New York University in July 2004, and Redka thanks Margaret Freeman for her most insightful comments). The cognitive analysis of synaesthetic im-

ages opens new vistas in understanding the author's style of writing and intensifies the degree to which readers identify themselves with the image of the poet. Natalya Bezrebra is finishing her Ph.D. on Dickinson's author's image from a cognitive approach and is also grateful to Freeman for review and commentary. Oksana Kurilo is on her first year of M.A. studies, tracing the evolution of Dickinson's "national vs. global" imagery from that of Emerson.

Preserving home traditions, Kyiv National Linguistic University is open to learning more, and, as a result of this encouraging trend, with immense support from Prof. Willie van Peer (Munich Ludwig Maksimillian University) and Dr. Sonia Zyngier (the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Anna Chesnokova and Milena P. Mendes are currently working on their *Reading Dickinson: Identification and Cultural Stereotypes*, an empirical study intended to cast light on the influence of the poet's verse on the national traditions of Brazil and Ukraine. The outline and the general strategy of the research were presented during the international seminar "Identification in Literature" in Munich in January, 2005.

As far as the authors know, practically no one has attempted to apply the empirical approach, trying to understand Dickinson's poetry and its influence on readers, while it is "the empirical study of literature [that] investigates literature as reading or text reception" (G. Steen, "Metaphor in Bob Dylan's 'Hurricane': Genre, Language, and Style" in *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*. Ed. Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, [2002]. 183). The only example is Willie van Peer's *Stylistics and Psychology. Investigation*



Photo by Victor Chesnokov

of *Foregrounding* (Croom Helm, 1986). But even he did not view Dickinson's verse from the cross-cultural perspective. In their research, Chesnokova and Mendes are trying to answer several questions. Knowing that "strongly affecting her reader was clearly at the heart of Dickinson's poetic ambitions" (Dominic Luxford, "Sounding the Sublime: The 'Full Music' of Dickinson's Inspiration" *Emily Dickinson Journal*, 15, [2004]. 59), the authors are aiming to see what these influences are as well as to investigate the impact of Dickinson's love poetry on certain cultural beliefs in Brazil and Ukraine. The research is part of activities of the international REDES project and is carried out among students from the Humanities in the two countries. The authors are especially thankful to Cindy MacKenzie whose wonderful

Concordance to Emily Dickinson's Letters helps trace whether the data received can be generalized onto the poet's letters as well.

The next events to highlight current developments in Dickinson studies in Ukraine are the twenty-fifth PALA conference in Huddersfield, U.K., and the international conference "Cultural Research: Challenges for the 3rd Millennium II" to be held on May 1-6, 2005, at Kyiv National Linguistic University with the generous support of the Rector Prof. Galik Artemchuk, who has always promoted international research and encouraged the activities of EDIS and the REDES project.

This annual conference is organized by the REDES group of Ukraine and is open to all junior and senior researchers with a special interest in empirical study of culture, literature in particular. In accordance with the aims of the REDES project, young researchers, especially students, are encouraged to participate. Besides papers being presented, there will also be workshops on research methods, and on SPSS for Windows application, and cross-cultural research groups functioning. Expected plenary speakers are David Miall (University of Alberta), Sarah

Davis, and Willie van Peer. The hosts sincerely hope Margaret and Donald Freeman will be able to make it for the conference as well because they are the most welcomed guests in Kyiv and the great friends of the organizers.

Apart from academic activities, the conference will supply plentiful chances to informally discuss current projects, Dickinson research in particular, and get advice and criticism from colleagues. An extensive cultural program is planned, as Kyiv is a fantastically beautiful city with fascinating natural landscapes, intriguing Old Russian history, cheap entertainment (opera in particular), and very friendly students who will be ready to attend to any of the guests' questions or necessities. Publication of the papers after the conference is planned.

It is always hard to start, but when you do it, what you need is just to keep up the good work, so the Kyiv group is open to all kinds of intercultural cooperation in the field of Dickinson studies. For more detailed information, please contact Dr. Anna Chesnokova at chesnokov@inet.ua.

Anna Chesnokova is chair of the English and Translation Department at Kyiv National Linguistic University. Her current project looks at Emily Dickinson's verse as connected to Transcendentalism.

SPACE IN ITSELF AND SPACE BEYOND

By Philippe Manoury

Translated from the French by Elizabeth Brunazzi in Collaboration with Claire Malroux

Introduction

By Claire Malroux

It was the autumn of 2000 when Philippe Manoury contacted me. Manoury is a French composer whose work has been performed several times in the United States, a country he knows well. He had just read my translation of poems by Emily Dickinson and was quite moved by this discovery, struck, as he says himself, by the "fact that a very young woman, living

in a bourgeois home in a small New England town could have elevated her thought to such a level of 'white heat.'"

Philippe Manoury has always been attracted by strong texts, whether they be Kafka's *The Trial*, from which he created his opera *K*, the works of William Faulkner, or those of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. For Manoury, there was no question of putting a particular poem by Emily to music, but he did not attempt to apprehend the cosmic and metaphysical amplitude

of her poetry, and to accomplish this in spite of the problems such brief, enigmatic texts, ones devoid of apparent unity, posed for a musician accustomed to large-scale orchestral and electronic-acoustic compositions. Instead, Manoury distilled a unity all his own from the work as it was made accessible to him in French and conceived *Noon* as the encounter of time, symbolized by intersecting cycles, with eternity.

Noon as the encounter of time, symbolized by intersecting cycles, with eternity.

Space in Itself and Space Beyond
By Philippe Manoury

Noon is in no way a "translation" of Emily Dickinson's work, but rather a form of questioning addressed to her poems, a dialogue between two artists belonging to different epochs who, without experiencing the same conditions of life or speaking the same language, nevertheless communicate by means of the supreme art that is music. Emily Dickinson would not have disowned, I think, such a partner.

Poets often seem to me strikingly closer to my work than many musicians. If the material of the poet is the word, as mine is sound, it is in the selection, in the refusal of the arbitrary choice, in the apparent strangeness of the expressions, in the search for the phrase that has yet to exist, in the attempt to invent freely but not indeliberately—a dynamic that renews the richness that language has bequeathed to us—that I recognize such a kinship with poetry. Baudelaire said: "Music carves out the sky, gives us an idea of space." Was he not speaking equally of poetry?

I discovered the work of Emily Dickinson rather recently. The hermeticism of her work, so often cited, is in fact the result of the space that emerges from her poetry. And what I might easily term the "miracle" of her poetry is due to the fact that this poetic space springs from another, more intimate, more local, more concentrated, even minuscule space. That a very young woman, living in a bourgeois home in a small New England town in the middle of the

19th century, could have elevated her thought to such a level of "white heat" is beyond my comprehension. Emily Dickinson lived as a recluse, it is said, but one must not consider such a choice the indelible mark of her art. It is indeed in the human quality of her poetry, from which her own person is never excluded other than by an intentional act of abdication, that she expresses herself. If she often reveals the hope that a divine geometry (which is not accessible to the living) will perhaps resolve the mystery of transcendence, nevertheless she is not contemptuous of her earthly condition.

It troubled me as once I was
For I was once a Child
Concluding how an Atom fell
And yet the Heavens held

Life set me larger problems
Some I shall keep to solve more
Till Algebra is easier
Or simpler proved above
(Transl. Malroux; see Fr516)

Like the novelistic characters whom her compatriot William Faulkner will eventually describe, Emily Dickinson relinquishes the earth in order to attain a prodigious vision. But she attains this vision by virtue of the will expressed through her writing. The earth, sky, seasons, nature, bees, the night and day that proliferate in her poems could have given rise to a naïve pantheism were they not frequently an annunciation of disillusionment ("When the heaven was too common to miss / Too sure to dote upon!"), even presentiments of a truth sometimes much more terrible (the night is "A vastness, as a neighbor came;" "massacre of suns"). And the violence with which she often projects her thought is precisely that of a re-

sounding explosion.

This space beyond words is for me entirely musical. I could not resign myself to "put to music" the poems of Emily Dickinson, to compose an ensemble of melodies for voices and orchestra. I preferred instead to create musical worlds in which the poem would sometimes occupy the center, sometimes the origin, and sometimes the endpoint. The experience of the brevity of time required to read this poetry in contrast with the "span of resonance" that extends well beyond it led me to create musical architectures on a large scale. But because this space is above all "in itself," it is also the sonorities of these texts that I attempted to translate in my music. The famous dashes that so often interrupt these poems entail, well before the later Mallarmé, an audition both heard in time but arrested: our no less famous "pauses." Such a pause allows the resonance to become precisely a moment of reflection on what took place just before. The capital letters chosen as a privileged principle of expression and—but this is true of all authentic poetry—the play of assonances, most often free in Dickinson as is the formal construction of her poems, have provided me with so many points of departure for musical thought.

Presently the length of *Noon* is 44 minutes. The final version will probably reach about one hour and a half. Composed between April and August, 2003, the work required a long, delicate preparation. My first efforts go back to 2001 when I participated in a creative workshop for radio broadcast sponsored by France Culture ("En lisant, en composant" by Daniela Langer) for which I had made a series of musical sketches: "5 Dickinson Studies" for electronic

Self, and the Seasons will follow, and then, once again, the cycle of Hours, because:

Morning that comes but once
Considers coming twice
(Transl. Malroux; see Fr1645)

The solo soprano is the principal voice in *Noon*. She is, however, often replaced by a recorded voice, that of American poet Marilyn Hacker reciting the texts of Emily Dickinson.

The choir, which often echoes the solo voice, is positioned within the orchestra rather than assigned to its habitual place. The choir is supposed to effect a musical transition between the soprano and the orchestra as it emerges from the instruments, like a spring from which words and meanings flow. The text sung by the soprano is frequently distributed throughout the choral voices, which also repeat the different tone colors of vowels and consonants, the instrumental harmonies, and the articulation of the solo voice.

The orchestra is not arranged in traditional fashion either. Two complete string sections are grouped around an instrumental center composed of woodwinds and brasses. A piano, two harps, and four percussion instruments (relying on considerable use of Jamaican steel drums) fill out the ensemble.

The electronic music is played in actual time, that is, according to the

orchestral tempi, and is largely composed of three different sections: the orchestra, choir, and solo voice. Certain orchestral "tutti," "sampled" from my previous works, have the effect of creating delayed and spatialized repetitions of the actual orchestra, as if it were physically moving away or toward the audience.

A synthesizing choir (made possible thanks to the Psola program) plays in counterpoint to the actual choir. Entirely constructed from the recorded texts of Emily Dickinson, the contrapuntal, synthesizing choir establishes junctures between spoken and sung language, and between phonemes and unvoiced consonants.

This same material, reduced to a single voice, forms a melodic melopoeia whose origin remains a spoken voice. A spatial installation made up of six sources arranged around the audience produces not only displacements of all these layers but also the virtual space from which they derive.

Composing today consists in the construction of the acoustic space which deploys music, and also takes into account the distance between this space and the audience. At the other end of the scale, and originating in the mental space of Emily Dickinson, and as if to impart to it a "musical incarnation," we hear the material space of sound. In both instances, space is "in itself" and space "beyond."

Noon, For Solo Soprano, Chamber Choir Electronic and Orchestral Instruments. Commissioned by the Orchestre de Paris.

Composed between April and August, 2003. Inspired by the Poems of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886).

4 Notebooks.

Notebook 1: Introduction, Cycles of Cycles, Cycle of Hours, I—Morning. Notebook 2: Cycle of Duality, Cycle of Hours, II—Noon. Notebook 3: Cycle of Divine Geometries, Cycle of Hours III—Evening, Notebook 4: Cycle of Death. Approximate Length: 47 minutes

Notes

The poems selected by Philippe Manoury were published by Editions José Corti and Editions Belin; they have been translated for this article by Claire Malroux.

This article, in French, first appeared on the occasion of the performance of Noon, in the program notes of the Orchestre de Paris, December 11th, 2003.

Elizabeth Brunazzi teaches in the English Department of West Chester University; she has published both scholarly and creative work.

Claire Malroux, French poet and translator of Emily Dickinson, was featured in the Bulletin 16. 1 (2004): 2-3, 22.

2004 SCHOLAR IN AMHERST Award

Jed Deppman, who directs the Comparative Literature program at Oberlin College, is the fourth recipient of the Scholar in Amherst Award. This year's award honors the late Dickinson scholar Brita Lindberg-Seyersted. Deppman will use the award to complete the chapter of his book *Postmodern Dickinson* entitled "Trying to Think with Emily Dickinson," a study of how this innovative thinker-poet rethought and reworked the texts and ideas her

culture had given her. The chapter will expand Deppman's article of the same title, forthcoming in the *Emily Dickinson Journal*. This three-part article uses letters and poems to examine the many important roles that thought played in her life and poetry. Part one portrays Dickinson as a Lockean-Kantian postmodern artist who used poetry to test and expand her mind's limits. Part two introduces a lyrical subgenre unique to Dickinson: the "try-to-think"

poem. Part three, a close reading of "I tried to think a lonelier Thing," reveals key elements of a typically difficult Dickinsonian project: thinking extreme emotion. Deppman will examine some of Emily Dickinson's resources for thinking for clues to the philosophical vocabulary and procedures of thought that are prominent in many poems.

He will argue that the modes of Dickinson's self-imposed labors and

Scholar, continued on page 22

A Brighter Garden

By Sheila Coghill

As the new school year started signaling renewal of the life of the mind, I cast a melancholy glance at my fading garden and recall Emily Dickinson's "here is a brighter garden" (J58; letter to Austin of October 10, 1851). I also affectionately recall the Emily Lives! celebration, May 15, 2004, in Bettendorf, Iowa. Organized by Hedy Hustedde, Information Librarian at the Bettendorf Public Library, and funded by Humanities Iowa and Enrich Iowa grants, it serves as a template for celebrating Emily Dickinson (and particularly her love of gardens). When Hedy contacted me and asked if I would judge the poetry contest (all the poems had to use a flower Dickinson employed in her poetry), help dedicate the Emily Dickinson garden (planted by local Master Gardeners using flowers common to Dickinson's own garden), and give a paper on flower imagery in Dickinson's poetry, my first thought was "Wow, these people really love Emily Dickinson!" My second thought as a Dickinson scholar and Master Gardener was, "This is perfect for me!"

The program was an extension to and culmination of the Bettendorf Library April-is-Poetry month initiative—which concluded the end of several months of activities such as a Great Books discussion of the poems "There's a Certain Slant of Light," "After Great Pain, A Formal Feeling Comes," and "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" led by Davenport, Iowa librarian Dee Canfield. There was also a performance by mezzo-soprano Rebecca Pracht of a selection from *12 Poems of Emily Dickinson* by Aaron Copland, a book discussion led by Augustana College librarian Connie Ghinazzi of Joanne Dobson's *Quieter Than Sleep*, and a showing of the film *Loaded Gun* introduced by Mary Beth Kwasek, who teaches Emily Dickinson at Black Hawk College.

The Emily Dickinson garden itself was constructed and planted in an area adjacent to the Bettendorf Library. Local Master Gardeners included as many plants as they could that Dickinson would have used, such as New York asters, snowdrop anemones, Cranesbill geraniums, Coventry Bell flowers, and lemon balm. They also produced a color brochure listing all

vided by the Culinary Arts Department of Scott Community College replicating recipes from Dickinson's era—such as her own Black Cake and Ginger cookies. During the reception, the Davenport Central High School Student String Ensemble played Brahms' "Like Melodies Enchanting" and other period pieces, while participants examined Dickinson-inspired artwork produced by Leslie Bell's Studio Fundamentals drawing class at St. Ambrose University.

When the program began, Ann Boaden, Augustana College Professor in the guise of Dickinson, presented an exceptionally convincing monologue based on Dickinson's poetry and letters. I gave my paper: "'To Be A Flower Is Profound Responsibility': Flower Imagery in Emily Dickinson's Life and Poetry." Next, I announced the winners of the poetry contest I had judged: Judy DePauw, Geneseo, Ill., first place; Dick Stahl, Davenport, second; Gayle Rein, Geneseo, third; and Emily Chesser, Rock Island, honorable mention. And last but not least, local blues artist John Resch performed "Emily's Song," an original song based on Dickinson's poetry.

On May 15, across the country countless programs commemorate Emily Dickinson. The Bettendorf program was notable for its range of events and media of expression that involved many community groups, schools, colleges and Universities. After a long winter, it was the "brighter garden" memory of the Emily Lives! Celebration that remained alive for me. I was happy to be a small part of it.

Sheila Coghill, professor and Chair of the Department of English at Minnesota State University Moorhead, teaches senior seminars in Dickinson and Whitman, and also 19th Century American Literature. She is co-editor of several anthologies in the University of Iowa Press Visiting Series.

Summer Soft by Judy DePauw

Past midnight, lost in reverie,
Her slender, white-draped form
Haunts my flower bed:
Smelling of balm and berry;
Plenteous with pink anemone.

Miss Emily

Movement along my garden path:
Footfalls follow consummate care
One cobblestone to the next.
Sleepy, moon blue pasque flowers:
Their essence—with her—commingle.

Resurrection Lily

Black-green vines intertwine,
Even as their purple souls,
In nighttime, nod her toward
The unrivaled aroma of my red rose.
"Oh, the sensuous aroma of my red
rose!"

I wonder, this moment,
if the pungent scent of earth
touches her—as you now touch me . . .

of the plants. After the garden dedication, which included a butterfly release of Painted Ladies and the installation of a bronze bust of Dickinson by local sculptor Ken Brinson, participants enjoyed a reception in the Library, with light refreshments pro-

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

E-MILY'S MAIL

By *Maryanne Garbowsky*

Imagine if Emily Dickinson lived today. Imagine her flight to her room to be alone, to write and respond to the numerous e-mails she would receive. "This is my e-mail to the World," she might have written. She might even have felt overwhelmed by the value of messages and their demands on her time. What would it have been like? What if she had a web site that others could travel to? What if she frequented chat rooms? What a vastly altered Dickinson we would have.

Certainly there would be advantages that a computer and e-mail might have afforded this elusive lady. She would still retain her privacy: Alone in her second floor bedroom by the light of her cool green computer screen, she could have assumed various personae and hidden behind them—the first person speakers she told her mentor Thomas Wentworth Higginson she was not. What fun to remain connected yet apart at the same time: "Ourselves behind ourself, concealed—" (J540).

Let's imagine today's world of electronic communication as it might have been used by the 19th century Miss Dickinson. First, what would her address have been? Her website might have read:

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—Too?
Perhaps you have the time to
chat
About eternity and immortality
And all that!

Emily would have loved greeting others, welcoming them—virtually—into her upstairs bedroom, her inner sanctum, where she could discuss all matters of weighty significance like faith and doubt, love and renunciation, death and immortality ("Because I could not stop for Death / He kindly

stopped for me—" [J458]). Can you imagine Thomas Wentworth Higginson's surprise when instant-messenger told him this message awaited him: "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?" He didn't mind, I'm sure, but perhaps thought it was a prank, some spam he planned to ignore. But then there was more: "The Mind is so near itself—it cannot see distinctly—...Should you think it breathed..." (J171). What could he say, except to reply—"send more." And she would—daily, maybe hourly. E-mail after e-mail would arrive emphatically punctuated with bold dashes she perfected long before e-mail made them omnipresent. Would he have suggested she publish them on an alternate web-site, marked with "open at your own risk!" or one strictly reserved for "half-cracked poetesses"? We'll never know.

We can safely assume, however, that correspondence would have been swift and spirited, and perhaps would have accelerated their first meeting face to face in August 1870. But maybe not. Higginson, as editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*, might have had too many e-mails to open and answer and instead might have deleted Dickinson's and blocked her from the rest of his literary world.

But Dickinson, who claimed to be "the slightest in the House—" (J486), would not have felt ignored because the Internet would have offered her vaster vistas in cyberspace to explore. Her website, no doubt, would have gotten numerous hits, and the chat-rooms she frequented would certainly have garnered a lot of interest. E-mail would have provided her with a way to escape the literal walls of her self-imposed confinement. Thus, instead of her charming hummingbird, whom she compares to "The mail from Tunis, probably / An easy Morning's

Ride—" (J1522). Dickinson might have written "An e-mail from the Net, no doubt / A mouse click away—."

Of course, for scholars there would be disadvantages. No library of the future would contain three volumes of Dickinson's e-mail—in printed or electronic form. A recent newspaper article confirms this: "Electronic record-keeping is no match for paper and ink when it comes to preserving history" (*Star-Ledger*, 6/9/03, p. 9). Thus, these communications would instead be consigned to some vast cyber-wasteheap lost to scholarship, leaving us without the commentary that links the poems to a time and place and person that allows us to enter the mind of the poet.

But wait—there's a bigger question. Would there even have been the poems? Perhaps Dickinson would be so caught up in the novelty of networking and of instant messaging that she would have had neither the time nor the inclination to sit down and write. Perhaps her eyes, too occupied with the flitting images on the computer screen, would miss the nuances of seasonal change ("the altered look about the hilltops" [J140] or "A certain Slant of light" [J258]). Or the natural images outside her window ("The Bird Came Down the Walk" [J328] or "The narrow Fellow in the Grass Unbraiding in the Sun" [J986]).

We will never know, but how glad we are that Dickinson, born too soon for the electronic revolution, wrote poem after poem and left them for us to find "in a Lady's Drawer / To Make Summer—When the Lady lie / In Ceaseless Rosemary" (J675). For this we are grateful.

Maryanne M. Garbowsky teaches English at the County College of Morris. She writes frequently about art and Dickinson, subjects she combined in her book, Double Vision (Putnam Hill Press, 2002).

EMILY DICKINSON MUSEUM SPONSORS A VARIETY OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN 2004

By Cindy Dickinson and Jane Wald

Greetings from the Emily Dickinson Museum! We look forward to welcoming many of you this summer when EDIS comes to Amherst. The Homestead offers the biggest surprise when you see it for the first time painted in its late nineteenth-century colors.

As many of you who receive our newsletter know, the Museum has been quite active in the last year with many different projects. We have focused in particular on the expansion of our public program offerings. In the last issue you learned about our marathon reading of Emily Dickinson's poems—an inspiring community event that people are still talking about! Other compelling programs followed throughout the year.

The annual Emily Dickinson Poetry Walk last May celebrated the poet's fascination with Shakespeare. Paraic Finnerty of Kent University began the day with his lecture "Stratford on Avon—accept us all: Emily Dickinson's Bardolatry." A visiting scholar at Amherst College during the spring, Finnerty is a past recipient of the EDIS Scholar-in-Amherst award. His excitement about Dickinson and Shakespeare captivated the audience and prompted a particularly meaning-

ful exchange about the play *Othello*, the subject of Finnerty's forthcoming book. The Poetry Walk, which followed the lecture, engaged readers from the local theater community as well as Dickinson enthusiasts. More than 100 people joined the Walk.

Last summer the Museum inaugurated two program series. "'To see the Summer Sky is Poetry': Poetry in the Garden at the Emily Dickinson Museum" offered visitors a special opportunity to listen to Dickinson's poetry read aloud in the Homestead garden. On three Sunday afternoons in July, eager listeners gathered to hear poems selected and read by distinguished members of the Amherst community. Readers were Wally Swist, poet-in-residence at Fort Juniper (the Robert Francis House) in Amherst; Lynn Margulis, a scientist and a neighbor of the Museum; and Jay Ladin, professor of English at Yeshiva University and a resident of Amherst.

The Museum's new series "Preservation in Action" took place in late July with a morning workshop and investigation of our latest capital project, the restoration of the Homestead exterior. "You're Painting the Homestead?!? Why?!" gave participants some understanding of the research project that led to the decision to paint the Homestead in its late 19th-century palette. The program was led by archaeologist and architectural historian Myron Stachiw, who served as the chief consultant for the Homestead Historic Structure Report.

In the fall, the Emily Dickinson Museum formed a reading group, "Kinsmen of the Shelf," which meets to discuss

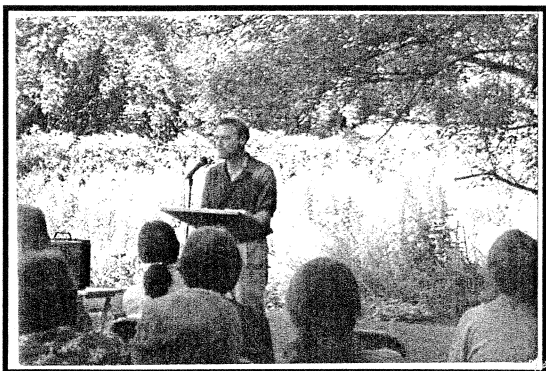


Courtesy of the Emily Dickinson Museum

books, poems, and essays read by Emily Dickinson and her family. In September, the group discussed Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* with Wendy Kohler, former Homestead guide and Executive Director of Program Development, K-12, Amherst Regional Schools. Kohler wrote her doctoral dissertation on Helen Hunt Jackson. In November, under the direction of Cristanne Miller of Pomona College (who was teaching in Boston for the semester), the group examined the essays and poems of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Two major events highlighted the Museum's fall calendar. During Columbus Day weekend, Martha Nell Smith, Professor of English and Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland, shared her research on and insights into the poet's only niece. "Martha Dickinson Bianchi: Poet, Novelist, Pianist, Editor . . . Niece" helped to illuminate the life and contributions of this significant Dickinson family member. Later in October, Aife Murray, scholar and artist, led a walking tour of Amherst, "Margaret Maher's Amherst—Emily Dickinson's Maid and Muse." Her presentation reminded participants of another aspect of Dickinson's world—that of the domestic servant.

The year closed, of course, with our



Courtesy of the Emily Dickinson Museum

Museum, Continued on page 23

DICKINSON POEMS FEATURE PROMINENTLY IN JAZZ ALBUM

Reviewed By William H. Pridgen and Nancy List Pridgen

Tim Harrison Quintet. *ar-ia*. CD, 57 min. New York, NY: Foothill Digital, 2003.

ar-ia is a jazz album with nine songs. Three of the songs are settings of Dickinson poems, and the other six are instrumental. Those who like jazz will appreciate this album. Those who like Dickinson will find it worth listening to even if they aren't jazz buffs, just to hear how the poems are presented.

This album is mainstream jazz with a contemporary flavor, slightly reminiscent of Vince Guaraldi or Herbie Hancock, but there are elements of cool jazz, bebop, modal, soul, and a little Brazilian. That doesn't mean that *ar-ia* is in any way derivative or unoriginal. Far from it.

The Tim Harrison Quintet consists of Tim Harrison, piano, John Eckert, trumpet and flugelhorn, Dave Riekenberg, tenor and soprano sax, Tom Hubbard, bass, Grisha Alexiev, drums, and Dee McMillen, vocals. The group has a lyrical, melodic, and rhythmic jazz style. All the performers are

virtuosi.

The album jacket credits the Johnson edition of Dickinson's poetry for the versions of poems used. The three Dickinson poems on *ar-ia* are "The judge is like the owl," "The saddest noise, the sweetest noise," and "A train went through a burial gate" (Johnson 699, 1764, 1761). Dee McMillen sings the words as if she understands the poems. These three pieces are woven seamlessly into the context of the album.

For each of the poems, the music serves as both background and commentary. "The judge is like the owl" is the most upbeat. "The saddest noise, the sweetest noise" is by turns bright, eerie, and wistful. "A train went through a burial gate" (listed as "...till all the churchyard rang" on the album) brings out the poem's connection between the beauty of the bird's song and the purpose of going to a burial, which is to say good-bye to someone.

The three poems at first listening seem unconnected to one another—the first ("The judge is like the owl"), lighthearted and cheerful, contrasts with the second

two about sadness and death. Yet at second look one finds references in all three poems to melancholy songs of birds. In "The judge is like the owl," the lyrics request payment for the rent on an oak—"a Tune/At Midnight—Let the Owl select/His favorite Refrain." Though this song is more upbeat, it is difficult to imagine the call of an owl at midnight as being anything but melancholy.

This album offers much to be enjoyed and appreciated by enthusiasts of either jazz or Dickinson's poetry. It will enhance anyone's music collection.

ar-ia can be ordered from Amazon.com.

Nancy List Pridgen and William H. Pridgen live are retired high school teachers (English and economics) who live in San Antonio, Texas. Nancy is currently studying Dickinson's publication history and its effect on Dickinson scholarship. Bill's interests include Thoreau's writings, philosophy, and photography.

2005 SCHOLAR IN AMHERST COMPETITION

EDIS invites applications for the Scholar in Amherst Program. The program supports research on Emily Dickinson at institutions such as the Frost Library of Amherst College, the Jones Public Library, the Mount Holyoke College Archives, the Emily Dickinson Museum, and the Amherst Historical Society. The award is a \$2,000 fellowship to be used for expenses related to that research, such as travel, accommodations, or a rental car. A minimum stay of one week in Amherst is required. Recipients also may use the fellowship to initiate a lengthier stay in the area. Preference will be given to persons with completed PhDs who are in the early

stages of their careers.

For 2005, the Scholar in Amherst Award will be named in honor of Everett Emerson, who died in 2002. He was the first male guide at the Dickinson Homestead, played a central role in bringing Dickinson's dress to the Homestead, and organized "Emily Dickinson: A Centennial Conference" at the University of North Carolina in 1986. Though he is best known for his scholarship on early American literature and Mark Twain, Emerson's unflagging enthusiasm for Dickinson inspired a generation of Dickinson scholars.

To apply for the 2005 Everett Emerson Scholar in Amherst Award, please send

three copies of a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction (written by the applicant), a two-page project proposal, and a brief bibliography by October 15, 2005, to Marianne Noble, Chair, Scholar in Amherst Selection Committee, Department of Literature, America University, Washington, D.C. 20016, USA or to mnoble@american.edu. Inquiries also may be addressed to Jane Eberwein, Department of English, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401, USA or jeberwein@oakland.edu. Recommendation letters are not accepted as part of the application packet.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Clinton, Catherine, ed.; Stephen Alcorn, illus. *A Poem of Her Own: Voices of American Women Yesterday and Today*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003. 80 pp. 10.3 x 8.9 x 0.6 inches. Cloth, ISBN 0-8109-4240-2, \$17.95.

Arranged chronologically, Clinton's selection of 25 poems represents three centuries of American women poets: Anne Bradstreet, Phyllis Wheatley, Emily Dickinson, Julia Ward Howe, Lydia Maria Child, Emma Lazarus, Marianne Moore, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Gertrude Stein, Gwendolyn Brooks, Adrienne Rich, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Mary Jo Salter, Marge Piercy, and others less well known. Their various viewpoints on themes of family, nature, girlhood, injustice, political dissent, and the problems of female stereotyping reflect the diverse ethnic cultures that contribute to American literature and history. Dickinson is represented by "I dwell in Possibility" (J657). A stylized, full-page color illustration accompanies each poem on its facing page. Brief biographies of the poets are placed at the back of the book. Clinton's goal is "to inspire a future generation to create poems of their own." She recommends the book to "readers of both genders, readers of all ages—for any and all who can appreciate poetry." Accessible to older children, this handsome book can be appreciated into adulthood.

De Guzman, Michael. *Beekman's Big Deal*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004. 213 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-374-30672-9, \$16.00.

De Guzman's engaging protagonist is 12-year-old Beekman O'Day, whose

hair "was brown and grew in several directions at once and fell forward over his forehead, no matter how much effort he put into training it." Having lived a nomadic life moving from one Manhattan hotel or apartment to another and attending nine schools, he finally achieves some needed stability when he and his father settle into a small home in a lively neighborhood of friendly eccentrics. Intrigued by his best friend's sister, a cheerless recluse who writes poetry and admires Emily Dickinson, Beekman embarks on a desperate plan (112-191) to befriend and impress this young recluse by presenting himself dressed like Dickinson "come all the way from Amherst to recite a poem—" (J1755). Filled with humor, as well as important insights about family, friendship, and maintaining the courage of one's convictions, this book is a delightfully slant way to introduce Dickinson to readers ages 8 to 12.

Hill, Reginald. *Good Morning, Midnight*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. 433 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-06-052807-9, \$24.95.

Taking its title from Dickinson's poem (J425), Hill's twenty-first Dalziel and Pascoe crime novel engages the reader's attention immediately. In an intricately planned suicide, Pal Maciver, a prominent local businessman, shoots himself at his desk in a locked room of his family's Yorkshire estate, replicating his father's death ten years before, including a book left open to Dickinson's poem. Or could it have been murder? The investigation by Falstaffian Detective Superintendent Andrew Dalziel and bookish Detective Chief Inspector Peter Pascoe leads through a maze of family, friends,

adulterous liaisons, unsavory international business dealings, and competing police investigators, but Hill deftly orchestrates his large cast of characters and ever-expanding plot from Yorkshire to America to Iraq. An Oxford-educated former English teacher, the author employs literary allusions, word play, and wit. Dickinson readers will not only want to decode Dickinson's poem for possible clues but also will enjoy meeting Aunt Lavinia with her penchant for befriending birds.

Johnson, Greg. *Last Encounter with the Enemy*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004. 213 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-8018-7882-9, \$14.95.

Things are not always what they seem in Johnson's collection of 14 short stories that explore the capacity of the human heart to endure tragedy, haunting memories, and loneliness. His narrators are often intelligent children older than their years because of difficult family circumstances. These tales are compassionate, insightful, and edifying rather than depressing, as his characters "battle the lawlessness of the universe" and strive for normalcy. Four cleverly designed stories are based on encounters with Flannery O'Connor, Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf, and Emily Dickinson. Demonstrating imagination and wit, "First Surmise" (194-208) expands on Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for Death" (J712) as the narrator converses with Dickinson from the back seat of the carriage on the journey to Eternity. For more about "First Surmise," see *Bulletin* 15.1 (2003): 24. Johnson is a gifted storyteller who holds a reader's attention from first page to last.

The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books, including those published outside the U.S.

Send information to Barbara Kelly, 444 Washington Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301, U.S.A.

E-mail: barbarakelly@psualum.com.

McClatchy, J. D. Photographs by Erica Lennard. *American Writers at Home.* New York: Library of America and Vendome, 2004. 224 pp. 12.25 x 9.75 inches. Cloth, ISBN 1-931082-75-8, \$50.00.

Combining evocative text and approximately 300 photographs, this beautiful, large-format book takes the reader inside the homes of 21 American writers: Alcott, Chopin, Dickinson, Douglass, Emerson, Faulkner, Frost, Hawthorne, Hemingway, Irving, Jeffers, Jewett, Longfellow, Melville, Millay, O'Connor, O'Neill, Twain, Welty, Wharton, and Whitman. Complementing the text, the colored photographs have a warm, golden hue that draws the reader into the book and into the intimate spaces where the writers both lived and worked. From the grand New England homes of Wharton and Twain to the simpler settings of Frost's New Hampshire cottage and Whitman's New Jersey rowhouse, the tour includes Hemingway's tropical Florida home and Jeffers's Tor House in Carmel, California, built with rocks he hauled from the beach below the house. Dickinson's minimal surroundings challenged Lennard, but she achieves an inviting golden glow even in these spare rooms. Both the photographs and the text entice the reader to travel and see these homes firsthand.

McGinley, Tod C. Black and white line drawings by Don Looper. *Emily Dickinson and Her Irish Friends.* Ruskin, Florida: M&M Printing, 2004. 48 pp. 8.5 x 11 inches. Paper, ISBN 0-9664987-1-2.

McGinley's slim, large-format book includes a seven-page autobiographical essay, "My Irish Heritage," and a short story, "Emily's Pallbearer," a fictitious account of the Irish-immigrant McCoo family, focusing on the youngest son, Michael, a gardener at the Dickinson Homestead. One day in the hollow of his spade he finds a three-leaf clover and a note: "New feet within my garden go, / New fingers stir the

sod." The relationship between this shy pair, the poet and the gardener, grows over 20 years. Michael takes Dickinson for secretive rides on country lanes in a one-horse shay, becomes a snowbound, overnight guest in the Dickinson barn, and finally serves as the poet's lead pallbearer. McGinley is a clear and graceful writer, inspired by his Irish heritage and an early personal acquaintance with Sister Mary James Power (*In the Name of the Bee: The Significance of Emily Dickinson*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943). He demonstrates a natural talent for storytelling, interweaving historical facts with imagination, subtle Irish humor, and respect for Dickinson and her Irish friends. For more information, the author may be reached at tmcg26@juno.com.

Pinsky, Robert, and Maggie Dietz, eds. *An Invitation to Poetry: A New Favorite Poem Project Anthology.* New York: Norton, 2004. 308 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-393-05876-X, \$29.95.

This third anthology of Pinsky's Favorite Poem Project collects 198 poems accompanied by a DVD featuring 27 participants from across the United States, reading and commenting on their favorite poems. Arranged alphabetically, the 138 poets from 28 countries include a wide range of voices from Li Po and Sappho to Robert Hass and Gwendolyn Brooks. Six Dickinson poems (J108, 126, 288, 333, 670, and 829) are included. Yina Liang, a student from Atlanta, Georgia, recites "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (J288) on the DVD. The book and the videos, originally seen on PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer, show how various people, including a glass blower, a Cambodian immigrant, an economist, a college president, a construction worker, a Supreme Court justice, and a marine, bring alive their chosen poems with a variety of humor, hope, eccentricity, poignancy, wonder, and depth. For more on the FPP's first two volumes, see *Bulletins* 12.2(2000): 19 and 15.2 (2003): 22.

Spargo, R. Clifton. *The Ethics of Mourning: Grief and Responsibility in Elegiac Literature.* Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004. 314 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8018-7977-9, \$49.95.

To explore the ethical dimensions of anti-consolatory grief, Spargo examines Hamlet, works by Milton, the Renaissance elegists, Dickinson, Shelley, Hardy, and the Holocaust elegies by Plath and Jarrell. Traditionally grief and mourning serve a social and psychological purpose, but Spargo is interested in the mourner who refuses consolation, identifies with the lost Other, and transforms his mourning into an ethical act. In "Lyrical Economy and the Question of Alterity" (101-120), he notes Dickinson's "economic sparseness of lyrical poetic language" (Fr139, 140, 359, 409, 479, 1043, and 1096). He also reads Fr199, 817, and 1100 in light of Odysseus "as a figure desperate to find himself again included in economy." Informed by the work of Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, Bernard Williams, and others, this formidable volume is for scholarly readers. General readers interested in elegiac literature will find Mary Jane Moffat's *In the Midst of Winter: Selections from the Literature of Mourning* more accessible.

Stambovsky, Phillip. *Philosophical Conceptualization and Literary Art: Inference, Ereignis, and Conceptual Attunement to the Work of Poetic Genius.* Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2004. 231 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8386-4026-5, \$46.50.

To demonstrate the value of literary art to philosophical thinking, Stambovsky studies William Butler Yeats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," seven lyrics by Emily Dickinson (J7, 258, 465, 552, 938, 1004, and 1068), and Wallace Stevens's "Idea of Order at Key West." He says these works display "the full measure of visionary penetration and profundity of nuance that distinguish great literature." In "The Phenomenological Key: The Sensus Numinis in Emily Dickinson's Verse" (134-170),

Stamovsky examines Dickinson's poems in light of Rudolf Otto's "illuminated darkness, silence, and empty distance . . . the three agencies by which Western and Oriental art communicate the aura of the numinous." He says, "Dickinson's most accomplished verse demands the highest pitch of hermenutic acumen and inferential subtlety if one purposes to grasp its genuine value as a formative stimulus to imaginative philosophical thinking." He concludes that she "developed a genius for recasting the imagery, themes, and idioms of conventional piety in genuinely original and penetrating renderings of the numinous." Informed by William Desmond, Otto, Martin Heidegger, and others, these scholarly essays are written for serious readers interested in the interrelationships of philosophy, literature, and religion.

Vendler, Helen. *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2004. 142 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-674-01567-3, \$19.95.

Originally delivered as the Clark Lectures at Cambridge University, Vendler's essays on Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, and Yeats argue that fine poetry is a product not only of a creative imagination but also of an active intellect. In her quest for the ways a poet develops an individual and characteristic process of thinking, she studies Pope's parody, Whitman's repetition, Dickinson's rearrangement of serial sequencing (64-91), and Yeats's images. Vendler explains Dickinson's use of chromatic plot sequencing in "I'll tell you how the Sun rose—" and "I like to see it lap the Miles" (Fr340, 588). Examination of other poems shows a series of ruptures (Fr669, 867, 994) as Dickinson evolves from chromatic linear advance to circularity leading nowhere (Fr372) and to hysteria (Fr423); to backward sequencing and use of a posthumous present tense (Fr1218, 1550); to philosophizing from a God's-eye view (Fr782); and finally to arranging events not by sequence but by emotional hierarchy (Fr320, 336,

591). These stimulating essays reflect the rigor of Vendler's intellect and scholarship.

Wolosky, Shira, ed. *Major Voices: 19th Century American Women's Poetry.* New Milford, Conn.: Toby Press, 2003. 570 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-59264-041-9, \$19.95; paper, ISBN 1-59264-040-0, \$14.95.

Focusing on ten American women poets, Wolosky's anthology provides a generous sampling of poems by Lydia Sigourney, Julia Ward Howe, Francis Harper, Helen Hunt Jackson, Emily Dickinson, Alice and Phoebe Cary, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Emma Lazarus, and Charlotte Gilman. Included are a cogent introductory essay (1-16) and a five-to-seven page introduction to each poet and her work. The editor notes the interest these women shared in their roles as women and the historical, religious, social, and economic values they questioned. Wolosky says, "Women writers contemporary to Dickinson display the gender constructions, social forces and tensions, political issues and events that are, in Dickinson, often disguised; but which come to notice exactly through the contexts of other women's writing." She regards these writers as "saucy and insightful, protesting and affirming, sentimental and political . . . eminently worthy of analysis." This jargon-free, non-polemical book provides a valuable context for reading Dickinson's poems and would appeal to anyone interested in women's studies or nineteenth-century American literature, history, culture, and religion.

Book Review

Marta McDowell. *Emily Dickinson's Gardens: A Celebration of a Poet and Gardener.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005. 218 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-07-142409-1, . Price \$18.95.

Reviewed by Cheryl Langdell

Focusing on her garden as it changes through the seasons, *Emily Dickinson's*

Gardens: A Celebration of a Poet and Gardener includes some consideration of Dickinson's poems about flowers and nature along with McDowell's careful reconstruction of the poet's cherished garden.

Just as Susan Gilbert, the sister-in-law Dickinson called her "sister," was known for her prize flowers, Dickinson was well known in her own time for her baking; she entered her breads in the annual county fairs in Amherst, often winning prizes. Susan's domain was the garden in public, but in private Dickinson might be said to have been writing about flowers at least partially to give pleasure to Sue, a point McDowell seems to overlook in this otherwise useful book on gardening, addressed principally to gardeners rather than scholars.

If one wants to replicate Dickinson's garden and if one wants tips on growing the flowers and plants she grew, this book will be extremely helpful because it chronicles everything that grew in the cycle of the seasons in her garden. Using it, one can create the probable garden Dickinson worked a lifetime to create; it discusses each individual plant that she may have planted (since exact information on everything she actually grew is scarce and random) and gives snippets of poems written about the flowers, plants, trees, or shrubs that she cherished.

Beginning with the poet's studies in botany at Amherst Academy, which she attended as a high school student, the book treats her private herbarium, a book that contains over 400 pressed plants and flowers and is seldom discussed by scholars of her poetry. This guide takes the reader through the turning seasons of New England. Occasionally McDowell, who calls Dickinson "Emily" throughout, interjects some literary links to her observations on the flowers, or as Dickinson would put it, conscious of the pun, links between "Posies" and "Poesie." For example, after two practical paragraphs on the bluebell, McDowell concludes: "Like her poems, bluebells are startling, but succinct." On the next page,

there follows a section entitled "How to Prune Old Garden Roses."

Yet McDowell, to her credit, also points out that in the mid-nineteenth century, Protestant American girls were encouraged to study botany because "studying natural phenomena was considered an avenue to understanding the plan of the Deity;" she cites the popular axiom, "His pencil grows in every flower," meaning each is God's unique handiwork. As this illustrated book examines the succession of flowers and colors in the garden throughout the year, lines from Dickinson's poems and personal anecdotes drawn from her private domestic life in the garden run through the text whose audience is the general gardener.

Marta McDowell's book makes an excellent companion to another colorfully illustrated, more nuanced analysis of the place and symbolism of nature in her poetry by Judith Farr, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). While the latter is an analysis of the symbolic and literary dimensions of gardening and flowers in Dickinson's poetry, McDowell's book shows how to recreate Dickinson's garden in one's own garden. Those who are truly interested in her poetry of the garden should read both books.

Reveling in the sensuous beauty and speculating on the meanings to Dickinson of each of the flowers mentioned in Dickinson's poetry, McDowell's book may reach a larger audience than Farr's more academic work. Those who work in the garden and want to experience what Dickinson experienced there may be attracted to McDowell's book because it mixes practical advice with lines of Dickinson's poetry. Those who are not already familiar with her poetry or her so-called "real life" as homemaker and gardener, sister, sister-in-law, and daughter may be surprised to see how hard she worked in her garden and in the kitchen.

In addition, McDowell shows the modern reader how the middle and upper class women of Amherst were invested in their gardens and slyly competed with one another in and

through their gardens in the well-bred fashion of upper class women in mid-nineteenth-century New England. Reading this, one would never subscribe to the myth of the poet as an eccentric Amherst recluse robed in white because in it we see how carefully and energetically the poet cultivated her posies and "poesie."

Cheryl Langdell, an active gardener in Pasadena, California, is the author of Adrienne Rich: The Moment of Change (New York: Praeger, 2004) and is working on a new essay on Emily Dickinson's poetry. She is convenor of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Emily Dickinson International Society and invites anyone interested in attending the meetings to contact her at: clangdell@apu.edu or cheril@family.net.

Selected Bibliography

Articles appearing in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* are not included.

- Bird, Michael. "Dickinson's 'At Half past Three, a single Bird.'" *Explicator* 62.4 (2004): 204-06. [The poem celebrates the will to create experienced by a singing bird and by the poet who explores the power of creativity with the curiosity of a scientist.]
- Cambanis, Thanassis. "Hope, Optimism Reign as Iraq Faces New Challenges." *Boston Globe* 29 May 2004, third ed., sec.: National/Foreign. [Architect and poet Naseer Hassan is translating the work of Emily Dickinson into Arabic.]
- Cavanaugh, Cynthia. "Wilbur's 'Altitudes.'" *Explicator* 62.2 (2004): 121. [Cavanaugh examines Richard Wilbur's poem, "Altitudes," and its images of dome and cupola for links to Dickinson and the Homestead cupola.]
- Clews, Helen. "The Panther in the Glove: Emily Dickinson." *English Review* 13.4 (2003): 14-17. [After introducing Dickinson and her work, Clews advises teachers and students to interpret the language and meanings of Dickinson's poems by brainstorming the denotations and connotations of each word in a poem; she demonstrates her approach with "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers-(J216)."]
- Diehl, Joanne Felt. "Selfish Desires: Dickinson's Poetic Ego and the Rites of Subjectivity." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 31.1 (2002): 33-52. [Defining Dickinson's poetic ego as a fictive construct (the poet's often transgendered "supposed person"), Diehl describes the paradox of a poetic ego drawn to the other by desire, yet resisting and determining its own course. Unrestricted, Dickinson creates "a persona that embraces wildly divergent possibilities."]
- Fenwick, Wendy. "Emily Dickinson's Smoking Poems." *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 11.2 (2004): 26. [Viewing Dickinson as a twentieth-century poet who lived in the nineteenth century, Fenwick argues that the letters to Susan and selected poems (J84, 249, 518, 1219, 1318, and 1568) are "smoking guns" revealing a rich fantasy life.]
- Gardner, Jan. "A Door to Emily Dickinson's Past." *Boston Globe* 28 March 2004, third edition, sec.: National/Foreign. [Near the Emily Dickinson Museum is the house Austin Dickinson built for Mabel Loomis Todd and her husband David Peck Todd, an astronomy professor at Amherst College. This 1886 "house with a sinful past" recently opened as a bed-and-breakfast where 30 works of art painted by Loomis Todd are displayed throughout; they are on permanent loan from the Amherst Historical Society.]
- Gardner, Thomas. "Restructured and Restrung: Charles Wright's Zone Journals and Emily Dickinson." *Kenyon Review* 26.2 (2004): 149-74. [Gardner explores Charles Wright's fascination with Dickinson and the echoes of "There's a certain Slant of light" (J258) in Wright's most important work, *Zone*

Journals. Gardner's essay is part of a forthcoming book entitled *Emily Dickinson and Contemporary Writers*.]

• Harde, Roxanne. "'Some—are like My Own—': Emily Dickinson's Christology of Embodiment." *Christianity and Literature* 53.3 (2004): 315-36. [Informed by today's feminist theories of embodiment, this essay examines Fr128, 404, 524, 550, 670, 727, 825, 1050, and 1537 to argue, "Dickinson goes beyond critiquing Calvinist doctrine and practice as she revises Christianity through a Christology of the body."]

• Kushner, Aviya. "Weeds and Loneliness." *Jerusalem Post* 5 April 2004, sec.: Literary Supplement: 12. [Kushner reviews Esther Raab's *Thistles: Selected Poems by Esther Raab* (Ibis Editions) translated into English by Harold Schimmel who compares Raab to Dickinson: "both [poets] have quirky punctuation, obscurity (not difficulty) and fractured grammar" and both "seem to have a radical empathy for tiny, seemingly insignificant things."]

• "Knox College Professor Wins Award for Short Story." *Peoria Journal Star* 27 June 2004, sec.: Music. [Robert McClure Smith, author of *The Seductions of Emily Dickinson*, won the 2004 Scotsman and Orange Short Story Award June 1, 2004, for his short story, "Masonry." Open to authors who live or were born in Scotland, the competition is the largest and richest of its kind in Great Britain.]

• Lenhoff, Alan. "'Dear March—Come in—': Emily Dickinson Captured the Changing Season in Poems That Seem As New As Spring." *Writing!* 26.5 (2004): 28-29. [Focusing on Dickinson's poems about March (J1213, 1320, and 1404), Lenhoff suggests them as triggers for writing contemporary poems about April, using Dickinson's distinctive style.]

• "Marathon Reading of Emily Dickinson's Poetry for National Poetry Month in Amherst Massachu-

setts." Host: Melissa Block. *All Things Considered*. Host: Michele Norris. National Public Radio, 2 April 2004. [A sampling of the 1,789 poems read at the Amherst celebration.]

• McCormack, Jerusha Hull. "Domesticating Delphi: Emily Dickinson and the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph." *American Quarterly* 55.4 (2003): 569-601. [Providing "a lost cultural context," McCormack cogently shows how the new technology of telegraphy might have transformed Dickinson's poetic style, accounting for her dashes, capitalized nouns, compression, and omissions. Telegraphy also suggests "a model for the transmission of voices from Beyond" manifested in American Spiritualism and Dickinson's poetry. McCormack finds the Dickinson Electronic Archives analogous to the telegraph in privileging readers to interpret meaning from text.]

• Murphy Cullen. "The Next Testament." *Atlantic Monthly* Mar. 2004: 139-40. [With tongue firmly in cheek, Murphy suggests works that might be included in a new and revised version of the Bible; he proposes the poems of Emily Dickinson as a substitute for the entire Book of Psalms.]

• Ryan, Michael. "How to Use a Fly." *American Poetry Review* 33.1 (2004): 15-17. [A close reading of Dickinson's "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" leads Ryan to conclude that the "peculiar testimony" from beyond the grave warns the reader "to see while we're still alive" and to understand "what it means to die: to lose the capacity to see physically and spiritually."]

• Scharf, Michael. "Trouble in Mind." *Publisher's Weekly* 250.51 (2003): 54. [Scharf reviews Lucie Brock-Broido's *Trouble in Mind* (Knopf): "Gorgeous and mournful, ornate and deeply felt, [her] very much anticipated third volume follows up on *The Master Letters* (1995), whose highly wrought poems of love and self-abasement paid homage to Emily Dickinson"]

• Tynan, Trudy. "Visit the Amherst, Mass., Homestead Where Emily Dickinson Lived, Wrote." *Providence Journal* 11 April 2004, sec.: Travel; "Amherst: Where Emily Dickinson Wrote Her 'Letter to the World.'" *Associated Press Worldstream* 15 April 2004; "Museum Looks at the Life of Poet Emily Dickinson." *Vancouver Sun* 17 April 2004, sec.: Travel; "Poet's Past Comes to Life in Museum." *Calgary Herald* 17 April 2004, sec.: Books & the Arts; "Fans Prepare a Tribute to Dickinson." *Chicago Sun Times* 18 April 2004, sec.: Travel. [Multiple publications print Tynan's report on the opening of the Dickinson Museum in Amherst in 2004, the first time the museum offered joint tours of both the Homestead and the Evergreens.]

• Weber, Bruce. "A Windfall of Modern Poetry for Scholars." *New York Times* 29 Sept. 2004, sec.: E.1. [Atlanta's Emory University received a gift of one of the largest private poetry collections, more than 60,000 volumes, including rare volumes of Emily Dickinson's poetry, from Raymond Danowski, an art dealer and book collector, who was raised in the Bronx but divides his time between Britain and South Africa.]

Book Notes

Correction: Barbara Kelly's review of Harold Bloom, *The Best Poems of the English Language: From Chaucer Through Frost* (*Bulletin* 16. 2 [2004]: 28) should read: "This door-stopper anthology chronologically presents 108 poets born before 1900, mostly men, from Chaucer to Hart Crane. Emily Dickinson is one of eleven women poets included."

MEMBERS' NEWS

EDIS Annual Business Meeting

EDIS Annual Business Meeting
August 1, 2004
Moku'ola I Room
Hilo Hawaiian Hotel
Hilo, Hawaii
Approximately 43 present

EDIS President Jonnie Guerra convened the meeting at 12:50 p.m., welcoming all members. She announced the upcoming EDIS meetings and international conference and their themes:

- "Dickinson and Family," annual meeting, July 29-31, 2005, Amherst
- "The Art to Save: The Healing Power of Emily Dickinson's Words," annual meeting, 2006, Vancouver, British Columbia, not yet decided
- An international conference, 2007, site to be announced soon

Regarding the Scholar in Amherst Award Program, Guerra reviewed the three awards that have been made:

- Paraic Finnerty, 2001, whose book on Dickinson and Shakespeare will soon be published by the University of Massachusetts Press
- Angela Sorby, 2002, whose work on Dickinson focuses on the poet's reading
- Magdalena Zapadowska, 2003, a Polish scholar, who was unable to be here

The 2004 Scholar in Amherst Award honors the late Dickinson scholar Brita Lindberg-Seyersted. The deadline for applying is October 15, 2004. Former applicants are encouraged to re-apply. The award is given to junior scholars who have completed their Ph.D. and would benefit from a visit to Amherst. Additional information can be found on the EDIS web site. EDIS also offers a Graduate Student Fellowship. For information, visit the EDIS web site to contact Mary Loeffelholz at

Northeastern University.

In the absence of representatives from the Dickinson Museum, Guerra announced the merger of the Homestead and the Evergreens in July, 2004, to form the Dickinson Museum. There are two co-directors: Cindy Dickinson is Director of Interpretation and Programming, and Jane Wald is Director of Resources and Collections. Among the Museum's many activities was a marathon reading of Dickinson's poems in April, attended by several EDIS members.

Guerra announced that Journal Editor Gary Stonum, would be co-editing the Journal with Cris Miller until next July when Miller will become the new editor. She concluded her remarks by thanking all members for their help and support during her presidency.

Having distributed copies of the minutes, Secretary Barbara Kelly asked for and received approval of the minutes from the 2003 Annual Meeting at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

Treasurer Jim Fraser reported a closing balance of \$29,147.21. The balance reflects expenses of \$4,433.94, but not conference costs of about \$15,000. Fraser projects a 2005 balance of \$15,273.21, similar to the past year after the conference expenses are paid.

Membership Committee Chair Erika Scheurer reported a total of 353 members (including 52 non-U.S. members from 21 countries). Since last year, membership has increased by 25 (including members from three new countries: Ukraine, Brazil, and India). She said the loss of five "Contributing" members was counterbalanced by a gain of eight members in the new "Sustaining" category. She has sent letters to lapsed members, asking them to renew their memberships, and she encouraged EDIS members to reach out for new members.

Nominations Committee Chair Ellen Louise Hart announced the re-election of four EDIS Board members for 2004-

2007: Jonnie Guerra, Ellen Louise Hart, Mary Loeffelholz, and Cristanne Miller, whose terms expire this year, agreed to serve for another three-year term. She also announced the election of officers: Gudrun Grabher, President; Paul Crumbley, Vice-president; Barbara Kelly, Secretary; Jim Fraser, Treasurer; and Erika Scheurer, Membership Committee Chair. She thanked Guerra for her long service to EDIS and welcomed Grabher as the new president.

Guerra opened the discussion to comments and questions. Several members' wedding anniversaries were acknowledged as well as the 129th anniversary of Gilbert Dickinson's birth. The discussion then turned to EDIS chapter development. Gary Stonum said a woman in Ohio is interested in starting a chapter. Cheryl Langdell announced an upcoming meeting of the Los Angeles chapter at her house in Pasadena on August 28; she added that a list of members' addresses would be helpful in contacting people. Cindy MacKenzie reported a very successful meeting of the Saskatchewan chapter in a local bookstore. Emily Seelbinder's group in North Carolina met and gave her a scepter (a fly-swatter) for her 50th birthday; she also reported a Dickinson tea with two seatings, at which Connie Clark gave one-woman Dickinson presentations. Erland Heginbotham asked if there was a place in the Bulletin for chapter news. Georgiana Strickland replied that the news is published when it is sent to the Bulletin. Lois Kaufman tried to start a chapter in Atlanta, but she has no university affiliation and needs a list of names and addresses of local scholars. Margaret Freeman told of her Dickinson reading group in Heath, MA. Guerra said starting a chapter can seem intimidating and encouraged something more modest; for example, she said her colleagues at Cabrini look forward to her annual Emily Dickinson birthday party, including readings of poems,

gingerbread, and tea. Hiroko Uno then told everyone about the invitation the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan had extended to EDIS to hold an international conference in Japan.

The last item on the agenda was Margaret Freeman's preview of the 2005 Annual Meeting in Amherst, July 29-31. The planning committee includes Martha Ackmann, Betty Bernhard, Daria D'Arienzo, Cindy Dickinson, Margaret Freeman, Tevis Kimball, Connie Kirk, and Polly Longworth. Planning the meeting has generated the idea for a catalog of Dickinson resources in the Amherst area. The anticipated schedule includes a Friday poetry reading having to do with the Dickinson family, while the EDIS Board meets. Amherst also has walking trails, museums, and art galleries to be explored. A banquet is planned for Friday evening with nineteenth-century tableaux for after-dinner entertainment. The Saturday workshops will focus on Dickinson's correspondence with family members, and participants will be encouraged to read from the letters. A performance of "The Magical Prison" by Amherst College graduates will be offered Saturday evening. Sunday morning before the annual business meeting, the annual research circle will meet in the

garden and participate in readings. Freeman said that if you bring someone who is not a member to the annual meeting, the organizers are offering a non-member registration fee.

Guerra announced gifts of \$1,000 to the Dickinson Museum and \$500 to the Jones Library from EDIS.

Gudrun Grabher, the newly elected EDIS president, acknowledged the great honor and responsibility of her new role, especially in light of the fine leadership of past presidents Margaret Freeman, Vivian Pollak, Cris Miller, and Jonnie Guerra. She said she was glad to have a great vice-president, Paul Crumbley, to rely on. With heartfelt and sincere gratitude she then thanked Jonnie Guerra, who was president for four years and vice-president for five years, and presented her with a gift from the members. The gift is a large Emily Dickinson doll handcrafted by Judy Grove of Altoona, Pennsylvania. To everyone's delight, "Emily" was shy about standing up in front of so large an audience, but Guerra thanked everyone and said the doll would be added to Emily Dickinson's birthday party at Cabrini College.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara Kelly, EDIS Secretary

Chapter News

- The Utah Chapter of the EDIS will sponsor a poetry hike, with readings from Dickinson's works and Hammarskjöld's *Markings*. All interested persons are invited to meet at the Grove Creek Trailhead in Pleasant Grove, Utah, at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, 30 July 2005. Please RSVP at (801) 422-2020 or CLH8@email.byu.edu.
- Midori Asahina, Executive Secretary of the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan, reports that the Society celebrated its 20th anniversary in June 2004. The program included Hiroe Monguchi, "Reading Dickinson: Fr 528"; Nanami Araki, "Synesthesia and Dickinson"; and Noriaki Nakai, "Emily Dickinson as Conscious Editor of Fascicle 4." The General Meeting featured a symposium, "The Charms of Emily Dickinson's Poetry Reconsidered," moderated by Yumiko S. Koizumi and including Misako Hamada's "In Search of a Flowering Girl: The Joy of Singing by and with Emily Dickinson," Nobuko Shimomura's "'Dome of Abyss': Emily Dickinson's Poetics of Space," and Masao Okazaki's "A Linguistic Characterization of the Form and Meaning of Emily Dickinson's Poems."

Scholar, continued from page 11

disinheritance can be productively understood as postmodern. The way that Dickinson refused either to accept or reject the powerful explanatory discourses of her time can be recognized in the attitude Jean-François Lyotard uses to define postmodernism: incredulity toward metanarratives. And in the many ways she chose "not choosing" (as Sharon Cameron puts it) and became aware of herself as a site of vocal and intellectual conflict, torn or traversed by competing language games (in the Wittgensteinian and Lyotardian sense of rule-based usages), and ultimately developed a "variorum poetics" (as Marjorie Perloff

puts it) she can legitimately be taken as a postmodern artist *avant la lettre*.

To read Dickinson as a postmodern thinker is, on the one hand, to explore the ways postmodern theory makes visible important aspects of her work, and, on the other, to see how her poetry exemplifies and illuminates central postmodern predicaments. We shed light on both problems when we see Dickinson as a Derridean *bricoleuse*, mixing and radically extending contemporary religious, literary, scientific, philosophical, and other vocabularies along with their metaphysical presuppositions. If she chose the tropological power of poetry to pursue those "tries at thinking," it is precisely because she

was neither committed to nor trapped in any systematic, disciplinary patterns of thought.

By examining some of Dickinson's resources for *thinking*—e.g. sermons, schoolbooks, and philosophical textbooks, among others—for clues to the philosophical vocabulary and procedures of thought that are prominent in many poems, Deppman will be able to position Dickinson simultaneously within the religious and philosophical discourses of her era the current discourses of postmodernism.

annual Open House in honor of Emily Dickinson's Birthday. Once again, a very special donor provided 174 roses in honor of the poet's birth anniversary, and visitors eagerly arrived to select a rose and to view the two Dickinson houses—and to take away a piece of coconut cake or gingerbread.

The Museum would like to thank the program participants, leaders, and sponsors for their generous interest in the work of the Museum. An equally rich and diverse program schedule is planned for 2005. To learn more, please visit our web site at www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org or subscribe to our newsletter (at no charge) by e-mailing info@emilydickinsonmuseum.org or sending a note to the Museum at 280 Main Street, Amherst, MA 01002.

2005 Annual Meeting Announcement

The 17th Annual Meeting of the Society this year will be held in Amherst July 29-31, with the theme of Emily Dickinson and Family. We are looking forward to welcoming EDIS members over the annual meeting weekend. If you have not already sent in your registrations or made accommodation arrangements, please do so now, since in Amherst things fill up fast. You can return the registration form you received in the snail mailed brochure, or visit the EDIS website at <http://www.cwru.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html> to download a copy.

Persons with limited means may qualify for a fee reduction. If you are a student, on restricted income, or otherwise need financial help, please contact Eleanor Heginbotham by email at Heginbotham@csp.edu or Paul Crumbley by telephone at (435) 563-1807 and explain the nature of your financial limitation. Please use "EDIS Fees" in your email subject heading. Deadline for requests: July 1.

If you need further help or information, contact Margaret Freeman at freemamh@lavc.edu or (413) 337-4854.

Emily Dickinson International Society Membership Application Form

Name _____

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Please check if this is: new address new membership renewal

Annual Membership Category (check one): Contributing (\$100) Regular (\$50) Student (\$30)

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I have included an additional tax-deductible contribution of \$_____ to support the Society's programs.

Please pay by check drawn on a U.S. bank or an international money order, payable to Emily Dickinson International Society,

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

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