

## Bulletin

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

MAY/JUNE 2006

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

## THEY CAN DANCE UPON THEIR FEET

### A BLEND OF POETRY AND DANCE FOR EMILY'S BIRTHDAY AT THE FOLGER

By James Fraser and Eleanor Heginbotham

"What results [from reading a poem by Dickinson] is a shift in the ground beneath my feet": so choreographer Meisha Bosma explained her translations of speech into an expressive modern dance cycle that a full house at the Folger Shakespeare Theater in Washington experienced in a debut performance. In Bosma's *Violet in My Winter*, four dancers of the BosmaDance company, aided only by a writing table, paper, and, at the end, a basket, interpreted, for example, the yearning toward artistic power of "I would not paint a picture" (Fr348); the winsome wistfulness of "I was the slightest in the house" (Fr473); the regret of "The saddest noise, the sweetest noise" (Fr1789); and the paralyzing grief of "After great pain a formal feeling comes" (Fr372).

At times the dancers seemed to reflect the various voices within one complicated genius; at other times they seemed separate characters in dramas suggested by the wide variety of selections from poems and letters, each of which was read aloud in the lovely off-stage voice of the choreographer herself as the dancers stretched, tensed, twirled, reached, and—one could see it—thought and felt. In the discussion period following the performance, Bosma, who has created a similar cycle, *Blind Spot*, on the work

of Sylvia Plath, said she began her serious study of Dickinson with the letters. As she says in the program notes, the result of that research took on "a life of its own, revealing complex and passionate themes of love, pain, ambition, anxiety, despair, and exhilaration."

There were two firsts in the Folger's annual birthday tribute to Emily Dickinson; in addition to the premiere per-

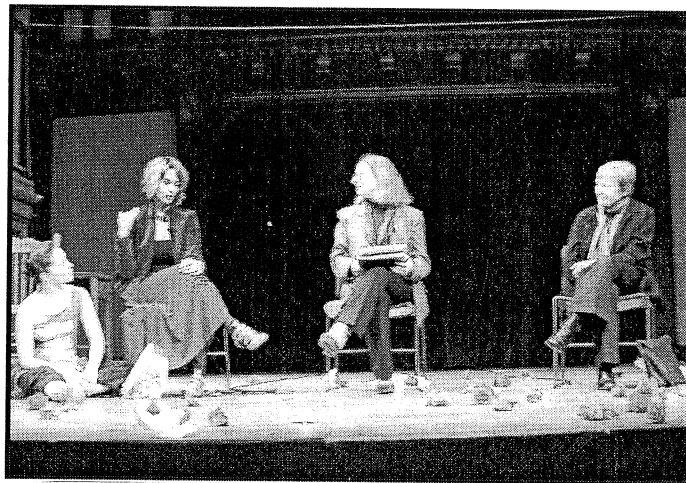
formance of Bosma's *Violet*, this year was the first in which EDIS co-sponsored and participated (through Jim Fraser) in the planning. Other co-sponsors were the Poetry Society of America and the Alexandria Performing Arts Association, of which Jim also is chairman. The American Dance Institute generously provided rehearsal space in which the dancers labored for many

weeks to develop and prepare for this evening. The BosmaDance production shared the bill with a reading by poet Rosemary Waldrop. Following the tradition of many years, the Folger honors a contemporary poet by inviting him or her to read from new work.

Waldrop's 15 volumes of published poems reflect Dickinson's practices: "By breaking sentences, breaking lines, breaking grammar," said Folger Poetry Coordinator Terri Cross Davis, "Waldrop dismantles languages and re-imagines it in a way that is fresh and syntactically vibrant." In the energy of her language, in her imagery and in their subjects Waldrop's poems seemed appropriately complementary to the Bosma-Dance production, and to the birthday honoree. For example, Dickinson's focus on art and artists, also privileged in the dance, was clear in Waldrop's reflections on Leonardo Da Vinci "the anatomist" at work and in her "Blind Side." Waldrop summed up the

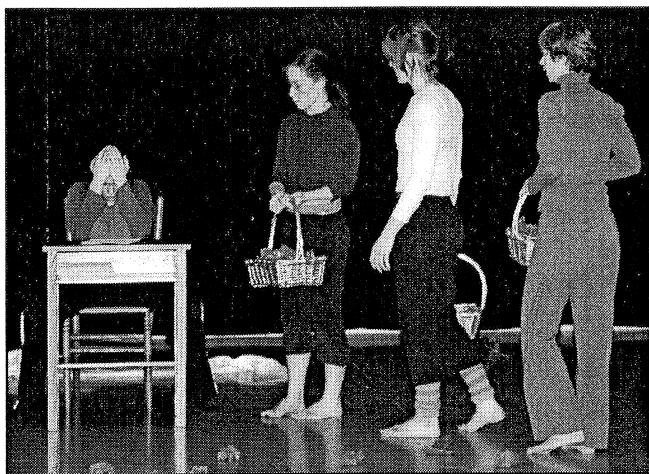
interplay between the dance and poetry elegantly and succinctly saying "dance is full of delicious language, words are full of dance." The birthday celebration was topped with the usual "Black Cake." The delights of the cold winter Washington night were indeed like "Violet in My Winter."

Meisha Bosma is a young professional dance artist based in the Wash-



Choreographer Meisha Bosma describes the inspiration for *Violet in My Winter* to moderator Karen Bradley (University of Maryland Dance Department) and poet Rosmary Waldrop, as Eileen Schwartz looks on. Photo by James Fraser.

formance of Bosma's *Violet*, this year was the first in which EDIS co-sponsored and participated (through Jim Fraser) in the planning. Other co-sponsors were the Poetry Society of America and the Alexandria Performing Arts Association, of which Jim also is chairman. The American Dance Institute generously provided rehearsal space in which the dancers labored for many



Dancers (from left): Leah Wrobel, Eileen Schwartz, Kelly Bond, and Sarah Cook in rehearsal. Photo by James Fraser.

and Emerging Choreographer. Also in 2005 she received a commission from the Kennedy Center to create a new work, *Handle with Care*, which her company premiered at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage in September 2005. Her work has been presented at many venues throughout the greater Washington DC area. Bosma earned her MA in

Dance and MAT in Education from American University in Washington, DC, where she was awarded a Modern Dance Teaching Fellowship.

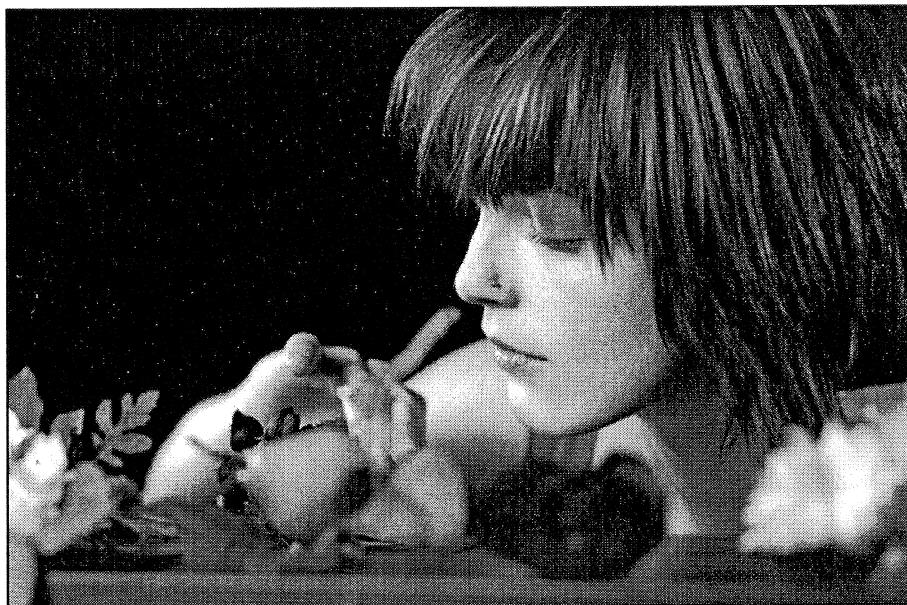
ington DC area. She is internationally recognized as an outstanding choreographer and dancer. During 2000-2004 Meisha was a full-time company member of the Kombina Dance Company in Jerusalem, Israel, and performed for audiences in Romania, Budapest, Germany, and Israel. During her time in Israel, Meisha co-directed *Fermata*, a theme-based performance series featuring Israeli choreographers and visual artists. Ms. Bosma also taught contemporary dance, Kombina repertory, and tap dance.

In 2004, Meisha received a prestigious Metro DC Dance Award for Most Outstanding New Work for her solo piece, "I Love, I Don't." In 2005 her exceptional talents were recognized again by Metro DC Dance Awards for Outstanding New Work in *Blind Spot*, Outstanding Individual Performance

Those who attend the Annual Meeting of the Emily Dickinson Society this year will be able to experience this outstanding artist's work. For additional information, see page 19 of this issue.

*James Fraser is a scientist, an appreciative reader of Emily Dickinson, and Treasurer of the Emily Dickinson International Society. He resides in Alexandria, Virginia.*

*Eleanor Heginbotham is Professor Emerita of Concordia University, Saint Paul. She has been a member of EDIS since its beginning. Her book, Reading the Fascicles of Emily Dickinson: Dwelling in Possibilities, was published in 2002 by the Ohio State University Press.*



Dancer Kelly Bond. Photo by Enoch Chan.

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# BLINDNESS NEVER BREWED

## A DICKINSON ANALOGUE OF NYRO'S "SWEET BLINDNESS"

By Patricia S. Rudden

Laura Nyro, one of the leading singer-songwriters of the late 1960s and early 1970s, grew up in an environment rich in various musical influences, including the jazz favored by her father, a trumpet player turned piano tuner, and the classical music that her mother loved. Along the way she was exposed to the popular music of the 1950s, from standards to early rock and roll, and she imbibed heavy doses of soul, gospel and doo-wop. She was also exposed to the major poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and read, as most young women of her time did, the work of Edna St. Vincent Millay and, of course, Emily Dickinson. Her lyrics, with their idiosyncratic images and verbal compression, suggest that she may have been especially influenced by Dickinson's technique, as well as other elements of Dickinson's poetry. One song in particular, "Sweet Blindness," shares subject matter and certain aspects of approach with Dickinson's poem "I Taste A Liquor Never Brewed" (J214).

The song is about a young person's first encounter with alcohol, written from the young drinker's point of view, and it tells of the joy of alcoholic intoxication in language that mimics the ways older people talk about alcohol. An actual adult would not have to sneak "my daddy's wine" or conceal the incident from parents, nor would an actual adult use words and expressions associated with drinking as awkwardly as this adolescent speaker does.

The Fifth Dimension, a pop group whose recording of the song became a staple of Top 40 radio in 1968 (and a standard of "oldies" radio thereafter), latched onto Nyro's songs fairly early in their career and helped her gain recognition as a songwriter. They approached "Sweet Blindness" with a clear understanding that the song was about drinking, a subject fraught with cultural and social assumptions and

overtones, and one of their assumptions seems to be that the song is about adult drinking. The arrangement they use is redolent of the bar room, evoking a cheap lounge filled with lurching, drunken adults and trashy burlesque-hall music. Lyrics that clearly describe an adolescent experience are sung in the voice of an old barfly. But this was the version that one could hardly avoid on AM radio, and given the cultural taboo against underage drinking, not to mention use of other drugs, this is really no surprise. Nyro released her own recording of "Sweet Blindness" twice: as the B side of the single of "Eli's Comin'" in April 1968, and again as the B side of her own recording of "Stoned Soul Picnic" the following October. All of these songs came from Nyro's April 1968 album, *Eli and the Thirteenth Confession*, which brought her serious attention and served as a source for popular singles by other artists. Her own recording of "Sweet Blindness," arranged by Charlie Calello in collaboration with Nyro herself, is faster, lighter, and more innocent than the recording by the Fifth Dimension, in keeping with the lyrics.

Beginning with some four-part harmony, the lead voice urges some un-identified auditor—perhaps only herself—to go "down by the grapevine / drink my daddy's wine / get happy." Is this a literal grapevine? Is real alcohol involved? We may have no more reason to believe so than we have when Emily Dickinson writes:

I taste a liquor never brewed—  
From Tankards scooped in Pearl—  
Not all the Vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of Air—am I—  
And Debauchee of Dew—  
Reeling—thro endless summer  
days—

From inns of Molten Blue—

When "Landlords" turn the  
drunken Bee  
Out of the Foxglove's door—  
When Butterflies—renounce their  
"drams"—

I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy  
Hats—  
And Saints—to windows run—  
To see the little Tippler—  
Leaning against the—Sun—<sup>1</sup>

Dickinson's poem uses imagery associated with drinking to talk about her intoxication with nature—her liquor is "never brewed." Dickinson's speaker is "inebriate of air" and "debauchee of dew," a "little tippler" "leaning against the sun." Much talk of booze and its effects, coupled with an explicit statement that this is not literal alcohol.

Nyro's song can be read as a description of an adolescent's first experiment with wine, or on another level as part of the same transcendental tradition. Both Dickinson's poem and Nyro's song are part of the long tradition of describing and celebrating spiritual and mystical experience in terms of physical intoxication, and while Nyro's song certainly involves actual alcohol, the song's main subject is the discovery of ecstasy, the rearrangement of sensory functions implicit in the phrase "sweet blindness." Dickinson uses imagery from her own garden, mixing references to natural phenomena with language of drinking and abstinence. Whatever Dickinson's own experience of alcohol, she clearly knew it could be abused, and she disavows a connection to real alcohol early and often.

She could have seen evidence of alcohol abuse on the streets of Amherst, and she probably also read about it in

temperance tracts or any of the other considerable alcohol-related literature of her time. David Reynolds sees the language of this poem as evidence of the direct influence of popular culture on Dickinson's poetry. He reads the speaker of the poem as a reworking of the figure of the "intemperate temperance advocate," the secret substance abuser who preaches publicly against alcoholic inebriation but uses either alcohol or something else after the temperance meeting (172). Dickinson's speaker, Reynolds says, is "exultantly open . . . proclaiming a debauchery that is allied with the highest form of temperance" (173). He traces Dickinson's use of quotation marks around "Landlords" and "drams" to the hugely popular temperance novel *Ten Nights in a Bar-room*, by Timothy Shay Arthur, which recounts, like most temperance literature, the eviction from a bar of a drunk who later swears off the drink (173). Dickinson uses the language of this episode to describe the "Butterflies" who "renounce their drams" while the speaker, exultantly high on life itself, "but drink[s] the more!"

Arthur's novel does indeed include a drinker who is urged to leave a bar, but not for excessive drunkenness so much as for nasty conversation. The book is a prime example of temperance propaganda, but the subject matter is different from Dickinson's. The novel concentrates on the terrible effects of the sale of alcohol as the opening of a bar-room in a hitherto decent town brings all sorts of depravity, mayhem and murder to its citizens. Dickinson's poem is a celebration of non-toxic ecstasy; Arthur's novel does not explore the feeling of intoxication at all. But the language of temperance does pervade the novel, and the women who suffer the dissolution and ruin of their families at the hands of irresponsible patrons of the bar are referred to frequently as "saints" and "angels," although none of them runs to a window to watch a drunk in the street. Reynolds concludes that Dickinson brings "popular temperance images to a truly new, transcendent space" (173). If

Reynolds is right, Arthur's temperance novel and other temperance language in the air affected Dickinson's poem the way her poem later could have influenced Nyro's song.

A hundred or so years later, when Laura Nyro was listening to the popular and classical music and reading the poetry that would shape her inner landscape, the common culture drew on other sources of words and phrases about alcohol. Nineteenth-century religious and cultural taboos against drinking had given way to the culture of the cocktail party, the lounge, the habit of drinks before dinner. Drinking was recreational, although many of Nyro's generation would have regarded alcohol as their parents' drug of choice, not their own. Instead of the language of flowers, bees, and temperance tracts, Nyro uses vocabulary that could almost be an urban reply to Dickinson's. The speaker uses adult expressions in clearly inappropriate ways, saying things like "I'm just a bit of a shade hung over" while still high, labeling herself "a saloon and a moonshine lover" (as if in answer to Dickinson's "Inebriate of air am I") and talking about a "gin mill spirit." Lifting a euphemism from a Cole Porter song, Nyro's speaker urges her auditor to join her and "get happy."

Where Dickinson's speaker relates proudly to a certain kind of inebriation, Nyro's speaker is still young enough to need to hide her illicit discovery. Dickinson's speaker may drink, but not what we think, while Nyro's speaker begs her auditor not to mention this incident to her parents. Neither work specifies the speaker's gender, but reading them both as female adds an interesting dimension to their strategies of concealment and indirection. Nyro's speaker glories in the drink, and in the glory of the drink, while realizing this behavior must be hidden from those who do not approve of "gin-mill spirit" and would define her as a "saloon and moonshine lover," while Dickinson's speaker proclaims her drunkenness, though it is clearly understood that what she drinks is a "liquor never

brewed." But both speakers use the alcohol-language of their times.

A childhood friend and cousin-by-marriage of Nyro's, Alan Merrill, recalls that Nyro did not drink alcohol when she was young. In her adolescence she much preferred marijuana, and in the early years of her career this earned her the wrath of another Columbia Records artist. Janis Joplin once visited Nyro at home and, as Merrill puts it, "threw a fit, almost immediately leaving in a huff, telling Laura 'you're no rock'n roller, you have no booze in the house!!'" (It is tempting to speculate that "Sweet Blindness" was actually based on a marijuana high and merely described, perhaps out of legal circumspection, in terms of a legal drug.) Her attitude toward alcohol had changed by her thirties, and by the time I knew her, in our forties, she had a well-developed taste for, among other things, vodka martinis with four olives. But she never developed the locutions of the sophisticated drinker. In a poem she read in concert in 1970 she describes truck drivers stopping at a tavern for "Jugs of beer, jiggers of ale" ("Coal Truck"). This contrasts with her fluency in the language of other drugs, including nicotine. One song called "I Am The Blues" that she performed widely in 1970, although it was not released on an album until 1976, begins "Cigarettes / I'm all alone / with my smoke and ashes." By 1988 she was publicly proud of having quit smoking.

Part of the meaning of any Nyro song comes from where it is placed in the sequence of the album on which it appears. Like Dickinson, although probably without knowing that, Nyro carefully stitched her songs together into album-shaped works in a pattern I have explored elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> "Sweet Blindness" derives additional meaning from its juxtaposition to the song that follows it, a harrowing depiction of a bad trip and its horrors, titled "Poverty Train." The expanded message is that there is a sweet, innocent side to intoxication, especially early in one's experience, but that sooner or later things can go very bad.

Ultimately the non-alcoholic but temperance-themed Dickinson poem does what the two Nyro songs do together. By using the language of temperance, Dickinson says positive things about a certain kind of intoxicated state, but also implies the unpleasant aspects of alcohol abuse by invoking the language of those who have sworn off of it. And in its time, Dickinson's kind of intoxication could be celebrated because it did not involve a dangerous substance; in Nyro's generation, the discovery of actual states of intoxication was something to celebrate—up to a point.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This is the version of the poem that appears in Thomas Johnson's 1955 edition as #214. Since it was also the text published in Martha Dickinson Bianchi's *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, it was the best known, and Nyro was probably familiar with this one. R. W. Franklin's edition of Dickinson's manuscript books reveals that this widely known version accepts two

variations Dickinson suggested at the bottom of the page, and Franklin's reading edition reprints the poem without the changes.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, my conference paper "Stacking the Wax: The Structure of Laura Nyro's Studio Albums," presented at the Midwest MLA conference at Minneapolis, November 2002.

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*Patricia S. Rudden is Associate Professor of English at New York City College of Technology, CUNY. Her main area of research is nineteenth-century American literature and culture, and she currently chairs the Women in Rock sessions sponsored by the Midwest Women's Caucus for*

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## NEW MUSIC

### ELLIKA HANSEN SINGS EMILY DICKINSON

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*By Samuel Charters*

Ellika Hansen's settings of Dickinson's poems differ significantly from the classical art-song settings the poems usually receive. One of the tantalizing things about Dickinson's poems is they weren't written in the formal literary style of the day. They weren't written in an elevated language or phrased in complicated rhyme schemes. She wrote with the ordinary diction that she spoke every day. Listening to the second version of "In the Name of the Bee" that closes Ellika Hansen's *Reverie*, it feels as if one is sitting in the Amherst church that was close to her house. In the modern, free style of her settings Hansen has caught the essential feeling of the lines of the poems. The directness, the surprise of the images remains, but the suggestion of unsolved

questions and dilemmas is always there in the spaces between the notes.

For anyone in America who grows up reading poetry, Emily Dickinson's poems are as close to us as our own skin. When you read lines like "Parting is all we know of heaven / and all we need of hell," that end "My Life Closed Twice," at the age of sixteen, something inside you changes. Hansen has beautifully suggested the delicate, cobwebby tracery of "Reverie," and there is just the right touch of casual impudence in "Nobody," Dickinson's dismissal of the notion of fame. Occasionally there are added touches in the settings of Ulla Vrethammar's cello and Hector Bingert's flute, and in their tonal colors there is still the suggestion of

the worlds that are enclosed in the lines. Even as well as I have known these poems all my life, in Ellika Hansen's suggestive, gentle, sensitive responses I hear them in new ways, and I find myself singing lines I have only spoke before.

Ordering information for *Reverie: Ellika Hansen sings Emily Dickinson* (2005):  
Gazell Records AB  
Dalénum 38  
SE-181 70 LINDINGÖ  
Sweden  
Tel: +46 8 660 07 15  
Telfax: +46 8 663 79 10

*Samuel Charters is co-editor, with his wife, Professor Ann Charters, of the anthology/text Literature and Its Writers.*

# SHARING POETRY

By Landis Everson

When I called Landis Everson in January and told him that his Poetry Foundation award, named for Emily Dickinson and given to a poet over 50 who had never published a book, had been announced in our Bulletin, the news surprised him. So did my invitation to feature him in the Poet to Poet Series. This delightful conversation led to another with Ben Mazer, who has played a key role in bringing Everson and his work to public awareness.

I am pleased to join Mazer in his efforts and to provide members of the Emily Dickinson International Society with an introduction to Everson in his own words.

Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor

The complaints about anthologies of poetry are largely exaggerated, usually by purists who think a poet's work should be devoured whole. Most people don't have the time or interest to do that. If an anthology can lure someone to this exotic world and open it, it is certainly doing its job well.

When I entered the University of California in 1947, poetry was represented by Louis Untermeyer's anthology of modern poetry.

I read it from cover to cover, advancing and retreating, liking this poet, not liking that, but learning and redeciding and changing until I could understand why each poet was included.

Emily Dickinson was a poet I learned to like slowly. At first she seemed too terse, too dry, too intellectual. But I trusted that anthology and I began to understand and like what I hadn't liked. It was "After great pain a formal feeling comes" that changed my mind. It was somewhat like deciphering a lovely puzzle, unlocking a magic that I helped make by finding the genie on my own.

One of the teachers at the University was Josephine Miles, a poet who also puzzled me and whose work I would labor over until I "got" it. I was in her class on literary criticism, and I remember Miss Miles telling us that if any of us was interested in writing poetry, we should always consider our effort was aimed at publication and not to stick ourselves away in a closet and write closed-in, private poetry. To

my life in their companionship, sharing poetry, sharing a new life. I began to publish the poems I was writing—writing for them, in the sense that they were my immediate audience. We talked to each other about our poems.

We were a community.

When we graduated, we saw less and less of one another. I found that a published poem did not satisfy me the way showing it to another poet did.

The audience for the published poem was silent, unrewarding. After the first thrill of my poem in print, the experience was meaningless. I stopped writing poetry in 1960 when I wrote a new kind of poetry with my two closest friends in poetry, Robin Blaser and Jack Spicer. We met once a week at Robin's apartment in San Francisco and read aloud what we had written.

After that, I began to redo old houses. Houses had had a fascination for me since I was a child. A poem. A house. A haircut. A cleaned window. They are all a creative process, depending on how you feel about what they mean to you. You might laugh, but an absolutely clear window is a beautiful thing and hard to create to perfection. So, after an expensive

education, I ended up banging my life away with a hammer. With joy. Robin moved to Vancouver. Jack Spicer died. Over 40 years passed. Then one day, Ben Mazer called me from Boston, explaining he was doing an article for *Fulcrum* magazine on the "Berkeley Renaissance" and was I any part of that and did I have any poems I'd never published? I was a part of the Berkeley Renaissance, and I had a couple of unpublished poems. And so began a curious friendship. Ben is a poet, and he coaxed me, little by little, to try to write again. At first I refused,

### Would You Pay \$10?

Would you pay \$10 for a poem that could change your life?

No, because I've read lots of poems that didn't change anything. "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" has a nice bounce to it but so does basketball.

When I read Emily Dickinson's "After great pain a formal feeling comes" and although I agreed with her I thought she could have used the word "relief."

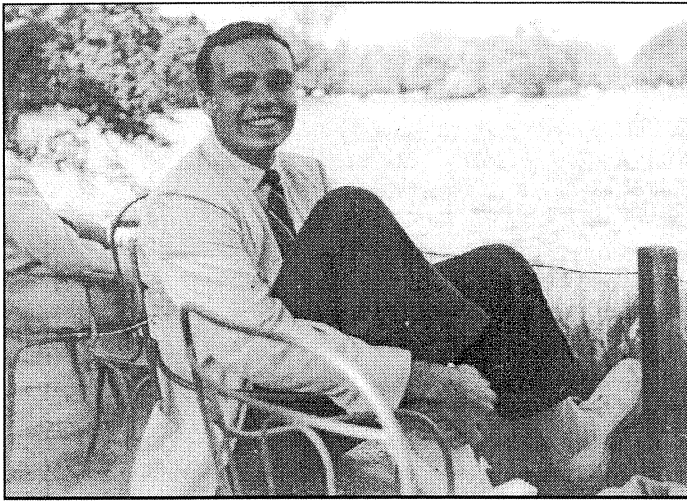
Poets tend to muddy the water, the beautiful water, so clear as she climbs naked and laughing down the mountains without shoes as if words could clothe her voice in a dry dress, forever undrinkable.

[Printed for the first time by permission of Landis Everson.]

do that was to be an amateur. To consider your work "out there," published, seen by strangers, was to be professional. The difference between amateur and professional was important.

Naturally, I realized Emily Dickinson was an exception to this rule. I did not raise my hand to Miss Miles and say, "But Emily Dickinson..." I thought I'd figure this out for myself. Because Miss Miles knew Emily Dickinson's life. One more puzzle for me to enjoy unlocking by myself, to understand.

At U. C. Berkeley I met other poets and began a rather sublime period of



*Landis Everson, in Paris, 1950 (photograph by his father), and in San Francisco, 2005 (photo by Ben Mazer).*

but he persisted until I sat down and tried once again to stir up the ghosts of poetry past. And Ben kept encouraging me. I was now writing again to a poet friend.

It was Ben, without my knowledge, who submitted my manuscript to the Poetry Foundation of Chicago for the Emily Dickinson award for a poet over 50 who had never published a book. When he called me to tell me that the book had won first prize, his words were almost meaningless. It has taken a long

time to realize the honor it means. They are publishing my book (my first book, at age 79!) this coming September via Graywolf Press.

So, I am tied to Emily Dickinson through the Poetry Foundation directly. I am the first to win a prize that they plan to give yearly, or whenever they find a suitable book to award. Yet there are older ties: my first poems were published in *Poetry* magazine in 1955, from which later the Poetry Foundation came. And more certainly, I am tied to the poet herself because, like her, I'm sure, I feel a poem is something to unlock, to discover on our own, so that we become like the poet, writing alongside as we discover what is behind the mystery.

*Landis Everson was born in 1926 in Coronado, California, and now lives in San Luis Obispo, California. He was a member of the Berkeley Renaissance of the late 1940s. While doing a Master's at Columbia in the 1950s, he encountered John Ashbery, who admired his poetry, and would later print a selection in *Locus Solus**

*(1962). In 1955, he was Karl Shapiro's teaching assistant while working on a soon to be aborted Ph.D., and had his first of four appearances in *Poetry*. In 1960, he participated in a poetry group with Jack Spicer and Robin Blaser, during which time he wrote two sequences, "Postcard from Eden" and "The Little Ghosts I Played With," which were printed for the first time in Ben Mazer's anthology of the Berkeley Renaissance in *Fulcrum 3* (2004). Since his rediscovery in *Fulcrum*, Everson has broken four decades of silence to write more than 150 new poems, which have recently appeared in such periodicals as *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *New Republic*, *London Review of Books*, *Harvard Review*, *Chicago Review*, *Jacket Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, and *Fulcrum*. In 2005, the Poetry Foundation awarded Everson the first Emily Dickinson Award for a poet over the age of 50 who has never published a book of poems. His winning collection, *Everything Preserved: Poems 1955-2005*, will be published by Graywolf Press in September 2006. (Note by Ben Mazer.)*

*Ben Mazer's poems have been widely published in international periodicals (Verse, Agenda, Fulcrum, Stand, Harvard Review, Salt) since the publication of his first collection of poems, *White Cities* (Barbara Matteau Editions, 1995). He is the editor of *The Complete Poems of John Crowe Ransom* (Hansel/Norton, 2007), and of *Landis Everson's Everything Preserved: Poems 1955-2005* (Graywolf, September 2006).*

### *The Red Wheelbarrow*

Shocking, the red wheelbarrow there,  
the cheerless sight of it  
reproachful,  
made for an October need. It never  
wanted me. Piled with dried beanstalks.

Rusting in the sun, waterlogged and tired.  
Did the idea of it die in my hands once,  
as we struggled together over the fake furrows, me  
with no plan for love, the wheelbarrow sobbing?

Trying to be whole, grow leaves again,  
touch the air. Our needs  
were different, transitory. I saw birds scavenging  
the fields, while  
the wheelbarrow rotted in my arms.

The moon is up for grabs. Nothing  
I make wants it.

[*"The Red Wheelbarrow"* first appeared in *Fulcrum*:  
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## WILLIS BUCKINGHAM DISCOVERIES OF A BIBLIOGRAPHER

By Elizabeth Rosa Horan

*The Scholar Series honors those whose work—editorial, biographical, or critical—has established the foundation for today's research on Dickinson. This profile of Willis J. Buckingham by his Arizona State University friend and colleague Elizabeth Rosa Horan offers inspiring perspective on the bibliographer's role in documenting work on Dickinson around the world and on the remarkable investigative and editorial achievement by which Buckingham provided us ready access to a treasure trove of early critical responses to the poems.*

Jane Donahue Eberwein,  
Series Editor

Many people have benefited from the research and publications of Willis J. Buckingham, beginning with his still-indispensable *Emily Dickinson, An Annotated Bibliography* (1970). Surveying Will Buckingham's research, one becomes aware of his uncommon prescience encompassing not just directions within Dickinson studies and their status within American literature, but also resources for bibliography and for the long-term study of interrelations of literature, print, and popular culture. A steady contributor to the *Emily Dickinson Bulletin* and *Dickinson Studies*, hardy precursors to the current *EDIS Bulletin* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, Will worked closely with Frederick L. Morey's Maryland-based Higginson Press. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s his annual reviews of scholarship helped establish the continuing consensus regarding the stature of Dickinson and Whitman as major, world poets. Yet Buckingham's most significant single contribution would be his *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s: A Documentary History* (1989), which demonstrates how the

poet was presented to and regarded by her nearest contemporaries, detailing how her work emerges as both the expression of a unique personality and the jointly negotiated production of editors, reviewers, author, and public.

Born and raised in Bismarck, North Dakota, where his father practiced

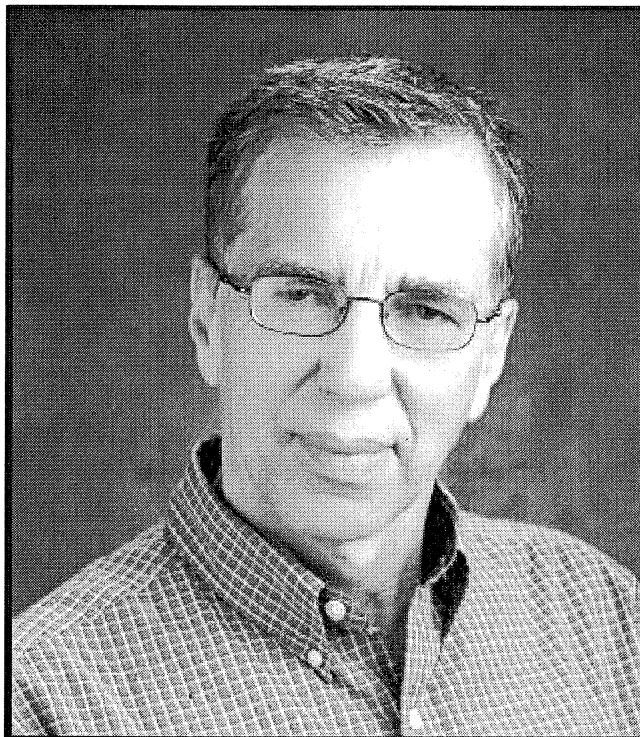


Photo by Portraits by Reg

medicine, Will Buckingham moved east to attend Harvard College, receiving his B.A. in English from the Honors program in 1960. He recalled how he first came to consider Emily Dickinson as a poet of note. While he was sure he had heard of her in school, he was enrolled in a college freshman course in public speaking. He heard another course member who'd chosen as his topic an introduction to the poet refer to the just-published, three volume Johnson edition (this was the fall of 1956). Afterwards, Will checked out the three volumes for sale in a

Harvard Square bookstore. In what he called his "Bismarck innocence" at what was probably the first full-scale scholarly treatment of any writer he'd ever seen, he thought, "My, she must be something to deserve this."

Other memorable aspects of Harvard that Will recalled were courses with Reuben Brower, who taught methods of reading based in New Criticism, and with renowned theologian Paul Tillich, whom Will described as "a wonderful lecturer, very current with the time, very exacting in his approach." Following graduation, Will received a Rockefeller Grant to study for a year at Union Seminary in New York. At year's end he found that he still liked English, so he completed an M.A. at Wisconsin. He subsequently returned to Union, where a homiletics professor recommended him to Charles van Riper, the world's leading researcher in the treatment of stuttering, who had a clinic at Western Michigan University. Will then taught composition at Western Michigan before moving on to Indiana University's Ph.D. program in English.

The mid-to-late sixties were an exciting time to be studying English, he recounts. "Everyone knew that we were definitely at the end of New Criticism: people at Harvard had been talking about that. But what would be next? No one knew." After working with teachers such as William Riley Parker, the Miltonist, and Edwin Cady in Indiana, Buckingham had offers from Southern and Midwestern universities. He was lured to Arizona State by the palm trees, the gracious charm of the English Department Chair, Jerry Archer, and the energy and collegiality of the English faculty. Beginning at Arizona State in 1969, Will was promoted to Associate in 1975, then to Professor in



1988. He devoted two significant sabbaticals to library research on Emily Dickinson, first in New York City (1975) and then in Great Britain (1982). A third sabbatical found him again traveling as well as spending time with his family and two children, Jocelyn and David, born in 1979 and 1988 respectively.

The unusually inclusive, far-ranging approach characteristic of Will Buckingham's perspective appears in his first book, *Emily Dickinson, An Annotated Bibliography* (1970). His work registered the Amherst writer's long-time and growing influence on other poets, novelists, and artists as an important index of her fame. This dimension of her influence has been subsequently born out in series such as "Poet to Poet" in the *EDIS Bulletin* and websites such as "Titanic Opera." Casting a wide net, Buckingham moved across genres and languages, attending to responses from inside and outside of the academy. This inclusive approach led people to send him self-published items, things that they didn't want to be lost, work that he included, in turn, in the annual updates which he regularly published in journals. Encompassing newspaper items throughout his research, Buckingham demonstrates Emily Dickinson's pervasive presence in popular culture. His bibliography's attention to foreign language editions and criticism revealed her global readership and remains an important guide for international perspectives on American literature. By defining the field in a broadly inclusive way, Will Buckingham followed the example of the first collectors, such as Charles B. Green at the Jones Library in Amherst, who was as much interested in collecting items related to popular culture, peripheral interests, ancillary materials, as in what academics produced.

A survey of the reviews that Will Buckingham regularly published in journals such as *American Literature* and *Nineteenth Century Literature* throughout the 1980s gives a sense of his wit, generosity, and fairness. Among the writers he admired in book

reviews are Ralph Franklin, Karl Keller, Vivian Pollak, and Christopher Benfy. Among the many writers who acknowledge him in their own work are George Monteiro and Barton Levi St. Armand. Buckingham hailed the publication of *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Ralph Franklin (1981). After noting how "the boldness of her hand . . . counters, some say, the 'bitsy' size of her verses," Buckingham describes Franklin's work as "handsome and meticulously prepared," and he praises the gatherings for their "full and lively sense of the poems' visual properties." Writing of Karl Keller's *Only Kangaroo Among the Beauty* (1981), Buckingham approves of the "eclectic and exploratory" method and the broad scope prompting Keller to relate Dickinson's work to Emerson, Thoreau, Edwards, and Bradstreet, even as he warns against "the critic as high-wire gymnast." Reviewing books by Vivian Pollak and Christopher Benfy, Buckingham suggests that Pollak's *Emily Dickinson: The Anxiety of Gender* (1984) "may well be the most broadly satisfying psycho-biography of Dickinson we have yet had; certainly it is among the most literary," while Benfy's *Emily Dickinson and the Problem of Others* (1984) "takes up a point crucial to Pollak's argument: Dickinson's essential wariness of nature, of others, and of God."

Buckingham's critical perspectives in his scholarship have been centered on histories of reading and response, and on Emily Dickinson as a reader. Yet he has also given substantial attention to textual criticism: in an early essay he treats of her "Lone Orthography." He has also been quite open to biographical criticism, as when he acknowledges, in 1984, that "for reasons readily apparent, Emily Dickinson is not an easy subject for the biographical critic," yet she "should not be exempt from the legitimate critical enterprise of relating what is known of a writer's life to her work." He wittily disputes the notion that "the love poems require historical validation," speculating that "[s]hould it be discovered—indisputably—that Dickinson was in love with Millard

Fillmore, and that he made secret visits to her home, the lines beginning 'I cannot live with You' would not convey an inflected richness greater than they already possess."

Deliberation and imaginative reach similarly characterize Buckingham's engagement with scholarship that most closely relates to and would even supercede his own. As early as 1982 he foresaw technology forever changing the field of bibliography. In *Resources for American Literary Study*, he predicts that "[e]ven in the near future, only those volumes will remain useful which substantially augment the MLA's information base and which offer annotation and indexing that is at least as good. Eventually all separate bibliographies will go into information systems, so will the full texts of the materials they cite." On the one hand, he notes that "the once proud race of bibliographers can expect to yield to faceless, nameless information specialists." On the other hand, he notes that "intensive efforts at recovery of biographical documents, or reconsiderations of reception history, for example, will always be the proper labor of the well-equipped scholar bent on making discoveries." Such discoveries would form a link between what's now called "history of the book" and what Buckingham calls "the sociology of her words in print," as he points out in reviewing Myerson's descriptive bibliography of Dickinson volumes (1986).

When Buckingham's *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s: A Documentary History* appeared in 1989, reviewers immediately recognized the text's value in enriching Dickinson studies with its broad, deep look at the late Victorian era's crucial role in the ongoing history of reading, authorship, and publication. *Nineteenth Century Literature* praised the work as "both editorially responsible and of enormous critical value." *American Literature* stressed the quality of the research as having a great impact on the wider field: "Buckingham teaches valuable les-

sons in humility. First, he proves how much archival material an astute researcher can find in supposedly well-dug grounds. Second, his nearly 600 items [show that] . . . the 1890s gave a detailed, patient hearing to Dickinson's genius. Third, her forbears had a more sophisticated taste than some of us care to admit." In all, Buckingham, according to this reviewer, "set an overall standard for informed, insightful persuasion that few of us can hope to match." Wendy Barker, writing in the *New England Quarterly*, describes *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s* as "a joy, a work of dedicated, excellent scholarship, fascinating reading . . . one of the most valuable works on Dickinson and on the culture and literary history of the period to emerge in some time."

Will Buckingham's *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s* began with travel to and immersion in various libraries. Yale's materials were especially valuable in helping him determine his direction. He recounts that when he began in the early 1970s, Richard Sewall hadn't yet published his biography of Emily Dickinson, but the materials that Sewall had helped bring to Yale, that Bingham had given, were available to anyone. He recounts how he proceeded with the scrapbooks of clippings that Mabel Loomis Todd had assembled: "three big boxes, three bound volumes," some 300 clippings in all. The Yale librarians let me photocopy all of them. Sometimes Todd, sometimes Bingham would have little notes, citation information. I just felt, OK, this is something I can really build on. I did feel, when I was doing it, this was the 1970s, no one, really, was much interested in audience, or readers, or cultural studies. I kept asking myself, "Who cares . . . about *Housekeeper's Weekly*?"

As Will examined the Todd scrapbook materials, he realized both how much had been done in the 1890s, and how much material was "still out there." Working with the scrapbooks, he developed a skeleton outline. If he found, for example, that Todd had preserved a review from a magazine, such

as that very *Housekeeper's Weekly*, he would page through the journal, checking for mention of other 1890s Dickinson volumes. Then he would examine all the domestic and women's weeklies he could find to see if they published book notices or reviews. "The detective aspect, which was great fun, pushed me on, along with my feeling that saving the historical record mattered. I felt the likelihood of those materials being lost if I didn't find and save them. It appealed to some sort of collector gene, in me. I thought, "This notice was kept for good reason. It, and others like it, if any, should be saved."

By discovering sources in metropolitan newspapers, as well as family and religious weeklies, *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s* doubled the number of known reviews from the poet's near contemporaries. Included, too, are advertisements and publication statistics, scrapbooks and newspaper accounts that recount public performances of the poems. Compiling this far-ranging and inclusive account, deeply attentive to subtle questions of value and affiliation, led Buckingham to observe a "three-tiered" quality to what Dickinson has meant to readers, ranging from "high minded silence" on the part of most elite and New York-based critics, a substantial "middlebrow" component, and "wide spread noncritical enthusiasm" (*Reception* xiii).

Like the work of Myerson and Mabel Todd, Buckingham's scholarship established and expanded the archival base upon which understanding of Dickinson's reception and, by extension, her role within literary history can be formed. Such work shows us Dickinson was not just a parlor poet, that she found sympathetic and occasionally puzzled audiences throughout the major cities of the US and Great Britain. To the question of why the opinions of Emily Dickinson's 1890s readers matters he pointed to how their enthusiastic response was not burdened with previous weighty judgments, even as he describes the 1890s as "the moment when the 19th century

could feel, and take pleasure in, the alien force of her voice" (*Reception* xii).

Relevant to the present, Buckingham's work evidences the proliferation of print venues. In addition to critical observations regarding the poet's life, acquaintances, reading, texts and forms, *Emily Dickinson's Reception* prints abundant evidence of books as mass-produced commodities in a pervasively commercial world not much removed from that of the poet. Book production figures printed in an appendix and referenced throughout the text set the success of the Todd-Higginson volumes in the larger context of the book trade. *Emily Dickinson's Reception* also provides rich materials detailing transatlantic aspects of reading, criticism, and book production. His documentation shows how the combined agency of far-flung networks produced the taste of the era, as evident in a wealth of reviews, annotations, and figures. The volume is beautifully illustrated with photos of figures influential in Dickinson's early, phenomenal sales, so readers have a sense of who many of those prominent actors were.

Buckingham's studies of readers and reading have moved both backwards and forwards from the 1890s. His sleuthing, culling materials from libraries and tracking down sources relevant to studying the poet, confirmed the 1844 edition of Webster's dictionary as owned by Edward Dickinson, work that Cynthia Hallen has used to build her "Emily Dickinson Lexicon Project." He contributed thoughtful essays on Emily Dickinson's practices as part of the reading life, to two edited collections, one edited collaboratively by Robert Weisbuch and Will's former student, Martin Orzeck. Observations about what 1890s readers liked in Dickinson also formed the basis of a keynote address that Buckingham delivered to the EDIS meeting in Amherst in 1989 and published in *EDIS Bulletin* 9.1 as "Spirituelle Songstress or Warrior Poet?"

When asked for his thoughts on the changes in writing technologies that he's seen, Will responded with his

customary enthusiasm and caution. He recalled feeling “freed, a thrill” when he first encountered a photocopy machine in a library, in the late 1960s, at Indiana University. He did not hesitate to describe his current efforts, and to articulate concerns for future Dickinson scholarship. While the age of single-compiler bibliography is at an end, he says, collaborative, online bibliographies should be open-ended, drawing on as many sources as possible, to encompass, in particular, international materials. For its clarity and ease of use, Will admires the bibliography section of the online Whitman Archive directed by Ken Price, for example, but he hopes that Dickinson compilers will avoid narrowing their search to “What Ph.D.s write about” or merely duplicating *PMLA*’s listings. He hopes libraries will fully describe their special Dickinson collections, and that there might be links to these archives on the EDIS website. Of his own work in this area, he notes that Indiana University Press has given him permission to put the 1970 bibliography, along with additions and corrections, on a website. Most of this pre-1970 material is of interest as publication and reception history so the new arrangement will be chronological. Doing so will get this record out to readers, especially internationally, who may not have convenient access to the long out-of-print bibliography. The site, currently in a raw state of emergence, is reachable at [www.aboutdickinson.org](http://www.aboutdickinson.org). He regards attention to readers and reading as being of likely continuing interest, along with evidence of poetry’s ongoing presence in popular culture, and of literature’s global circulation. He summarizes his relation to technology with characteristic modesty, “I was an early adopter, but always slow . . . very slow in picking up the techniques.”

Students, colleagues, and acquaintances have benefited from the spirit of inclusiveness and open-mindedness that is manifest throughout Will Buckingham’s research. The passion for travel that contributed to the suc-

cess of his literary research led Will Buckingham to develop Arizona State’s first courses in the hard-to-define genre of travel writing. In these as in his seminars in Whitman and Dickinson he tried to make students more aware of gay literature, and of multiple sexual orientations as, in his own words, “something they should be aware of, think about.” When Will most recently taught the Whitman and Dickinson graduate seminar in 2000, the semester’s progression of tasks reflected skills he’d carefully developed over his career. The opening weeks found the students giving presentations and writing succinct, yet detailed explications of individual poems, incorporating insights from other students and the criticism. They followed with summary-reports on critical articles before moving on to original historical research, poring through Victorian magazines, examining microfilms, and reading through originals of lesser-known editions and manuscripts. Lectures were pithy, witty, deeply attentive to the texts at hand. Sessions were set aside, too, for meeting with students as they planned out their projects. A student evaluation from the semester’s end states it well: “Buckingham has much to say, and all of it valuable. Not a minute of my time was wasted.”

**Willis J. Buckingham, selected publications:**

*Emily Dickinson, An Annotated Bibliography: Writings, Scholarship, Criticism, and Ana, 1850-1968.* Willis J. Buckingham, ed. Bloomington and London: Indiana UP, 1970. pp. xii, 322.

Reviewed: *The Year’s Work in English Studies, Choice, Times [London] Literary Supplement, American Book Collector, Higginson Journal of Poetry, Library Journal, American Literary Scholarship, An Annual, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, Resources for Literary Study, American Literary Realism.*

*Emily Dickinson’s Reception in the 1890s.* Willis J. Buckingham, ed. Pittsburgh:

U of Pittsburgh P, 1989. pp. xxiii, 615. Reviewed: *The Yearbook of English Studies, The Single Hound, American Literature, Choice, New England Quarterly, Nineteenth-Century Literature, Legacy, Bulletin of Bibliography, American Literary Scholarship, Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography.*

“Poetry Readers and Reading in the 1890s: Emily Dickinson’s First Reception” in *Readers in History: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Contexts of Response*, ed. James L. Machor. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993. 164-79.

“Emily Dickinson and the Reading Life” in *Emily Dickinson and Audience*, ed. Robert Weisbuch and Martin Orzeck. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996. 233-54.

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*Elizabeth Rosa Horan, Willis Buckingham’s colleague, is Professor of English and past Chair of the Department at Arizona State University. Known to Dickinsonians primarily for her insights into the Bianchi/Todd-Bingham publication battles, she also writes on Latin American women authors and is completing a biography of Gabriela Mistral.*

# INTERPRETATION AT THE DICKINSON MUSEUM

*By Cindy Dickinson and Jane Wald*

New projects are underway at the Emily Dickinson Museum to further our mission to “interpret” Emily Dickinson’s work and world. “Interpretation” is a word used in the museum field to describe how museums help visitors understand both the material objects and the stories that a particular museum or historic site has to share. As William Alderson, an influential historian and leader in the museum field, has defined it, interpretation “is an attempt to create understanding.” Interpretation takes many forms, and, along with preservation, is one of the Emily Dickinson Museum’s two main charges in its mission to steward the Homestead, The Evergreens, and the grounds that surround them.

This spring the Emily Dickinson Museum is in the midst of two new interpretation projects. The first is a new tour, entitled “This was a Poet.” Geared toward families and toward those with a nascent interest in the poet and her work, the tour takes place at the Homestead and offers a portrait of Emily Dickinson drawn largely from her own words in letters, and ends with a short participatory poetry reading under the oak tree in the Homestead lawn. About 30 minutes long, the tour is a complement to the two-house tour of the Homestead and The Evergreens, developed two years ago when the houses joined together as the Emily Dickinson Museum.

The second project stems from a substantial grant from the federally-funded Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which the Museum received last fall. Over three years, the grant will fund the following interpretive goals: first, a furnishings plan for The Evergreens and a furnishings and exhibit plan for the Homestead, developed from research in significant materials at two Dickinson-related archives (the Houghton Library at Harvard University and the John Hay Library at Brown Univer-

sity) and implementation of plan recommendations; second, an interpretive plan for the historic landscape and an interpretive audio landscape tour; and third, updates and revisions to the Museum’s tour and web site to reflect research uncovered through these projects. The IMLS project will deepen the Museum’s ability to interpret the poet’s life story and will ensure the Museum’s long-term sustainability.

The first component of the IMLS project, a furnishings and exhibit plan for the Homestead and The Evergreens, began in September. A furnishings plan, as defined by the National Park Service, helps to provide a history of the historic spaces for guides to present to the public. The plan “serves to solidify the furnished spaces by locating each item in the room and documenting why it should be there. As a preservation tool it documents the use of furnishings in an historic context, and focuses attention on an object and its preservation.”

From the Museum’s perspective as a steward of a significant historic site, the furnishings and exhibit plan marks an essential step in the Museum’s understanding of the interpretive potential of the houses and their collections. Guiding the Museum through this process is Nan Wolverton, an independent consultant who specializes in historic furnishing plans, exhibit research and design, historical research and writing, and collections cataloguing. She has held curatorial positions at Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Among numerous consulting projects, she previously worked at the Emily Dickinson Museum during the development of the Museum’s two-house tour and during winter guide training.

Ms. Wolverton spent the fall and winter researching Dickinson family documents at Harvard University and

Brown University, as well as other documentary material about the family. She is searching for clues about how the Dickinsons at both the Homestead and The Evergreens furnished their houses. She will use this information, in conjunction with a comprehensive review of the Museum’s object collection, to make recommendations for furnishing each space currently interpreted to the public, as well as several additional spaces deemed appropriate for inclusion in future tours of the two Dickinson houses. One of her primary charges is to look for objects currently housed at The Evergreens that would be appropriate for use at the Homestead in presenting the Museum’s story of Dickinson’s life, poetry, and legacy.

The furnishings and exhibit plan is scheduled for completion this summer. To keep updated on the Museum and its projects, please visit <http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org>.

*Cindy Dickinson is the Director of Interpretation and Programming of the Emily Dickinson Museum; Jane Wald is the Museum’s Director of Resources and Collections.*

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Coulson, Seana, and Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, eds. *The Literal and Nonliteral in Language and Thought*. (Series: Lodz Studies in Language, Vol. 11.) Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2005. 399 pp. Paper, ISBN 3-631-54169-4 (US-ISBN 0-8204-7748-6), \$62.95.

This volume gathers papers from 18 participants at the eighth International Cognitive Linguistics Conference held in 2003, in Logroño, Spain. International contributors of varied backgrounds discuss "the philosophical, psychological, as well as linguistic and literary aspects of the literal-nonliteral distinction in language and thought." An afterword features an interview with George Lakoff. In "Is Iconicity Literal? Cognitive Poetics and the Literal Concept in Poetry" (65-83), Margaret H. Freeman analyzes the meaning of the term *literal* and examines Emily Dickinson's "The Luxury to apprehend" (Fr819E) "to show how one might attempt a literal, iconic reading through a cognitive poetic analysis." Freeman's close reading illuminates what could otherwise be a confused and misunderstood reading of the poem. In light of postmodern theories that allow all coherent readings as possible readings, Freeman says, "there can also be readings that are, quite simply, wrong." She concludes that "one can distinguish between literal iconicity—the compositionality of the text as created by the author—and non-literal mappings—the interpretation of the text arrived at by the reader—however difficult that distinction might be."

Dominguez, Carlos Maria. *The House of Paper*. Translated by Nick Caistor.

Illustrated by Peter Sís. New York: Harcourt, 2005. 103 pp. 7.6 x 5.0 x 0.5 inches. Cloth, ISBN 0-15-101147-8, \$18.00.

A car accidentally hits Bluma Lennon, a Cambridge University literature professor, while she is reading a second-hand copy of Emily Dickinson's poems. Thus begins Dominguez's engaging fable about how dangerous reading and a passion for books can be. After Lennon's death, a cement-encrusted copy of Joseph Conrad's *The Shadow-Line* arrives, sent to Lennon from Uruguay. Curiosity leads her colleague successor, the narrator, to search for Carlos Brauer, to whom Lennon had inscribed the damaged but valuable book. In Uruguay, the narrator learns that Brauer is a demented bibliophile who has built himself a beach house, using his library of damaged books as bricks. This slim, easily read novel combines a literary mystery with a fascinating glimpse into the world of bibliophiles. Dominguez writes with wit, wisdom, and imagination evocative of magical realism and leaves the reader with haunting questions about Brauer, the significance of Conrad's book, and Dickinson's role in the mystery. Dickinson manuscript scholars will appreciate Dominguez's sensitivity to the conjunction of rhythm and composition on the printed page—"the infinite tiny details that go to create a beautiful object"; he suggests that white spaces between words create vertical and diagonal pathways that reveal the writer's rhythm and worth.

Finnerty, Páraic. *Emily Dickinson's Shakespeare*. Amherst: Univ. of Mass Press, 2006. 267 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-

55849-517-7, \$39.95.

Finnerty "examines Dickinson's many hyperbolic statements of praise for Shakespeare, and her abundant references to his works . . . within the historical context from which they emanated." He "reconstructs the social and cultural milieu in which Dickinson read Shakespeare [*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and others] . . . to clarify her actual references to reading him and . . . to speculate further on her attitude toward her preferred author." Mirroring her society's admiration of Shakespeare, Dickinson's adulation is clear: she appropriates Shakespeare "to either validate or undermine traditional attitudes on a number of issues." Others, however, considered Shakespeare "an 'English' author, whose mythic greatness suppressed the appreciation of American literature." Dickinson's "virtual exclusion of direct reference to his works in her poetry, and her poem 'Drama's Vitallist Expression is the Common Day' [Fr 776], demonstrate that her understanding of him was entangled in her sense of identity as an American writer." This understanding is reflected in her 1885 letter [L1004] to Mabel Loomis Todd. Finnerty's resources include the Dickinson family's eight-volume edition of Shakespeare and Dickinson's poem, Fr776. He also discusses nineteenth-century American Shakespeare critics, publications, and literary figures. Finnerty's well-researched and accessible volume should interest both scholars and general readers.

Geldard, Richard G., ed. and Introduction. *The Essential Transcenden-*

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](mailto:barbarakelly@psualum.com).

*talists*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2005. 265 pp. Paper, ISBN 1-58542-434-X, \$15.95.

In this anthology of key writings by New England transcendentalists, Geldard focuses on Emerson, Thoreau, Ames Bronson Alcott, and Margaret Fuller, among others. He offers a historical overview of transcendentalism's philosophical, intellectual, and spiritual roots; includes selected works; and surveys the legacy of the brief but influential New England movement. He emphasizes that the movement was a spiritual quest "centered on the notion of the infinitude of the private individual" rather than a religious movement concerned with ritual and doctrine. In his discussion of Emily Dickinson (241-44), Geldard says that "what draws her closer to the Transcendentalists are devotion to the examined life and profound mysticism." Printed in full are "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church" (J324), "Forever—is composed of Nows" (J624), and "This consciousness that is aware" (J822). About the latter he says, it "is the most transcendental and evocative of the examined life," and its central image "places Dickinson squarely in the Emersonian tradition at its most esoteric." He concludes, "The soul, that different entity, which simply is, accompanied obediently by this consciousness, undertakes the quest as best it can, wary and uncertain of the destination." Clearly written, this book is accessible, interesting, and informative.

**Meltzer, Milton.** *Emily Dickinson: A Biography*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Twenty-First Century Books/Lerner, 2006. 128 pp. 10.3 x 7.5 x 0.5 inches. Jacketed library binding, ISBN 0-7613-2949-8, \$31.93.

Intended for grades seven to twelve, this text is one of four volumes in Lerner's series, *American Literary Greats*; the other volumes feature Whitman, Melville, and Poe. Divided into 16 chapters, Meltzer's well-written biography not only includes the

details of Dickinson's life and her love of language but also situates the domestic and community life of Amherst within the context of selected political, social, and economic events of nineteenth-century America. The author writes about the people and events that influenced Dickinson in a lucid, easy-to-read style that includes interesting and informative details. For example, nineteenth-century fascicles were commonly a personal collection of admired works, he says, and Dickinson's father had collected his college papers into fascicles long before his daughter created her unique collection of poems. Excerpts from letters and poems and 33 black and white photographs generously illustrate the text. Aesthetically pleasing and well-designed, using high quality paper, the book includes a chronology of the poet's life, source notes, a selected bibliography, an index, and references to the Dickinson Museum, the Jones Library, the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, and the *EDIS Bulletin*. Although reference to modern publication history of the poems is missing, this introduction to Dickinson is attractive and should appeal to pre-teens and young adults.

**Norton, Paul F.** *Guide to the Dickinson Historic District, Amherst, Massachusetts*. Photographs by Asha Kinney. Amherst: Amherst Historical Commission, 2005. 41 pp. Paper, \$7.50 at Amherst Town Hall, Dickinson Museum, Amherst History Museum.

Designed as a guide for walking tours of Amherst, this booklet describes and illustrates 18 private homes and public buildings in Amherst's Dickinson Historic District. Each two-page spread describes the history and architecture of a building and includes a contemporary color photograph opposite the text; archival photographs are sometimes included. Besides the Homestead (featured on the cover with its recently restored exterior) and the Evergreens, the booklet includes Sweetser Park, the homes of Luke Sweetser, Enos Cook, David Todd, and

others, as well as the Masonic Temple, Police Building, First Congregational Church, and the Amherst Depot. Because 13 of the buildings originated in the nineteenth century as homes of prominent and active Amherst citizens, the booklet offers a vivid picture of commercial and intellectual activities in the community. An introduction briefly describes the ancestry of the Dickinson family and Amherst's early history. Included is a map with the 18 entries designated by number. Printed on high-quality paper, the booklet is a useful and interesting resource for visitors. Booklets may be purchased in Amherst, or send checks, made out to the Town of Amherst, for \$10.00 (includes handling and postage) to The Historical Commission/Planning Dept., Town Hall, 4 Boltwood Ave., Amherst, MA 01002-2351. E-mail inquiries should be sent to [krzanowskis@amherstma.gov](mailto:krzanowskis@amherstma.gov).

**Veivo, Harri, Bo Pettersson, Merja Polvinen, eds.** *Cognition and Literary Interpretation in Practice*. Helsinki: Helsinki Univ. Press, 2005. 339 pp. Paper, ISBN 951-570-598-3, •32.00. Order at: [www.yliopistopaino.fi](http://www.yliopistopaino.fi).

This book collects 12 papers, originally presented by international scholars at a conference in 2004, at the University of Helsinki, Finland. The papers explore the relations between cognitive literary studies and literary interpretation. In "Poetry as Power: The Dynamics of Cognitive Poetics as a Scientific and Literary Paradigm" (31-57), Margaret Freeman addresses three issues. First, she asserts that a reader can "accurately comprehend and articulate the aesthetic achievements attempted by the text producer"; she demonstrates this by analyzing Emily Dickinson's choice of *enabled* among many variants in "He preached upon 'Breadth' till it argued him narrow—" (Fr1266B). Second, she says, "cognitive poetics [can] distinguish between prototypical and peripheral readings of a literary text and evaluate the various interpretations" of readers, "something literary criticism has not at-

tempted to do." Third, to show "how cognitive poetics can describe and articulate the cognitive processes that contribute to a literary text's aesthetic effects," she offers a close reading of "I cannot dance upon my Toes—" (Fr381B). Overall, she suggests "an approach that draws from both the cognitive sciences and literary studies, including research in many disciplines, from neuroscience to literary criticism."

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### Book Review

**Malroux, Claire.** *Chambre avec vue sur l'éternité.* Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005. 291 pp. Paper, ISBN 2-07-077488-0, •17.90.

*Reviewed by Anne Mellenthin*

France's leading female poet, Claire Malroux has published six books of poetry, translated Emily Dickinson (amongst other poets), and received Le Grand Prix National de la Traduction in 1995.

In *Chambre avec vue sur l'éternité*, Malroux seeks "to penetrate the complexities of Emily Dickinson's creative process, to discover that which inspired her [Malroux] to write and walk quietly in [Dickinson's] footsteps while speaking on her behalf." She wishes to find "a key, not the key"—"to wander the halls of Dickinson's legacy and peek in the doors, some familiar and others, new." She succeeds with great subtlety and empathy.

Malroux opens with a description of a pilgrimage she makes to Amherst and the Homestead. She devotes one quarter of her book to Dickinson's biography, includes 43 pages of Dickinson's letters, and in the remainder, analyzes the recurring themes of Dickinson's poems. Malroux meditates on the poet's love of nature, the loves of her life, the elasticity of time, the explosive forces within her, the allure of death, and her evolving vision of eternity. She examines Dickinson's study of contrasts: miniscule/grand, presence/absence,

desire/renouncement, and ultimately being/nothingness. Like a choreographer, Malroux skillfully orchestrates the above so that we may better understand the fascinating mind of her subject.

Fluid and conversational, Malroux is never presumptuous. She gently ushers the reader toward a greater understanding of Dickinson's tormented interior life and the evolution of her writing. As an English speaker reading a foreign language book, I appreciated Malroux's brief chapters, each of which possessed the intimacy of a journal entry. Malroux seems to feel comfortable with ambiguity and paradox, asking questions of the inscrutable Dickinson and forcing us to investigate her meaning for ourselves. For example, when Dickinson writes of the explosive nature of the creative process—the *coup de foudre*—Malroux asks if the proverbial lightning bolt is "death, reunion, [or] a supernatural force?" Malroux writes of Dickinson negating the world around her, depriving her subject of the feeling of existence, and creating a death of self or identity. She finds this curious as Dickinson considered silence to be sublime. Although neither Malroux, nor anyone, has all the answers, she seems to ask the right questions.

As a French intellectual and long time scholar of Dickinson, Malroux suggests Rimbaud as a stylistic soul mate. Rimbaud writes, "Ils furent rois toute une matinée. . . et toute l'après-midi." (They were kings all the morning and all the afternoon.) This passage bears a striking similarity to Dickinson's lines: "her royalty, long coveted was going to begin before dawn and last until the night of her death." Even more eerily, Rimbaud writes, "Elle est retrouvée. / Quoi?—L'éternité. C'est la mer allée / Avec le soleil." (It has been found again. What? Eternity. It is the parted sea, with/by the sun.) Dickinson: "As if the Sea should part / And show a further sea."

This then may be Malroux's greatest gift to her foreign audience—the pantheon of European literary giants from whom she draws in her inquiry of

Dickinson. Proust's concept of the condensed nature of time and the philosophy of existentialism inform her analysis. Her references range from Shakespeare to Pauline Reage. Reage's book, *The Story of O*, is a tale of sexual subjugation in which Malroux identifies parallels in the exploits of O to Dickinson's master/servant letters. In these Dickinson wrote of the "Master" as one who "conjugates submission of the lover and of the intellect."

Malroux also cites Marguerite Duras's *Emily L*. In her best-selling book, Duras, inspired by Dickinson's "There's a certain Slant of light," lends her own genius to the poem. She writes, "on certain winter afternoons the slanting rays of the sun were as oppressive as the sound of cathedral organs. The wounds inflicted on us by these swords of the sun were dealt by heaven. They neither wounded nor consoled . . . What they did was produce a new perception, an inner difference at the heart of meaning." Malroux refers to the cathedral paintings of De Witte, executed in the northern light of Amsterdam, as visual imagery for this poem. Thus from her perch in Paris, City of Light, Malroux creates a bridge between European and American culture. As her readers, we are gratefully illuminated.

Malroux writes in her introduction that she felt presumptuous walking in Dickinson's footsteps, and I admit to feeling the same about those of Malroux. I hope I have done her very fine book justice and apologize if, in translation, I have misconstrued any of her thoughts or ideas.

*Anne Mellenthin lives in Menlo Park, California, and enjoys the study of literature, poetry, and the French language.*

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### Selected Bibliography

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

• Alexander, Meena. "Encountering Emily Dickinson." *TriQuarterly* 122 (2005): 53-57. [Alexander discovers

Dickinson's poetry (Fr269, 453, 647, 710) in an old anthology in Khartoum, Sudan, where Dickinson became her secret companion. She says, "Our journey had advanced—" (Fr453) renders "an art of extremity as sharp and clear as anything the mortal mind is capable of conceiving."

- Dahlgren, Marta. "'Preciser what we are': Emily Dickinson's Poems in Translation: A Study in Literary Pragmatics." *Journal of Pragmatics* 37.7 (2005): 1081-1107. [Dahlgren discusses the strategies and problems of translating poems. Considering lexical equivalences, semantics, phonetics, syntax, metaphor, rhythm, meter, and rhyme, she focuses on "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" and critiques three Spanish translations of "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." Literary pragmatics shows how a poem's elements interact, how neglecting an element can affect the understanding of a poem.]

- Dickinson, Emily. "Emily Dickinson: Eighteen Poems." *American Poetry Review* 34.6 (Nov./Dec. 2005): 74-76. [The 33rd anniversary issue of *APR* features Dickinson and Whitman on its cover and includes a selection of 18 Dickinson poems: Fr340, 398, 477, 515, 531, 534, 571, 636, 665, 817, 889, 960, 1056, 1311, 1325, 1364, 1493, and 1756. Meryl Streep read Dickinson's poetry at an *APR* anniversary gala in Philadelphia, November 16, 2005.]

- Friedlander, Benjamin. "Intention in Extremity: Reading Dickinson after the Holocaust." *Poetics Today* 26.2 (2005): 175-207. [The Holocaust is the springboard for Friedlander's readings of "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" and "Four Trees—upon a solitary Acre—." He discusses trauma theory and the limits of representation, focusing on "Dickinson's analysis of trauma—of experience too extreme to be accommodated safely or adequately in consciousness or language."]

- Hamilton, Craig. "A Cognitive Rhetoric of Poetry and Emily Dickinson." *Language and Literature* 14.3 (2005): 279-

94. [Hamilton examines the rhetorical function of the metaphors, similes, and analogies in Fr372, 598, and 1381. He concludes, "the cognitive rhetoric of Dickinson's poetry in particular, and most poetry in general, is figurative language" because it "offers the most productive means for conveying memorable and persuasive arguments."]

- Hustedde, Hedy. "Emily Dickinson Lives! @ the Bettendorf Public Library." *Public Libraries* 44.5 (Sept./Oct. 2005): 287-91. [The Bettendorf (Iowa) Public Library celebrated Emily Dickinson with a project culminating on May 15, 2004. Activities included an Emily Dickinson Garden; a poetry contest; a commissioned life-sized bust of Dickinson; a poetry discussion group; a showing of the video, *Loaded Gun*; an art exhibit; music and drama performances; and a lecture by Sheila Coghill on flower imagery in Dickinson's poetry.]

- Jackson, Virginia. "Dickinson Undone." *Raritan* 24.4 (2005): 128-48. [Jackson ponders the nature of a lyric poem and wonders: if we could redo history and rediscover Dickinson's manuscripts, "would we recognize a Dickinson poem if we saw one?" A close reading of Fr 1545A and B leads her to conclude: "Neither Franklin's near-perfect printed edition nor the new, beautifully illustrated electronic undoing of such editions will make a dent in our continuing desire to make Emily Dickinson into a lyric poet."]

- Keillor, Garrison. "The Anthem: If Famous Poets Had Written the Star-Spangled Banner." *Atlantic* (Jan./Feb. 2006): 94-95. [Emily Dickinson is one of seven poets who capture Keillor's imagination as, tongue-in-cheek, he rewrites the National Anthem in the style of Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Gary Snyder, and Billy Collins.]

- Kirby, David. "The Biggest Little Poems: Kay Ryan is a poet Emily Dick-

inson would recognize." *New York Times Book Review* (18 Dec. 2005): 7. [Reviewing Kay Ryan's poems in *The Niagra River*, Kirby says that Dickinson, "modern American poetry's mom," would arch "a single eyebrow in approval" of Ryan's compressed poems; that "like Dickinson's, many of Ryan's poems read as if there were a kid in the middle, legs coiled, beside itself with glee and terror."]

- Loeffelholz, Mary. "Dickinson's 'Decoration.'" *ELH* 72.3 (2005): 663-89. [Loeffelholz's well researched essay examines Dickinson's "Lay this Laurel on the one" and Higginson's 1873 poem, "Decoration," clarifying their historical and literary relationship to each other and suggesting additional nuanced interpretations; pertinent to her study are readings of Fr1314B, Fr1427, Dickinson's letter to Higginson (L2:525), and Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle."]

- Mayer, Nancy. "Reloading That Gun: Reading an Old Poem As if It Matters." *Hudson Review* 57.4 (2005): 537-49. [Mayer reads J754 as "deeply skeptical," because "it does not just refute the idea of a beneficent God who kills with one hand and saves a select few from his own devastation with the other; it also tempts the reader to either despair or amorality." *Hudson Review* 58.2 contains a letter challenging Mayer's secular explication of the poem, as well as Mayer's response.]

- Resetarits, C. R. "The Genomic Tropes of Dickinson's 'The Veins of Other Flowers.'" *Kenyon Review* 28.1 (2006): 79-85. [Resetarits explicates J811, showing a linkage between human genetics and language. Observing a lack of rigor in scientists' use of metaphorical language that would not be tolerated in scientific language, Resetarits says that scientists could learn how to use metaphors to explain science from Dickinson who "so often used Science as a metaphor for explaining all else."]



## 2005 SCHOLAR IN AMHERST AWARD

### SOCARIDES SELECTED AS THE EVERETT EMERSON SCHOLAR

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The Scholar in Amherst Award committee unanimously voted to award this year's scholarship to Alexandra Socarides. Her project, "Lyric Contexts: Emily Dickinson and the Problem of Genre," promises to be a major contribution to Dickinson scholarship. As a materially-focused study, hers will benefit considerably from on-site investigation in Amherst. Alexandra is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Rutgers, writing under the direction Meredith McGill, Myra Jehlen, Carolyn Williams, and Virginia Jackson.

Alexandra studies the construction and circulation of Emily Dickinson's fascicles. She argues that the fascicles need to be read as material objects rather than studied for the themes they express. She believes that Dickinson

conceived of the folded sheet—not the little booklet—as her primary unit of construction, and she interprets the poems in light of that claim. The chapters explore various aspects of a material approach to the study of the fascicles. One chapter considers the intersection of the letters with the fascicles, reading them as dual modes of circulation. Another chapter explores the gendered context in which the fascicles were written, arguing that the poems beginning each of the fascicles reveal that Dickinson was writing in dialogue with her female contemporaries. In this female form, Dickinson presented a fractured subjectivity that challenges conventional expectations upon female identity. The final chapter suggests that fascicles undo the

expectation of closure associated with the elegy.

This project is remarkably complex and provocative. Alexandra cites many major works of scholarship on Dickinson, particularly those focusing upon material interpretations, such as Jerome McGann's and Sharon Cameron's. Thoughtful, well-conceived, and well-informed, her proposal shows promise of resulting in a work of considerable value. All of the readers of her application found it an excellent and exciting project.

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## 2006 SCHOLAR IN AMHERST COMPETITION

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The Emily Dickinson International Society 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 who have completed their Ph.D. or who are in the early stages of their careers.

For 2006, the Scholar in Amherst Award will be named, for the second time, 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 gen-

eration of Dickinson scholars.

To apply for the 2006 Everett Emerson Scholar in Amherst Award, please submit electronically a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction (written by the applicant), a two-page project proposal, and a brief bibliography by October 15, 2006, to Marianne Noble, Chair, Scholar in Amherst Selection Committee, [mnoble@american.edu](mailto:mnoble@american.edu). Inquiries also may be addressed to Jane Eberwein at [jeberwei@oakland.edu](mailto:jeberwei@oakland.edu), or Department of English, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401, USA. Recommendation letters are not accepted as part of the application packet.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

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### CALL FOR PAPERS

The Emily Dickinson International Society invites proposals for its upcoming international conference, "Emily Dickinson in Japan: Like Fabrics of the East," to be held at the Kyoto International Conference Hall in Kyoto, Japan, August 3-5, 2007.

Papers are welcome on any topic suggested by the conference theme and location, including fabrics of language, fabrics of cultural exchange, fabrics of landscape and perspective; Dickinson's reception in Japan, including in translation; Dickinson and material culture; Dickinson and cross-cultural poetics.

Proposals may be for individual papers or for entire panels or symposia.

Please send abstracts of individual papers (200 words) or, for panels, a brief description of the panel's topic with abstracts of the papers.

Proposals are due by September 15, 2006 and should be addressed to Mary Loeffelholz, Department of English, 406 Holmes Hall, Northeastern University, Boston MA 02115, or by email to [m.loeffelholz@neu.edu](mailto:m.loeffelholz@neu.edu). Please include your email address with your submission.

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### CHAPTER NEWS

The Saskatchewan chapter of EDIS, along with the Department of English at the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, invited

Thom Tamarro to present a talk entitled "Poets Talking to Poets: Contemporary Poets Visit Whitman, Dickinson and Frost" based on his three recently published anthologies. In his books, Tamarro and co-editor Sheila Coghill attempt to capture the poetic conversations between contemporary poets and these three legendary American poets. Along with readings of poems by contemporary poets "talking back" to their forefathers, Tamarro invited students to assist him by reading some of the poems throughout the presentation. The event was well-received by all who attended. The following evening, Tamarro read from his new collection of his own poetry,  *Holding on for Dear Life*  (Spoon River Poetry Press, 2004).

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## EMILY DICKINSON'S WORLD A BED & BREAKFAST EVENT

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An October bed & breakfast event devoted to "Emily Dickinson's World" is to be offered once again by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, Massachusetts. Running October 13-15, it will be the Unitarian Universalist Society's tenth weekend of private tours, lectures, poetry readings, and music. New for 2006 are a dinner Friday evening in the historic home of the Dickinson family's next-door neighbor, a time set aside for discussion of Dickinson's poetry, and a performance of William Luce's *The Belle of Amherst*.

Jane Donahue Eberwein, editor of *An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia*

(Westport, CT, 1998) and author of *Dickinson: Strategies of Limitation* (Amherst, 1985), will present the keynote address, entitled "Emily Dickinson as Reader's Friend." Her insights will follow the opening dinner at the Leonard M. Hills House (1862), an Italianate villa built for one of Amherst's leading citizens and furnished with period antiques.

On Saturday, guests will visit the Homestead and The Evergreens, tour other historic sites by motor coach, and visit the poet's grave. Afterward, they will be treated to a Victorian tea at the Amherst History Museum and have the opportunity to discuss Dickinson's

poetry with fellow conferees. The day concludes with a performance by stage actress D'Arcy Dersham as "The Belle of Amherst," and a concert of Dickinson's poetry set to music. And on Sunday, Harrison Gregg will speak on "The Show is not the Show—Emily Dickinson as Satirist."

The cost of the 2006 Emily Dickinson's World Bed & Breakfast Weekend, \$360, includes two nights' lodging, four meals, and all admissions. To request a brochure, contact [Unitar@crocker.com](mailto:Unitar@crocker.com) or call 413-253-2848, ext. 1. The complete itinerary is also available at <http://users.crocker.com/~unitar>.

## 2006 EDIS ANNUAL MEETING

You are cordially invited to join the Board of Directors of the Emily Dickinson International Society at the University of Maryland, College Park, from August 4 to 6, 2006, for the 2006 Annual Meeting and Weekend Program. This year's program is titled "The Economy of Pain," after the provocative phrase used by Linda Pastan in her poem "Emily Dickinson."

The events of the weekend will include talks by EDIS President Gudrun Grabher and by Fred Foote, a career navy physician and poet whose recent work concerns the Iraq war; workshop discussions of four Dickinson poems; a panel of poets (including Sandra Gilbert, Alicia Ostriker, and Thom Tammaro) addressing the topic of pain in their own and Dickinson's work; and a public interview of Dickinson scholar Jane Eberwein by Martha Ackmann that will cover scholarly topics and teaching challenges followed by "Oprah-style" interaction with the audience. A special feature of this year's program will be a performance by BosmaDance of *Violet in my Winter* on Saturday evening. The work, choreographed by Meisha Bosma, was

jointly commissioned by the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Poetry Society of America, the Alexandria Performing Arts Association, and the Emily Dickinson International Society. On Sunday morning, annual meeting participants will be able to join BosmaDance company members for an hour-long movement/poetry workshop for non-dancers. This workshop will explore the movement possibilities connected to one selected Dickinson poem. Both the Research Circle and annual Business Meeting also will take place on Sunday.

On the social side, participants will have the opportunity to participate in a concerted reading of Dickinson's poems about pain, to dine-around in Washington D.C. on Friday evening, and to join in a festive banquet on Saturday evening before the dance performance.

After the EDIS meeting adjourns, there will (hopefully) be an optional bus tour of literary sights, including Frederick Douglass's home, F. Scott Fitzgerald's grave, sites relevant to Louisa May Alcott and Walt Whitman, and, of course, the Willard Hotel. This

tour will take place on Sunday, August 6, from 2-6 p.m., and will cost \$50. But the tour hinges on this tricky proviso: at least 20 persons must participate. Please confirm your interest by sending a check to Eleanor Heginbotham, 10500 Rockville Pike #1624, N. Bethesda, MD, 20852, by June 30. Checks will not be deposited until we know there is sufficient interest. Address questions—but not reservations—to [heginbotham@csp.edu](mailto:heginbotham@csp.edu).

For more details—complete weekend schedule, housing options, menu choices, and registration information—please consult the Society's website, <http://www.cwru.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html>. Please note that a registration form can be downloaded from the annual meeting website. Want to get a head start on the poetry workshops? The four poems to be discussed are the following: "Through the strait pass of suffering" (Fr187), "A single Screw of Flesh" (Fr293), "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" (Fr340), and "It ceased to hurt me, though so slow" (Fr421). Contact Jonnie Guerra with other questions at [jguerra@cabrini.edu](mailto:jguerra@cabrini.edu) or 610-902-8462.

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