

Bulletin

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

"RUTS WHERE SHE WENT OUT AND BACK"  
ON THE CURRENT POET LAUREATE, KAY RYAN

By Julie R. Enszer

It has become a tradition of the Poet to Poet series to feature United States Poet Laureates with a Dickinson connection. Thus, it is my pleasure to present Kay Ryan in this issue.

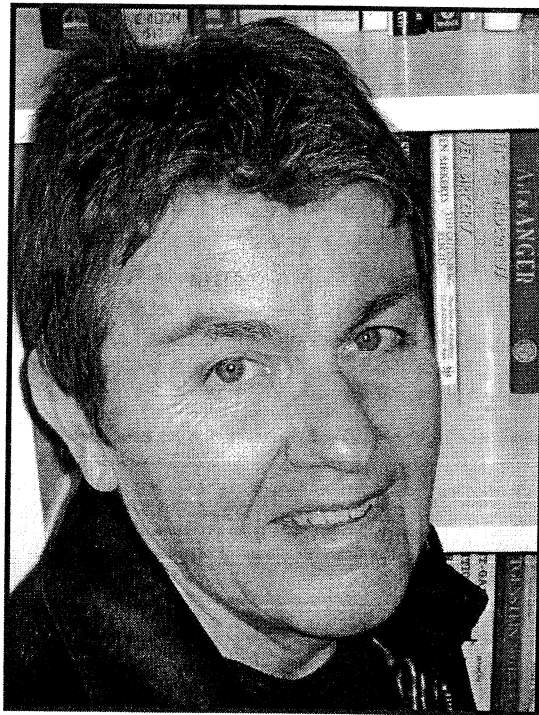
Ryan's poems and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *The Yale Review*, *Paris Review*, *The American Scholar*, *The Threepenny Review*, and *Parnassus*, among other journals and anthologies. She was named to the "It List" by *Entertainment Weekly*, and one of her poems has been permanently installed at New York's Central Park Zoo. Ryan was elected a Chancellor of *The Academy of American Poets* in 2006 prior to her 2008 appointment as the Library of Congress's sixteenth Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry.

A special thanks to Martha Nell Smith who introduced me to Julie Enszer, this essay's author.

Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor

In July 2008, Kay Ryan was named the sixteenth poet laureate of the United States by Librarian of Congress James Billington. Ryan is the first open lesbian to occupy the position; Elizabeth Bishop, of course, filled the predecessor role of Poetry Consultant in 1949-1950, but she was not open about her sexual orientation. The role of the poet laureate is as idiosyncratic as the poets who occupy it. Some poets popularize the art, using the laureate position to generate new audiences for

poetry. Billy Collins, for instance, instituted the *Poetry 180* project for high school students, and Ted Kooser initiated the newspaper column *American Life In Poetry*. Other laure-



Kay Ryan  
Photo by Jane Hirschfield

ates use the position in less public ways, but all advocate for poetry as a vital part of the American arts.

Regardless how Ryan uses the position of poet laureate, her poetry is already rooted in populism and the American tradition. Ryan has published six books of poetry, most recently *The Niagara River*; her forthcoming selected poems, *The Best of*

*It: New and Selected Poems*, is scheduled for publication in March 2010. Ryan writes poems that are both whimsical and philosophical as well as accessible and profound. Not incidentally, her work is influenced in large and small ways by Emily Dickinson.

Ryan's whimsy often is what first draws readers into her poems. At a January 2008 reading hosted by the Folger Shakespeare Library, Ryan reread many of her short poems a second or third time for the audience, asserting her privilege as a poet to dwell in the possibilities of the poem. Ryan's repeated renditions of her short poems ensured adequate time for aural absorption and allowed the audience to savor both Ryan's humor and her carefully crafted language.

Like Dickinson, Ryan makes meaning and finds humor in small observations from daily life. In "Swept Up Whole" from the collection *Elephant Rocks*, Ryan writes,

You aren't swept up whole,  
however it feels. You're  
atomized. The wind passes.  
You recongeal. It's  
a surprise.

This short lyric demonstrates some hallmarks of Ryan's poetics. First, compression and brevity are important in Ryan's poems. Here, she contrasts the opening premise of an experience, being "swept up whole," with an antonymic description of

being “atomized.” Then, she skillfully maneuvers the passage of time, using the image of wind, and returns to wholeness with the verb “recongeal.” In the final sentence, with its curious lineation, Ryan observes what is amusing about the experience: “surprise.” Ryan achieves completion in this poem through whimsy; other emblems of her writing—compression, contrast, and choppy lineation—are also central to the playful meaning-making in this poem and are evocative of Dickinson.

Rhyme is central to Ryan’s work, though not conventional end rhyme. Ryan embeds rhyme in her poems in unanticipated places—the beginning of lines, the middle of lines, and in many instances without immediately discernible patterns. “Swept Up Whole” provides an example of Ryan’s use of rhyme. The poem is almost a quatrain to the ear with the rhymes of “feel” and “recongeal” in the second and fourth lines and the third and fifth line rhyming “atomized” and “surprised.” These rhymes bind the poem tightly together, particularly when the poem is spoken or heard. By resisting the quatrain, however, and lineating the poem as five lines with rhyme embedded in the middle or beginning of the lines, Ryan provides the poem a visual element that both supports and resists the aural experience of the poem.

The gestures Ryan makes to quatrains and other traditional forms also are evident in the opening lines of “To Explain the Solitary” and

“Things Shouldn’t Be So Hard.” Both of these poems have quatrain specifiers embedded in their openings and in their conclusions. In “To Explain the Solitary,” the second and third lines provide end rhyme in these opening lines, while the concatenation of “family,” “solitary,” and “daily” hints at the quatrain without being expected end rhyme. Similarly, in “Things Shouldn’t Be So Hard,” Ryan opens with the regularized rhyme of “tracks” and “back” in an orderly quatrain arrangement. The orderliness of the quatrain is lost as the poem proceeds, perhaps as a mark of hardship; though never restored, order echoes again near the conclusion with “abrade,” “parade,” “scarred,” and “hard.”

Just as Ryan doesn’t use rhyme in traditional ways, she does not adhere to strict metrical patterns, but her poems are inflected throughout by the awareness of meter. In “Swept Up Whole,” the metrical gestures are dactylic, as in the title and the word “atomized.” Throughout this poem, she resists the iambic inclination of English and builds her metrical feet with three beats, but even these beats are irregular, like her rhyme and lineation. Using irregularity and subversions of the expected metrical forms, Ryan builds excitement and tension.

If whimsy is what draws readers into her poems, whimsy is not all that Ryan’s poems offer. Like Dickinson, she also takes intangibles and makes them concrete. In “To Explain the Solitary,” Ryan reaches for explanations of both “solitary” and

“ordinary” through physical locations—the Galápagos, Amherst, and Ireland. Conditions of people become the manifestations of geography. In a similar move, in “Things Shouldn’t Be So Hard,” household items become metonymic for loss. Or consider “Tenderness and Rot” from *The Niagara River*. Ryan pairs the abstractions of tenderness and rot and asserts that they “share a border. / And rot is an / aggressive neighbor / whose iridescences / keeps creeping over.” She prefigures the images that she uses later in the poem with the shared border, suggesting that each is a bounded nation but they creep over their boundaries like rotting food. In the next stanza of the poem, however, Ryan admonishes, “No lessons / can be drawn / from this however,” thwarting the reader’s search for meaning. She ends this poem with an aphorism, “It is important / to stay sweet / and loving.” This commentary brings the poem to rest with a seemingly small and domestic suggestion, but, given the earlier imagery of nationalism, war, consumption, and deterioration, Ryan invites, in spite of her disclaimer, the opportunity for the reader to think more broadly—and politically.

Ryan’s poems, with their quirks of rhyme and meter, conjure many Dickinson poems. To encounter Ryan’s work on the page, even with modern printing and typography, is to understand further Ryan’s intertextual dialogue with Dickinson. Ryan’s poems appear compact with short lines, reminiscent of how

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Dickinson's poems appeared in her fascicles. Ryan's lineation propels the eye down the page filling her poems with energy and speed that works with a contrapuntal force to her meter and rhyme. While Ryan's use of dashes and slashes and her insertion of capitalization are restrained, these features appear often enough to be a nearly spectral Dickinsonian mark. Ultimately, Ryan's study of and apprenticeship to Dickinson is evident in all of her collections of poetry.

Although Ryan has won numerous awards for her poetry, most recently the prestigious Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize administered by the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, many reports of her appointment as poet laureate characterized her as a "poetry outsider." Such a description is, of course, highly suspect as it is uncertain where such lines are drawn between inside and outside and who is responsible for drawing them. Ryan's decision to teach composition part-time at the College of Marin, a community college, seems part of what earned her this dubious label of "poetry outsider." (See, for example, Patricia Cohen, "Kay Ryan, Outsider with Sly Style, Named Poet Laureate," in *The New York Times*, July 17, 2008.) It was this decision, however, which allowed her to organize her life with maximal free time to pursue poetry writing. The poems and collections of poetry Ryan has published over the past twenty-five years demonstrate the prudence of that decision. Even though the world of poetry is better served by description than prescription, there continues to be a desire to seek and find "reclusive" poets and, particularly when they are women, to ascribe mysteries of their vision and poetry to public reticence. In most cases, and certainly in the case of Kay Ryan, this ascription serves sexism more than poetry. In particular, in regard to Ryan, reclusiveness and reticence are inaccurate as she now, quite happily, occupies one of the

most public roles for a poet in the United States. Then, again, as Ryan writes, "There is no place / where people don't adjust." Hopefully, in her adjustment to poet laureate, she will "leave / deep tracks" on the public world of poetry in the United States as well as deep tracks in her own poems for readers to enjoy.

#### To Explain the Solitary

It is easy to think a moor or heath or penury or a limp or a strain of madness in the family could explain the solitary, but there are daily reports of people overriding the most exotic restraints to become ordinary. The armless woman uses her toes to woodburn kittens. The blind man demonstrates vacuums and sells lots of them, as convinced of lint as the next person. Shall I go on? At the extremities, the furthest Galápagos or worst prison teases all the ordinary occupations from a few birds blown wrong. There is no place where people don't adjust. Amherst didn't curse Miss Dickinson or Ireland hurt Yeats into song.

From *Elephant Rocks*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

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#### Things Shouldn't Be So Hard

A life should leave deep tracks ruts where she went out and back to get the mail or move the hose around the yard: where she used to stand before the sink, a worn-out place; beneath her hand the china knobs rubbed down to white pastilles; the switch she used to feel for in the dark almost erased. Her things should keep her marks. The passage of a life should show; it should abrade and when life stops, a certain space—however small—should be left scarred by the grand and damaging parade. Things shouldn't be so hard.

From *The Niagara River*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

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## DEFIANCE IN A TIME OF BACKLASH REBECCA PATTERSON'S LESBIAN DICKINSON

By Jordan Landry

This *Dickinson Scholars* piece features the career of Rebecca Patterson, whose groundbreaking reading of Dickinson certainly prepared the way for later scholars such as Martha Nell Smith, Ellen Louise Hart, and Vivian Pollak, as well as the present author, Jordan Landry. Perhaps not coincidentally, Patterson is referenced by two other writers in this issue of the Bulletin.

Cindy MacKenzie and Jed  
Deppman, Series Editors

In the late 1940s, American women experienced a severe societal backlash as the end of World War II reversed their new-found freedoms and forced them back into the domestic sphere.<sup>1</sup> In the preface of her second book, *Emily Dickinson's Imagery*, Dickinson scholar Rebecca Patterson hinted that she too became a statistic in this national trend. In 1947, while her husband attended college through the support of the G. I. Bill, she found herself reduced to the position of a "bored and lonely housewife (with an unused Ph. D.)" (*Imagery* xv). Her drive to fight the heavy tide of history burgeoned through reading one woman, Millicent Todd Bingham, representing another, Emily Dickinson (*Riddle* vii-viii).

Bingham's veiled reference to Emily Dickinson's "too-much-loved woman friend" inspired Patterson to engage in a quest to uncover this woman's identity and her meaning to Dickinson (*Riddle* vii). For Patterson, this journey led to the production of two widely-read books, *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* (1951) and *Emily Dickinson's Imagery* (1979), which unveiled Dickinson's lesbian desire as the

force behind her artistry and the untold secret of her biography. For Emily Dickinson studies, this journey served to map a hitherto unseen route to understanding Dickinson and, in the process, revised the most

biography and a propensity toward speculation in naming it, they were divided by one crucial difference: where critics before her found an unnamed male, Patterson discovered Kate Anthon Scott.

By her own account, Patterson was only able to uncover this alternative story about Dickinson's lesbianism by "transform[ing] a personality ([her] own) as conventional, priggish, and puritanical as that of any of [Dickinson's] biographers" (*Imagery* xv). Thus Patterson retrospectively differentiated herself from earlier critics by insisting on her ability to reflect on and cast off the most restrictive ideologies of her own time about women and their sexuality.

Through re-making herself and resisting the undertow of history, Patterson succeeded in publishing a book that Dickinson's prior biographers had never imagined: one that put women at the forefront of Dickinson's life and defined her desire as unequivocally lesbian. With this audacious claim, every known story and treasured image of Dickinson, predicated as they all were on the supposed immutability of her heterosexuality, came under challenge. A wholly different vision of Dickinson's experience became possible.

Remarkably, Patterson made her original claims about Dickinson in the 1950s. At a time when Senator Joseph McCarthy urged the purging of communists and homosexuals alike from the ranks of government, Patterson dared name the woman genius of the nineteenth century a lover of women. At a moment when McCarthy accused of treason all those who associated with these so-called detractors, Patterson hooked her academic career to the topic of



Rebecca Patterson

fundamental narratives surrounding Dickinson's life and poetry.

Just as Dickinson's "terror since September" and three unidentified tutors—the first who "taught [her] Immortality," the second who "died," and the third who "left the land"—moved critics before Patterson to making heroic attempts to name the unnamed, so too this nameless woman motivated Patterson (L261). Yet, even as Patterson and critics before her were bound together by a shared fascination with the elusive in Dickinson's

lesbianism.

Perhaps even more startling, eighteen years before the Stonewall Rebellion, the three-day riot that ushered in the dawn of gay rights, she insisted on discussing Dickinson's lesbian desire compassionately, and, a half-century before the debates over gay marriage hit the national stage, she asserted that Dickinson and Kate "were 'wed one summer' and [Kate] was the poet's 'bride'" (*Riddle* 225). Patterson's work broke ground not simply by pushing the boundaries of traditional scholarship but also by telling the story of lesbian desire at the most unlikely and fraught of times.

According to Patterson, lesbian desire transported Dickinson, bringing her a joy and fulfillment inaccessible to her in relationships with men. The villain of Patterson's work is not the lesbian who desires but the society that judges that desire. In *Riddle*, the silence about and denial of lesbian desire demanded by society debilitated Dickinson, impeding her pursuit of fulfillment and robbing her of a permanent attachment (225).

Whereas, conventionally, in the 1940s, lesbians were associated with death, extreme fear of men, sadism, and alien realms such as far-off planets, Patterson's focus on Dickinson's humor and play in the letters sent to Kate Anthon stressed the positive and even commonplace aspects of lesbian desire (*Riddle* 119-121, 166-169, 186-187). In fact, Patterson suggested that it was not Dickinson's lesbianism that led her to indulge in images of death but rather society's thwarting of her ability to pursue this desire. Thus, society's fear of lesbians, sadism toward them, and exile of them come under attack in Patterson's work, inverting the usual stereotypes.

Yet, by providing this unique lens through which to view Dickinson, Patterson's own life and work became the target of society's rampant homophobia. According to Patterson, conservatism inhibited

other critics' ability to see the truth of her claims about Dickinson's sexuality (*Imagery* xv- xvi). Once published, Patterson's *Riddle* was indeed the target of vitriolic attack. For example, the closeted lesbian and famed poet Elizabeth Bishop criticized Patterson's findings as "[u]nseemly [d]eductions."

Moreover, Patterson's outing of both Dickinson and Kate led to a loss of relationships for her. For example, her cherished connection to Kate's two grandnieces did not survive the publishing of *Riddle* (*Imagery* xvi). These consequences of publication highlight a double standard alive at the time. As Bishop's language and Kate's grandnieces' rejection of Patterson suggest, the prevailing judgment on Patterson was that a lesbian reading of Dickinson was an invasion of privacy and an expression of poor taste in a way heterosexual readings of Dickinson were not.

Patterson's *Riddle* fueled a vigorous debate among critics over Dickinson's sexuality and the significance of women to her poetry. This debate still informs and structures much of Dickinson criticism. As just one example, Martha Nell Smith significantly expanded Patterson's argument by claiming that Sue Gilbert Dickinson is the Master, the spur of Dickinson's poetic maturation, and the editor of the poetry that Dickinson published through private circulation (*Rowing* 113-116, 195-197). In reply, Alfred Habegger's 2001 biography of Dickinson, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson*, unveils Charles Wadsworth as the Master and positions him as the harbinger of Dickinson's maturity, both sexual and poetic (418-421). To promote this argument, Habegger discredits Martha Nell Smith's earlier claims (368, 389).

Thus, Patterson's *Riddle* sets the terms for a debate that lingers to the present moment: to re-heterosexualize Dickinson and her writing, a

literary critic must attack persistent ideas about Dickinson's lesbianism and try to undercut theories of women's influence in shaping the bulk of Dickinson's poetry. Such a requirement preserves Patterson's original narrative: to reinstate her heterosexuality, now critics must overtly negotiate with the story of Dickinson's lesbianism. The two sexualities have become inextricably entwined in Dickinson studies in a way unnecessary before Patterson.

Beyond laying the groundwork for a debate over Dickinson's sexuality, Patterson's thesis about Dickinson's lesbianism introduced a series of related themes that would propel feminist critics for a half-century and more. Gender-bending, the masking of a female beloved as male, and the creating of a symbolic system through which to express lesbian desire are topics originally explored by Patterson and still being pursued today by feminist critics. Martha Nell Smith mapped a fresh approach to Dickinson when she took in a new direction Patterson's idea that editors of Dickinson had removed references to lesbian desire or refused to publish poems with lesbian subtexts. Smith and Ellen Louise Hart established a significant body of work that takes issue with Patterson's idea that Sue Gilbert's relationship with Dickinson ended early and affirms Sue's on-going importance to Dickinson. Paula Bennett enlarged Patterson's work on the sexual imagery underlying Dickinson's poetry by exploring the centrality of female genitalia to Dickinson's oeuvre. Both Bennett and Vivian Pollak developed further Patterson's ideas about Dickinson's jealousy of her brother Austin and her play with masculinity in order to compete with him.

Thus, Patterson's two books provided material by which feminist critics could forge, whether through

*Defiance, continued on page 17*

## PELLETS OF SHAPE

### EMILY DICKINSON'S LABORATORY OF WORDS IN Fr963

By Mary Hurst

As so often happens, I am at first baffled by what Harold Bloom calls Emily Dickinson's "startling intellectual complexity" (291). Bloom says that she begins by unnamings, and then unpacks the trope; she systematically reorganizes language and thought. As a painter and art-maker, my job is to see familiar things anew. Maybe "Banish air from air" appeals to me because I sense that the poet is working to the same ends.

In the first line, she proposes to "banish air from air," a physical impossibility in a Newtonian universe. My mind's eye sees this as a scientific experiment of meticulous complexity, a kind of splitting apart of matter at its most fundamental level. In Rebecca Patterson's *Emily Dickinson's Imagery* I find affirmation for the scientific metaphor, then Patterson loses me with a leap from science to passion:

Of this 1864 poem, Rebecca Patterson writes that it "affirm[s] an allusion to molecular attraction or crystalline structure, the whole of this confused figure being doubtless intended to describe the properties of a love indivisible and indestructible. And when this love is forced, as by a flame, it only changes into a more active and powerful form with a 'Blonde push / Over your impotence,' it flashes into 'Steam'" (103).

I differ from Patterson's conclusion that the poem is "doubtless" an allusion to the properties of love; instead, I find Dickinson's supposedly "confused" figure to be a dead-on accurate description of actions possible only in the laboratory of a modern nuclear physicist. Here, Emily's project is science, not a meditation on secret love or sublimated sexuality. She frequently used science as metaphor: as Fred White puts it, "to perform, in effect, experiments

in language." Following this thread, I propose that the entire poem refers to a separation of words from conventional meaning. The feeling here is one of profound excitement: to "divide light" is "daring"; to isolate a word from its matrix of meaning is revolutionary in the context of Emily's time and place. Saussure pointed out that although a word might sound the same to any listener, the meaning of that word is different for each one of us who hears it. Emily's intuition told her that, as a poet, her job was to dissolve, peel, and burn each word away from its meaning in order to reassign it for her own use. She will do this by applying her own version of the scientific method.

In the first two lines, she lays plans to separate air from air, and to divide light. She applies Einstein's vision, for what is dividing light but splitting the atom? As a schoolgirl, Emily studied science; we see the influence of science throughout her poetry, as she puts her knowledge of the physical world through the filter of her imagination. The poet sets out to conduct a bold, secret, and possibly dangerous experiment to see if she can transcend, "flit over," her own creative impotence and the monolith of tradition. What takes place here has nothing to do with the possibilities of a "normal physics"; this is about finding her own meta-physics.

Emily's matrix, out of which her words will first be defined and then reassigned, was the world of the Puritan tradition, a strict ordering of family, church, manners, codified religion and culture, held together by a structure of language and meaning as dense and pervasive as the bricks with which her father's house was built. Yet she was not alone; subversive forces at work in the New England of her day included Eastern religious thought in the works of

Emerson, Hawthorne's gothic ironies, Melville's nihilistic *White Whale*—and her own deconstruction of language. Far from being a confused allusion to the properties of love, this poem emphasizes that her work involves nothing less than the creation of a completely new language, beginning with "dismantlement" of the old.

With typical Dickinson speed and efficiency, the first part of the experiment is done in two lines. Then she tells us "They'll meet," in some in-between place—the inside of an alchemical vessel? Divided Light meets Banished Air, and the natural properties of matter are altered: "Cubes in a drop / Or Pellets of Shape / Fit."

The word "Fit" stands alone at the very center of the poem. In her laboratory she has created Pellets of Shape that Fit. In Emily's day, pellet was a common term for ammunition (today we would most likely call it buckshot). A pellet would be an image of great and specific power, an object that could be aimed and fired for pinpoint accuracy. In her poems, which are at times compressed almost to the level of Morse code, pellets are tiny, lethal words, words that can cut through walls of tradition, exploding on contact with the reader's understanding. In her laboratory of words, Emily Dickinson has made bullets.

In a new phase of the experiment, I imagine the poet operating the tools of an alchemist's laboratory. A kind of sludge is boiled away, and as the smoke of chemical reaction clears ("Films cannot annul"), we see cube-shaped objects packed within crystal drops. Moving beyond her individual word-pellets, she proposes cubes-in-a-drop as a metaphor for densely packed meaning held together in a compact phrase. In split-

ting the raw material of language by using the tools of imagination she has discovered a strange new world, one where cubes in a drop suddenly "Fit." She has the hang of it: the poet/chemist operates the cooker, adjusts the heat. "Odors return whole"; her mixture is new but stable, its original components intact, however enhanced.

Now she is ready to "Force Flame." She adds a bit of fuel—gives the mixture a Blonde push—and a yellow flame springs from blue at the base. Fire bursts forth, asserts itself; an inner fire, sensual and intimate, lights up the poet's internal laboratory. No longer impotent, she is gravid with words. The blonde push is her own generative power, the interior motive force of the Feminine, operating in secret.<sup>1</sup> Words as raw material might be as flitting steam, but Emily has learned to transmute them into pellets of power.

At the beginning of this poem, the poet is impotent<sup>2</sup> but daring; alone in her laboratory she objectifies language into matter, a substance both dense and volatile. Now, after great struggle, the words are no longer historical abstractions: they are hers, and they Fit—into lines/stanzas/poems as explosive, dense, and as packed with information as an atom.

She has cooked the language, forced the flame, split the common locutions of the surrounding world. She has freed the words of Webster, the King James Bible, and the Protestant Hymnal from matter, substance, and culture. When she raises the heat, she can charge a poem with kinetic energy: ready, aim, fire. Created anew by the poet's alchemy, her words travel through time/space into the future, just as she planned. She has brought her ideas through from the inchoate world into this world, and now each of her great poems is a shape of pure gold.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In French, "blond" is the masculine form for the word for "fair, light-haired"; "blonde" is the feminine form.

<sup>2</sup> Dickinson had no problem bending gender; she would therefore have had no problem imputing the properties of "impotence" or "potency" to a metaphor of Feminine power.

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Writer, poet, and artist, for 20 years **Mary Hurst** has worked as an editor/proofreader for graduate students in clinical and depth psychology, literature, and political science. In the '90s she published *Inanna's Net: An Irregular-Periodical, a newsletter for women concerned with the menopausal process. Emily Dickinson is her "soul poet."*

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## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HONORS DICKINSON

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By *Judith Farr*

On March 19 at the Davis Theatre at Georgetown, students and faculty of the Departments of Drama, Portuguese, Spanish and English came together to present "Voices / Visions of Emily," a two-hour tribute to the poet. Selections from two novels about Dickinson—Judith Farr's *I Never Came to You in White* (1996) and the Portuguese novelist Ana Nobre de Gusmao's *A Prisioneira de Emily Dickinson* [*The Prisoner of Emily Dickinson*](2006) were interspersed by recitations of well-known Dickinson poems, some set to music. Before a reception sponsored by the Instituto Camoes and the Portuguese

Embassy, the authors answered questions from the audience.

The moderator, Dr. Ana Delgado, spoke of Farr's novel as "an epistolary fiction of 66 imagined letters that recreate Dickinson's life from age 17 at Mary Lyon's Seminary until her death at 55 in Amherst. It describes the growth of her inner life under the loving tutelage of a 'Mysterious Person' whom Emily finally identifies as the 'Muse' of poetry. . . . the novel reveals how Dickinson's blazing genius sought its own path despite envious persons—schoolmates, teachers, even friends—who misunderstand or oppose it."

De Gusmao has written seven novels, one of which—*Dead without a Corpse*—won the Maxima Literary Prize. All focus in various ways on the idea of enclosure. *A Prisioneira de Emily Dickinson*, which was read in English, is the tale of a young Portuguese journalist named "Emilia" who takes English lessons with an American tutor and becomes obsessed with the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Ms. de Gusmao's interest in Dickinson followed upon her acquaintance with Jorge de Sena's recent translation of the poems into Portuguese and her reading of Farr's novel, which had been translated into Spanish.

## MY BLUE PENINSULA

By George Gleason

*Some come to Dickinson by slow degrees. For George Gleason, it was falling in love with her poetry at first sight, and the experience put him on a path exploring the ways in which her life had parallels with his own. A retired corporate lawyer who specialized in energy and environmental law, he now engages in legal consulting and pro bono work for organizations dealing with issues of poverty, the homeless, and the mentally ill.*

*If you'd like to tell your own story of a close encounter with Dickinson, please let me hear from you at [georgiestr@aol.com](mailto:georgiestr@aol.com).*

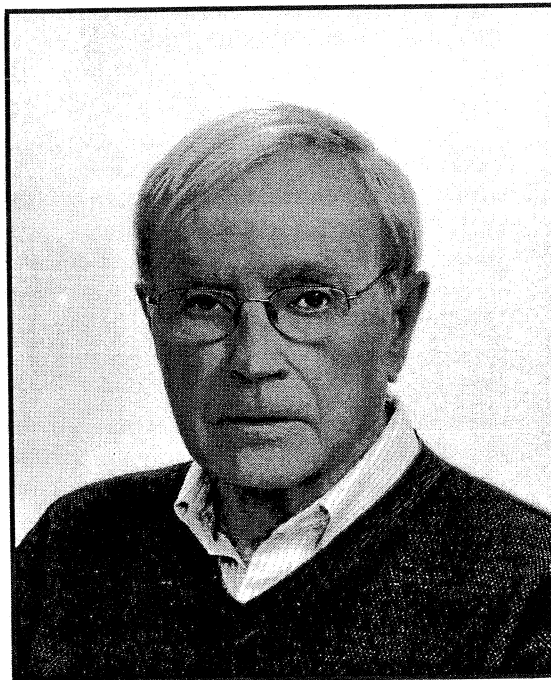
Georgiana Strickland,  
Series Editor

Emily Dickinson came into my life about ten years ago when my wife gave me a poetry anthology because she knew I have long been interested in Walt Whitman, whose work was featured in the collection. The book also included a large selection of Dickinson's poems. While I previously had a limited exposure to her work, this time it was like love at first sight. I was immediately struck by the similarities I could see in the underlying genius of these two American poets.

Of all the Dickinson poems in the book, I became particularly attracted by "It might be lonelier" (Fr535). In this poem Dickinson's speaker tells us that she has become so accustomed to her loneliness that the intrusion of hope or peace would "blaspheme" her little room. In the last stanza, however, there is an abrupt change in tone with the speaker speculating that if she achieved her "Blue Peninsula—" she would "perish—of Delight." This image of a blue peninsula automatically evoked in me, as it must in others, a similar feeling of delight, but the conflicted

context of the poem made me wonder whether there was something more that I was missing.

At the time I first read this poem I was a volunteer docent at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and I was aware that the Library had an "Ask the Expert" program. I e-mailed the poetry expert and asked if he was aware of the meaning of "Blue Peninsula," or if there was any literary



George Gleason

history for the phrase. About two weeks later he answered, in effect, "Don't know." My search was on.

As a lawyer who had spent a career trying to fit seemingly contradictory evidence into a consistent narrative, I found the challenge too great to resist. Moreover, having lost both of my parents at an early age and having suffered the uncertainty of whether I could ever be comfortable in a normal family environment, I could relate to the sense of isolation Dickinson's speaker was suffering.

I purchased Thomas Johnson's edition of Dickinson's complete poems and read all of them, many several

times, and did a lot of research into her life. I identified the other poems in which she used the word "peninsula," and a larger number containing the word "blue." I also discovered that she had never again used the two words together. I was working hard on this problem, but without much focus.

All that changed on December 10, 2007, when I attended a Dickinson birthday celebration at which Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, professor emerita at Concordia University St. Paul and former board member of EDIS, gave a lecture. When I told her of my research interests she handed me an application for EDIS membership and subsequently put me in touch with several Dickinson scholars who are EDIS members. With the help of their recommendations I was able to kick-start my research project. As Dickinson observed, they provided the "Fuse unto a Spark / In dormant nature—lain" (Fr913).

I have now completed my research on "Blue Peninsula," which examines the peninsula imagery in "It might be lonelier" and the other poems in which Dickinson used the imagery. I am also working on a comparison of Dickinson and the painter Georgia O'Keeffe, in whom I have had a long interest. I believe Dickinson and O'Keeffe are the outstanding American artists in their respective fields, and my aim is to show that they are much more alike in their lives and works than most people appreciate.

Dickinson scholars will recall that symbolist poet Rebecca Patterson was the first to suggest that "Blue Peninsula" is a reference to Italy. This claim has been repeated by other writers and apparently is believed by a large number of people throughout the world. However, my research suggests that "Blue Peninsula" is not



a geographical reference at all. Dickinson was not a literalist, and it is likely that she used "Blue Peninsula" as a metaphor or symbol of something meaningful to her. But what? What did she mean to convey by her enigmatic use of "Blue Peninsula"? Is there some pattern in her use of this peninsula imagery? These were my questions.

My research reveals that Dickinson used the word "peninsula" much as she used the word "circumference," that is, in a context quite different from the dictionary meaning. She seems to refer not to a geographical land mass but rather to a mental construct, a state of mind, or a platform, if you will, from which, while staying at home in Amherst, she can explore the existential meaning of such abstract concepts as anger, determination, fear, ecstasy, and rebirth. She does this beautifully in these peninsula poems.

Significantly, a peninsula is attached to a mainland, which represents her home in Amherst, but is open to the sky and the sea, with the rhythmic ebb and flow of the tides and a constantly shifting shoreline, the land and the water dissolving one into the other. The sky is also immense and constantly changing. The openness of the peninsula affords a panoramic view of the interplay of these natural elements, particularly the sea. Although it is not documented that Dickinson ever saw the sea, her fascination with it is evident in many poems. These elements represent the complex and interrelated intellectual and emotional issues Dickinson deals with in the course of her meditations.

The peninsula imagery is consistent throughout the poems in which Dickinson used it. In "They put us far apart" (Fr708), the next poem after "It might be lonelier" in which she used the imagery, she writes, "They put us far apart—As separate as Sea / And Her unsown Peninsula." This poem can be read as a meditation on the harsh treatment the poet endured during her year at

Mt. Holyoke Seminary for her refusal to accept Jesus as her personal Savior. Dickinson's "unsown Peninsula" may be a reference to her determination not to let the school authorities sow in her the tenets of Christian orthodoxy.

In "One Crucifixion is recorded—only" (Fr670), her "Peninsulas" encompass many alternatives to the conventional view of Jesus' crucifixion, a view with which I can personally relate. I know from my own experience the indelible scars that alienation from the faith of one's youth can inflict. In "Bereaved of all, I went abroad" (Fr886), the speaker seems to leave home to escape a pervasive sense that she has died, only to find that the grave has preceded her to the "New Peninsula"—new because she had never before experienced this feeling of dread.

Switching moods, Dickinson's playfulness with her peninsula construct is seen in "Could I but ride indefinite" (Fr1056), where a policeman "should jump Peninsulas / To get away from me." Dickinson, typically hyperbolic, knows that neither a policeman nor anyone else can jump over a peninsula—as a geographical body—but that is no bar to her mental construct. In "By my Window have I for Scenery" (Fr849) the peninsula is "giddy." The intensity of the speaker's meditation makes her dizzy. She feels over-excited, mentally intoxicated by the vision. In "The inundation of the Spring" (Fr1423), the sweetness of spring wipes away the isolation of winter that the poet felt, and she pines no more for "that Peninsula" that symbolizes her loneliness. In the lines beginning "The earth has many keys" (Fr896A)—which Franklin's variorum edition restores to their original position as the last two stanzas of "Further in Summer than the Birds"—when the speaker stops hearing the crickets (the melody of life), she fears she is in a place where melody is not, perhaps death, an "unknown peninsula."

In "It might be lonelier," as in the other peninsula poems, Dickinson

again appears to use this imagery as a mental construct. She here imagines a peninsula as an alternative emotional and intellectual platform from which she can contemplate her loneliness, while at the same time relishing the comfort she has found in it. For me, it is a marvelous existential view of the fears and hopes that I have experienced in my own life. I believe the peninsula is "Blue" here because she often associated that color with the warmth of a beautiful day or a good feeling: for example, in "Nature rarer uses Yellow" (Fr1086), where Nature is "Prodigal of Blue"; in "One Blessing had I than the rest" (Fr767), where the Heaven above is "Obscured with ruddier Blue"; and in "My River runs to Thee—" (Fr219), where she asks, "Blue Sea! Wilt welcome me?"

In the final analysis, "It might be lonelier" is, I think, a happy poem that reflects the poet's contentment in the isolation of her family home in Amherst, a "privileged captivity," as Alfred Habegger says in *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, where she exercised "unprecedented imaginative freedom" (211). My conclusion likely will not be popular with Dickinson's many *buon amicos* in Italy, but I do not intend it in any way to detract from the beauty of that brilliant blue peninsula.

My work on Dickinson's comparison to Georgia O'Keeffe is still in its early stages. Dickinson as a poet expressed herself in words, while O'Keeffe, as a painter, did so in color and form. Yet what are so striking, even on first look, are the similarities in their visions of themselves, their independent personalities, their choices of life style, and, most important, their artistic techniques. While Dickinson's imagery often assumes a quality of abstraction, O'Keeffe's abstractions often convey an impression of image. Both artists employed similar techniques that allowed them to manipulate and transform things and thoughts, and to recreate them as meditative representations of the words, colors,

and forms they once were. This is a rare talent.

Both artists also distanced themselves from the traditional forms of their professions, in Dickinson's case the genteel forms of classical rhyme and rhythm, and, in O'Keefe's, the various European post-Impressionist schools. Each also ignored the "modern" styles of their contemporaries to create their own versions of "modern." Dickinson did this with her blank syntax and O'Keefe with her poetic reformulation of concrete realities, her flowers series being an excellent example.

Biographical factors that on first glance may seem incidental, cumulatively serve to draw a similar profile of Dickinson and O'Keefe. Dickinson's eventual decision to dress in white and O'Keefe's to dress in black are seen by most scholars to have symbolic significance. Both eventually became reclusive. Dickinson's life style is well known

to *Bulletin* readers. In O'Keefe's case, she fought a long battle to free herself from the burdens of marriage and the public life she was forced to lead in New York, to spend the final decades of her life in almost total seclusion in New Mexico. Dickinson largely resisted pressures to let her work be published while she was alive. O'Keefe was compelled to sell her paintings to support herself, but refused to sign them as a symbol of her desire to isolate herself from the public.

Dickinson and O'Keefe epitomize their respective arts at the highest level, one that separates true genius from mere brilliance. As my work on this comparative study progresses, I look forward to interfacing with others in the EDIS community who have a similar interest in O'Keefe. From time to time, my wife and I retreat to a comfortable adobe house on a high mesa that overlooks Abiqui, New Mexico, where O'Keefe spent the

last several decades of her life. The peace and solitude of this view constantly remind me of Dickinson's declaration that "The Soul selects her own Society— / Then—shuts the Door—" (Fr 409). This is one thing on which I know Dickinson and O'Keefe would agree.

Being a member of EDIS has turned out to be a very rewarding experience. I have found many new friends who have been welcoming and helpful to me in pursuing my research interests, and I truly feel that I am part of the worldwide Dickinson community. I am looking forward to the new challenges and opportunities that my involvement in EDIS will make both possible and enjoyable.

#### Work Cited

Habegger, Alfred. *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson* New York: Random House, 2001.

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## VIEWS ON DISCUSSING DICKINSON

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By Beatrice Jacobson

In the Bettendorf (Iowa) Public Library parking lot, I sit in my car and try to focus. It's a lovely spring evening at the end of an exhausting semester. But it's also the anniversary of the death of Emily Dickinson, and so, we'll gather to share her poetry and discuss our ideas, responses, insights. We'll begin by assembling in her garden on the Library grounds—a spot I can see through my car window. Though a young garden, this delightful area centers on a bust of Emily, and contains many of her favorite species. On this May evening, it is rich with a wealth of blossoms and an array of colors and fragrances that would delight our poet.

There, in the garden, we gather and several poems are read. I read "It's all I have to bring today—"—one of my mother's favorites—and we conclude our commemoration of Dickinson's death: "In the name of

the Bee— / And of the Butterfly— / And of the Breeze—Amen!" (Fr23).

A few minutes later, we are gathered at the table in one of the Library's meeting rooms. Looking around, I greet several regulars and newcomers as well—a young poet, a writing teacher, a retired couple new to the area, a tense young man, an older poet, an avid reader who always brings his own copy of Dickinson's poems (*Bolts of Melody?*) so his versions often differ from those we've distributed—leading us into distracting but engaging issues of text analysis and editing.

Strewn down the center of the table like a garden path is a collection of Dickinson-related books from the library—biographies, criticism, children's books about Dickinson's world. Since tonight's topic is flowers in her poems, I've brought along the wonderful facsimile of her Herbarium to pass

around. The presence of marijuana in the collection evokes smiles and leads to observations about the uses of hemp in the nineteenth century.

We typically have each poem read aloud before discussing it. I always ask for volunteers, and though the group is generally willing to speak up and ask questions, reading a Dickinson poem can challenge even the experienced. "Oh," interjects one reader when she realizes, mid-poem, that she had misunderstood the syntax. But we build on her misapprehension, exploring how Dickinson uses word order for effect.

Throughout the conversation, we enjoy the treats prepared by Hedy Hustedde (Information Librarian for the Bettendorf Public Library)—the poet's ginger bread or black cake. (We've already savored "The Emily Dickinson Black Cake Walk" by

*Views, continued on page 18*

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Arsenault, Isabelle, illustrator. *Emily Dickinson: My Letter to the World and Other Poems*. Toronto, Canada: Kids Can Press, 2008. 50 pp. 9.5 x 5.75 x .375 inches. Cloth, ISBN 1-55453-103-5, \$18.95; paper, ISBN 1-55453-339-8, \$9.95.

Arsenault illustrates eight familiar Dickinson poems, using pen, ink, and watercolors in a spare palette of black, white, and blue, punctuated by touches of russet or gold. The somber, sometimes witty drawings suggest the poet's interest in nature, death, and writing, and depict her solitude, self-awareness, instability, and imagination. Each poem spreads over multiple pages, giving images priority of place and encouraging readers to linger over the the words and illustrations: a carriage passes through a forest of ghostly humans taller than the leafless trees; Dickinson sits on an ink pot, her feet resting in spilled black ink while behind her stands a quill pen as tall as a tree; Matisse-like leaves and stems repeat through the pages, as do images of Dickinson dressed in white, her skirt a cracked, down-turned, teacup, the cracks forming tree trunks and branches; and amid stylized nineteenth-century ladies and gentlemen are an equally well dressed dog, bird, and donkey that will pique children's interest. Biographical sketches of the poet and the artist conclude the book, noting: "It's ironic that she who shrank so much from the world, famously declaring, 'I'm Nobody! Who are you?', became a beloved Somebody." A unique gift for Dickinsonians ten years or older, this handsome volume is the seventh title in the Visions in Poetry series featuring classic poems illustrated by contemporary artists.

Beinhorn, Ellen, illustrator. *Emily and Me*. Valle Crucis, North Carolina: Dancingfish Press, 2008. 55 pp. 8.25 x 8.25 x .375 inches. Cloth, ISBN 1-879802-85-8, \$25.00.

Inspired by Dickinson's poems, Beinhorn, an artist, sculptor, and poet, has drawn portraits or "faces" for 53 familiar and less well known Dickinson poems. Each page contains one or two faces illustrating the 1890s text(s) of the accompanying poem(s). Some pages also contain Beinhorn's poems and personal commentary on Dickinson, easily identified by an attractive contrasting format of white print on a black background. The artist, an octogenarian with a strong, independent voice, says, "There are very few pretty pictures in this book." Although some young, smiling faces are present, most are older, expressing a wide range of solemn, sad, and frightful emotions—reminiscent of Charles Dickens's underworld characters, Van Gogh's *Potato Eaters*, or even Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. Beinhorn has achieved a kind of narrative art, the faces suggesting interior lives with tales to tell. She uses pencil, pen, or charcoal for line drawings colored with pastels and watercolor washes, the hues sometimes muted, sometimes appealingly bright, sometimes disturbingly garish. Each face is unique, and Beinhorn's line drawings recall Picasso's fine early work. The drawings alone are enough to make this a book to return to again and again; the drawings and poems together are a catalyst for group discussions and writing projects. Beinhorn says, "I hope I have made a bridge from poem to face and that you will find comfort in the crossing."

Dill, Elizabeth, and Sheri Weinstein, eds. *Death Becomes Her: Cultural Narratives of Femininity and Death in Nineteenth-Century America*. Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008. xix + 190 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-84718-561-7, \$69.00.

To demonstrate the intersection of femininity and death in nineteenth-century America, eight essayists, writing from multidisciplinary perspectives, explore the works of Louisa May Alcott, Rose Terry Cooke, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, among others. The book presents death "as an extraordinary event, at once an upheaval of household serenity through an explosive, supernatural expression of agency and an appalling scene of pain and victimization." It posits "a vexed relationship between, on the one hand, contested definitions of femininity and power, and, on the other hand, cultural understandings of death and the afterlife in American literature and culture." In "Scooping Up the Dust: Emily Dickinson's Theology of the Crypt" (1-17), Roxanne Harde examines more than a dozen Dickinson poems on death, tying them to the poet's "theological questing." Though a corpse may have been horrific for Dickinson, it "also becomes the foundation for faith and a seeking toward eternity." It becomes "an agent for theology: she begins with loss in order to know the sacred." Harde concludes, "Ultimately, she found a comfortable discomfort in her eschatological conclusions about God and his heaven, as made evident by one of her epistolary elegies to her father: 'I am glad there is Immortality—but would have

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

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tested it myself—before entrusting him.”

Frank, Lucy E., ed. *Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2007. Cloth, ISBN 0-7546-5528-2, \$89.95

Examining a range of canonical and less well known writers, fifteen contributors from North America and the United Kingdom explore the ways that nineteenth-century Americans, from the socially privileged to marginalized others, understood death and mourning. Frank says, “Above all this volume is intended to contribute to the developing critical discussion of how death and mourning — and most importantly *whose* death and *whose* mourning — are represented in the United States.” Arranged in three sections, the second section contains two essays featuring Emily Dickinson. In “‘I think I was enchanted’: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Haunting of American Women Poets,” Alison Chapman considers the praise poems of Anne C. Lynch Botta, Emily Dickinson (116-21), and Sarah Helen Whitman. She discusses Dickinson’s “I think I was enchanted,” “I want to thank Her,” and “Her last Poems —,” noting that the elegies are “embedded with allusions” to Browning’s *Aurora Leigh*. In “God’s Will, Not Mine: Child Death as a Theodicean Problem in Poetry by Nineteenth-Century American Women,” Paula Bernat Bennett considers elegies by Emily Dickinson (131-33), Frances Harper, Sarah Piatt, and Lydia Sigourney, among others. Describing Dickinson as “a connoisseur of pain,” Bennett discusses Dickinson’s child-voiced questions in poems and letters, stating that “It’s easy to invent a Life” is “among Dickinson’s most explicit statements” of her concern for the apparently random punishments God inflicted, for which theodicy had no satisfactory explanations.

Keane, Patrick J. *Emily Dickinson’s Approving God: Divine Design and the Problem of Suffering*. Columbia, Missouri: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2008. xiii + 256 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8262-1808-7, \$39.95.

Inspired by Emily Dickinson’s “Apparently with no surprise” (J1624 / Fr1668), “a poem epitomizing her lifelong wrestling with God” and evoking sharply differing responses from readers, Keane embarks upon his “interdisciplinary study . . . primarily a work of literary criticism [but] . . . also a personal reflection on literature and religion, faith and skepticism, theology and science,” intended for the general reader. He examines “the role played by God in a natural and human world marked by violence and pain: the great Problem of Suffering”; and “Dickinson’s varying perspectives on God.” On the nature of God’s relationship to man, the debates between religion and science, and intelligent design versus chance, Keane draws from the philosophical, literary, and scientific thinking of Aristotle, Epicurus, the Bible, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Shakespeare, Milton, Pascal, Spinoza, Newton, Jonathan Edwards, David Hume, Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, William Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shopenhauer, Carlyle, Keats, Shelley, Emerson, Darwin, Melville, Dostoevsky, Matthew Arnold, T. H. Huxley, Nietzsche, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Yeats, Robert Frost, Einstein, Wallace Stevens, Niels Bohr, Mother Theresa, Stephen Jay Gould, Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Schönborn, and neo-atheists Richard Dawkins, Daniel C. Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens, among others. Keane’s careful research and close reading of Dickinson’s poems of doubt and faith within the context of theological, cultural, and scientific thinking provide an accessible, intellectually fascinating journey for readers who share Dickinson’s quest for certainty in an uncertain world.

Lundin, Roger, ed. and introd., and Andrew Delbanco, afterword. *There Before Us: Religion and American Literature, from Emerson to Wendell Berry*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2007. xxii + 250 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-8028-2963-4, \$18.00.

Concerned about the neglect of religion in American literary study and criticism, Lundin and nine fellow essayists, seek to revive that conversation. They explore the role religion plays in American literature and culture from the 1830s to the present, examining the work of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Dickinson, Frances E. Harper, Twain, William and Henry James, Ezra Pound, H. D., T. S. Eliot, and others. Contributor Delbanco says, “In a sense, this is a book about post-religious writing . . . about writers who feel radically alone until and unless they apprehend an intimation of the consoling presence of the divine . . . about the pursuit of religious experience in a culture that makes the pursuit both possible and arduous.” In “Nimble Believing: Dickinson and the Conflict of Interpretations” (80-109), Roger Lundin draws from Dickinson’s letters and poems to discuss her lifelong spiritual quest. His instructive essay is informed by Immanuel Kant, James Turner, and Paul Ricoeur. He says, “Like Herman Melville, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche—contemporaries with whom Dickinson merits comparison—she was among the first to take the full measure of the loss of God.” Situating Dickinson “within the emerging culture of disbelief,” Lundin traces the poet’s journey from belief and unbelief to nimble believing, judging her to be, in spite of her doubts, “one of our most serious poets of belief.”

Yarrington, Earl, ed. and introd., and Mary De Jong, ed. *Popular Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and the Literary Marketplace*. Newcastle upon Tyne, En-

gland: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. xi + 496 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-84718-232-6, \$67.99.

The purpose of this collection is “to offer multiple perspectives . . . [on] different ways women writers across the century negotiated within the literary marketplace.” Drawing from “cultural studies, economic history, feminist theory, and other methodologies,” twenty-seven contributors examine Louisa May Alcott, Lydia Marie Child, Kate Chopin, Emily Dickinson, Mary Mapes Dodge, Fanny Fern, Margaret Fuller, Sarah Josepha Hale, Frances Harper, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, among many lesser known women writers. In “Publication, Science, and Class: Emily Dickinson versus the Popular Woman Writer” (35-58), Robin Peel argues that Dickinson could have published her work had she wanted to do so. He is not persuaded by the reasons set forth for her not publishing. He says that the tradition of private contemplative writing and scientific investigation influenced Dickinson; in the antebellum era, scientific study involved gathering and classifying evidence with no pressure to publish. Like scientific study, Dickinson’s poems were an ongoing provisional process, subject to change. He also believes Dickinson, outside of the “private circulation of her work,” accepted “poetic anonymity as the price to be paid for continuance as an accepted member of a respected Amherst family,” and concludes, “Like a scientist she conducted her experiments, but her class position and refusal to believe in grand solutions or final earthly discoveries meant that she was never driven to publish her findings.”

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#### Book Reviews

**Benfey, Christopher.** *A Summer of Hummingbirds: Love, Art, and Scandal in the Intersecting Worlds of Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Martin Johnson Heade.* New York: Penguin,

2008. 287 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-59420-160-8, \$25.95; paper, ISBN 0-14311-508-3, \$16.00.

*Reviewed by Maryanne Garbowsky*

This is a book to sip and to savor: a journey of sorts through time and space connecting a variety of disparate places, people, events, and images—ultimately all linked together: “The Amherst summer of 1882, a summer of hummingbirds, began with . . .” (195).

When I first boarded this train (of thought and association), I must admit I was confused by the number of stops along the way. But I soon realized that they would be linked together (some more snugly than others) by the underlying destination: a gathering of hummingbirds (both literal and metaphorical) and the people fond of them – Martin Johnson Heade, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Emily Dickinson, and Joseph Cornell among others. Add to this mix others who offer a side trip to our main journey: Mabel Loomis Todd and her husband David, Austin Dickinson, Henry Ward Beecher, Mark Twain, Otis Lord, and the list goes on.

Connected by place, relationship, circumstance, or interest, this array of “Dramatis Personae,” as Benfey calls them at the beginning of his voyage, is mentioned and related to the main figures sometimes directly but often indirectly. Witness for instance this slant reference: “What Byron’s poetry promised—for Stowe, Dickinson, and Henry James—was escape from the wintry prison-home of custom and Calvinism . . . Byron broke the rules; Daisy Miller broke the rules; Harriet Beecher Stowe and Emily Dickinson, in their way, sought to break the rules as well” (131).

Overall, however, if you read each chapter almost as a separate stop on the trip, you may enjoy what you have read and learned even more. Benfey’s narrative, like his descrip-

tion of Dickinson’s imagination, “is moving on several tracks” (119). Stopping in between to catch your breath, you board the train once more and are off to more surprises as well as insight. For instance, some prurient details like David Todd’s “passion for young girls” and “his habitual recourse to masturbation” (183) are shocking, making one wonder why they are included.

On the other hand, Benfey’s analysis of Dickinson’s poetry is given fullest treatment in chapter 9 and reveals many pertinent details that directly refer to the topics under investigation: love, art, and hummingbirds. In this chapter, Benfey identifies Dickinson’s hummingbird poem “A Route of Evanescence” as her “signature poem” (208).

The final chapter—chapter 10—takes us by train to Florida and the grand hotel built by Henry Flagler, who invited Martin Johnson Heade to be a showcase artist in St. Augustine. This chapter recreates in delicious detail the experience of travel in this golden day: “As you stepped down from the horse-drawn hotel coach . . . you found arrayed before you the manifold helpers, clothed in fantastic garments and velvet hats, anticipating your every need” (222). The reader can taste the author’s own passion for this elegant style of travel of the past: “Your trunk, bearing the brightly colored labels of its past exotic itineraries followed” (222).

What follows is a wonderful epilogue that is worth waiting for. The epigraph Benfey chooses for the epilogue comes from a letter Dickinson sent to John L. Graves (L184, April 1856), in which she expresses what *Toward the Blue Peninsula*, a collage by assemblage artist Joseph Cornell, visually expresses: “a moldering plume, an empty house, in which a bird resided” (243).

Pulling all the images together—hummingbird, art, prison—Benfey concludes with one long thread that ties Dickinson and her poem/collage manuscript for “Alone and in a

Circumstance" (Fr1174) to the twentieth century and to Joseph Cornell and his identification with the poet: Cornell says, "just now the poem beginning 'Unto my books so good to turn'—what they must have meant in her tortuous seclusion—a clue in the same kind of escape found in books on sunny mornings on Fourth Avenue" (254).

From Martin Johnson Heade, to Mabel Loomis Todd, to Emily Dickinson, to Jay Leyda, to Joseph Cornell, and back to Emily Dickinson, we are left breathless. The last words of the book echo Dickinson's poem in the epigraph and reverberate with Cornell's musings about Dickinson's and his "own feeling for the endless ecstatic 'voyaging'" (255): "The window is open. The perch is empty. The bird is flown" (259). We have arrived at our destination as well as our departure point. After a long journey grounded in abundant facts and details, the reader takes flight, released to his or her own unseen place, one only to be imagined.

Christopher Benfey is to be congratulated for artfully putting together his own artistic assemblage. He has taken us on a journey that is interesting and informative as well as charming. In his acknowledgments, he credits Theodore Stebbin's *The Life and Work of Martin Johnson Heade* as the impetus for this book: "I had picked up Stebbin's excellent study for distraction from a complicated memoir I was trying to write" (261). So we have to thank Stebbin for giving Benfey the distraction that provided him with the impetus to write *A Summer of Hummingbirds*. It was certainly a trip I will remember.

*Maryanne Garbowsky is a professor of English at the County College of Morris in Randolph, New Jersey. She has written two books (The House Without the Door and Double Vision) and numerous articles about Dickinson.*

**Wineapple, Brenda.** *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. ix-xi, 416 pp. Cloth, ISBN 987-1-4000-4401-6, \$27.95.

*Reviewed by Dorothy Huff Oberhaus*

Brenda Wineapple's *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson* is a lively, readable account of the mostly epistolary friendship between the poet and Higginson, a prominent literary figure and co-editor of two of the three posthumous editions of Dickinson's poems in the 1890s. Though the two met face-to-face only twice, they corresponded for twenty-four years, during which Dickinson sent him over seventy letters and about one hundred poems, more than she sent to any other single recipient except Susan Gilbert Dickinson who received about two hundred and fifty. Dickinson initiated their correspondence in April 1862 when she responded to his article in the April *Atlantic Monthly*, "Letter to a Young Contributor," in which he advised young writers how to get their work published. She quickly responded with a letter famously beginning, "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?" (echoing his advice to "Charge your style with life"), and enclosed four poems. Although this leads some readers to believe she hoped for his aid in publishing her poems, Wineapple is among those who maintain that Dickinson never wished to publish.

According to the author, whose previous books include biographies of Hawthorne and Gertrude and Leo Stein, *White Heat* is not a biography of Dickinson or Higginson. Rather, it is an account of the "lifework" of two "seemingly incompatible friends," one a "recluse" and the other an "activist." The book is divided into sections reflecting their friendship. The Introduction's title

is "The Letter," meaning the poet's first letter to Higginson; Part I, "Before," focuses upon their lives and work in the years preceding the letter; Part II, "During," on the years of their correspondence; and Part III, "Beyond the Dip of Bell," on the years following Dickinson's death in 1886 when Higginson co-edited her poems and she therefore made her belated literary debut. Each of the three Parts is composed of alternating chapters focusing primarily upon Dickinson or Higginson, but also drawing comparisons between them. Chapter 1, for example, describes Higginson's seventeenth-century New England ancestors, his family, and his early life through his marriage and early activities as an abolitionist; Chapter 2 then describes Dickinson's seventeenth-century New England ancestors, her family, and her early life through her year at Mount Holyoke and friendships with Benjamin Newton and Susan Dickinson.

Readers familiar with the work of such biographers as Sewall, Habegger, and Longworth will find no startling new information about the poet's life. And because the author's aim is "not conventional literary criticism," but rather to allow the poetry to "speak largely for itself, as it did to Higginson," there is little analysis of the poems. Instead, poems and quotations—sometimes only a single line or stanza—appear throughout, often with little or no commentary. A recurring problem is Wineapple's attempt to find allusions to Higginson in Dickinson's poems. An example of this is her brief comment on "A Slash of Blue! A sweep of Gray! . . . Some Ruby Trowsers—hurried on," in which she writes that the poet "may well be picturing Higginson's regiment in the bright red trousers he loathed"—which is impossible: the poem is dated spring 1861; their correspondence did not begin until spring 1862; and Higginson did not take command of his red-trousered regiment until autumn 1862. There are, moreover, er-

rors of fact, that one hopes will be corrected in future printings, among them the following. After Dickinson's death her sister did not find "about eight hundred" poems; she found nearly eighteen hundred poems. The three Master letters were not "probably composed in the late 1850s"; R.W. Franklin dates them Spring 1858, Spring 1861, and Summer 1861. Early in the book the only authenticated daguerreotype of Dickinson is described as the "one known image of her"; and yet two hundred pages later an unauthenticated daguerreotype that many Dickinson scholars believe is not the poet appears without explanation or caveats.

Wineapple is a passionate defender of Higginson, whom she sees as having been unfairly "relegated to the dustbin of literary history," and mocked for his "tin ear" as co-editor of the first two editions of Dickinson's poems. Though she concedes that the titles he gave the poems are "awful," she reminds us that when he and Mabel Todd began work on the second edition he said, "Let us alter as little as possible," a proposal Todd unfortunately ignored. Wineapple vividly portrays Higginson as a complex figure who was not only a respected literary man and an ordained minister but also a lifelong fitness buff; a radical, fearless abolitionist and member of the Secret Six who supported John Brown's attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry; a Colonel in the Union Army who led its first regiment of freed slaves; and a champion of women's rights. Wineapple also insists that he was "not as square a critic" as has long been claimed. Although he was initially taken aback by Dickinson's unconventionality, he eventually understood her genius "enough to let us have her" in the volumes of poems he co-edited and warmly endorsed.

*Dorothy Huff Oberhaus, professor of English at Mercy College, is the author of Emily Dickinson's Fascicles:*

*Method & Meaning (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995; second printing and paperback, 1996). She is presently writing another book about Dickinson's fascicles.*

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- Benfey, Christopher. "Emily Dickinson's Secret Lover!: Why the Big News Is Being Ignored." *Slate* 9 Oct. 2008. Online: <http://www.slate.com/id/2201944/> [Benfey challenges the myth of Dickinson as the lovelorn spinster inspired by a grand mysterious passion to write equally passionate poems, suggesting that evidence supports more ordinary emotional experiences: an early aborted emotional attachment to George Gould and a later affection for Judge Lord.]

- Bergland, Renee L. "Urania's Inversion: Emily Dickinson Herman Melville, and the Strange History of Women Scientists in Nineteenth-Century America." *Signs* 34.1 (2008): 75-99. [Bergland examines the history of American women scientists from 1830-90, noting that their early acceptance as scientific muses later changed to disparagement with sexual insinuations.]

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Online: [MassLive.com](http://www.MassLive.com). [At its annual Emily Dickinson Birthday Lecture, the Emily Dickinson Museum received a \$15,000 American Literary Landmarks Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts; the grant will help support the Museum's community-wide programs.]

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- Paprocki, Justin. "Like Emily Dickinson? This Society's for You." [Hilton Head, South Carolina] *Island Packet* 8 Jan. 2009. Online: <http://www.islandpacket.com/lowcountrylife/story/717903.html> [A new EDIS chapter at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, started in January with an inaugural meeting chaired by Ellen Beinhorn, a lecturer at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and author of *Emily and Me*, a collection of Dickinson poems accompanied by Beinhorn's paintings.]



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- Rogoff, Jay. "Certain Slants: Learning from Dickinson's Oblique Precision." *Emily Dickinson Journal* 17.2 (2008): 39-54.

- Teicher, Craig Morgan. "2008 National Book Critics Circle Finalists." *Publishers Weekly* 24 Jan. 2009. Online: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6631948.html?rssid=192> [Drew Gilpin Faust's *The Republic of Suffering* and Brenda Wineapple's *The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, both books reviewed in the Bulletin, were among the National Book Critics Circle finalists in nonfiction and biography respectively.]

—. "Pen Pals." *Publishers Weekly* 255.26 (30 June 2008). [Teicher interviews Brenda Wineapple about writing *White Heat* and Higginson's misunderstood role as Dickinson's editor.]

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[Poets Lisa Fishman and Daneen Wardrop, both graduates of Western Michigan University where Wardrop is a faculty member, will read from their works at Western Michigan University on Dec. 11, 2008. Wardrop is the author of a poetry collection and two books of literary criticism, including *Emily Dickinson's Gothic*.]

- Wilson, Suzanne. "The Reel Emily Dickinson: New DVD Explores the Life and Environs of Amherst's Poetic Genius." *Amherst Bulletin* 26 Sept. 2009. Online: <http://www.amherstbulletin.com/story/id/110792/> [Filmmaker Ernie Urvater, writer/editor Terry Allen, narrator Joni Denn, videographer James MacAllister, painter Elizabeth Pols, and pianist Estela Olevsky have created a 32-minute video documentary on Dickinson's life and genius; the DVD, entitled "The Poet in Her Bedroom," is intended for use in classrooms but would interest anyone who enjoys Dickinson's poetry.]

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with a 900-foot historically accurate hedge that will link the Homestead and the Evergreens along Main Street.]

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### *Defiance, continued from page 5*

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opposition to or extension of her ideas, new approaches to understanding Dickinson, her lesbianism, her masculinity, and her women-centered politics.

A confluence of defiance and backlash shaped Patterson's career, her books, and critics' responses to them. Patterson recognized in the late 1940s that women, herself included, were relegated to limited roles in American society, and she challenged such a destiny for women by representing both Dickinson and her female beloved as women of passion, humor, and genius. This commitment to changing the perception of women's roles is clear even in a form she filled out in 1967 for the Kansas State College of Pittsburg where she worked from 1954 until her death in 1975.<sup>2</sup> The form asked her to "[g]ive details of other employment, and war service, [sic] (outside the field of education)." Her curt one-word reply was "Housewife."

This simple yet defiant gesture

symbolizes the significance of Patterson's work. She pushed for institutions to recognize the role women played in American society and brought women to the forefront of public debate. In turn, she questioned the ways in which conventional heterosexuality scripted women into predetermined, unacknowledged, and unpaid roles in American society. For Patterson, the lesbian was a figure who defied society's traditional expectations of women, operating as she does outside of normative expectations of women's desire and their gender roles. By outing Dickinson, Patterson's books created a new myth of how one woman's body, sexuality, and mind could have meaning for another. They defied the expectations of their time and reimaged women's relationships during a time of backlash.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Randy Roberts, Curator of Special Collections at Pittsburg State University's Leonard H. Axe Library, for providing me with information from their collection of Rebecca Patterson's papers and for permission to publish the photo of Rebecca Patterson.

<sup>2</sup> This form from the Public Information Office at Kansas State College of Pittsburg is held in the collection of Rebecca Patterson's Papers in the Leonard H. Axe Library of Pittsburg State University. Her obituary, also in the collection, establishes the time line of her work for Kansas State College of Pittsburg.

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— and Ellen Louise Hart, eds. *Open Me Carefully: Emily Dickinson's Intimate Letters to Susan Huntington Dickinson*. Ashfield: Paris, 1998.

**Jordan Landry** graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder where she studied with one of the founding EDIS members and distinguished scholar, Suzanne Juhasz. Landry has published articles on queer perspectives of Dickinson in the *Emily Dickinson Journal*. She is currently working on the role of the queer in women's environmental literature as well as the absence of the queer figure in feminist eco-critical theories. She teaches at the University of Wisconsin OshKosh.

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#### Views, continued from page 10

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Sandra Gilbert.)

More generally, we're hungry for meaning. Yet the circlet of poems we've read this evening resists our best efforts at closure, and with laughter, sighs, puzzled looks and shrugs, we all realize, as we seem to do each time, that the real meaning—the excitement, wonder, discovery—lies not in "conclusion," but in process. Our walk down the poetic garden path has been instructive—and at times comedic: the circle of participants are surely in awe of Dickinson, but they treat her with humor, irony, and, at times, refreshing irreverence.

As the Library's closing time approaches, we adjourn. These engaged and somewhat Dickensian Dickinsonians say farewell to each other, and give Hedy and me ideas about themes for upcoming discussions—Dickinson and music, Dickinson and the sea, even "drunken" Dickinson.

Soon I'm back in my car again. It's dark now, one of those mild and gentle early darkneses of Iowa spring evenings. And it's quiet. I glance over at the garden before leaving. Not much can be seen now, but leaves, I know, are breathing, as roots stretch downwards and outwards, and buds prepare to unfurl.

**Beatrice Jacobson**, Professor of English at St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa, wrote her dissertation, "Dickinson's Ways of Knowing," on Dickinson's embrace and rejection of her education. Her recent work has included articles on Mary Lyon (in *Dominant Culture and the Education of Women*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008) and Alice McDermott (in *Too Smart to Be Sentimental*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

## NEW EDIS BULLETIN EDITOR SELECTED

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The EDIS Board is pleased to announce that Kathleen Welton has been selected as the third editor of the *EDIS Bulletin*, beginning with the fall 2009 issue. Readers of the *Bulletin* may recognize Kathy's name as the co-editor of *100 Essential Modern Poems by Women*, which opens with a dozen pages dedicated to Dickinson. (The volume was reviewed by Barbara Kelly in the November/December 2008 *Bulletin*.)

A resident of Chicago, Kathy has been involved in editing and publishing since 1978, when she received her BA in English and Italian Literature from Stanford. Currently president of aka associates, she is an editor, freelance writer, and publishing consultant to authors and organizations. She has worked for the American Bar Association as director for book publishing as well as H&R Block, John Wiley & Sons, and Dearborn Financial Publishing (among others), in capacities ranging from acquisitions, budgeting, and personnel management to product

development, marketing, and e-commerce. The selection committee (Martha Ackmann, Michael Kearns, Georgie Strickland) was impressed by Kathy's experience in all phases of publishing, her familiarity with various publishing soft-



Kathy Welton

ware programs such as Quark and PageMaker, and her recognition of the differing objectives of the *Bulletin* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*.

Under Kathy's guidance, the *Bulletin* will remain committed to responding to the needs and interests of the EDIS membership while also exploring new directions. Kathy is particularly interested in continuing the tradition of editorial excellence of the *Bulletin* as well as ensuring that the *Bulletin* is available in electronic formats, searchable in online databases and Web sites, and in reaching out to a younger audience. She also would like to hear from members who have ideas for the *Bulletin*, including articles, upcoming Dickinson-related events, and thoughts on how to continue to engage EDIS members and new readers. You may reach her at: Kathy Welton, aka associates, 645 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60611; 773-636-6410; [kathy@kathywelton.com](mailto:kathy@kathywelton.com).

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## MEMBERS' NEWS

### Scholar in Amherst Announced

The 2008 Scholar in Amherst Award will go to Renee Berglund of Simmons College. The Scholar in Amherst Award Committee, made up of Martha Nell Smith, Eleanor Heginbotham, and Paul Crumbley, was impressed by Berglund's application and her progress with a book-length project titled "Emily Dickinson, Planetary Poet." The support provided by EDIS will enable Berglund to complete essential research in Amherst and move toward completion of her book. Berglund has also explored the relationship between Dickinson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

### EDIS Scholar in Amherst 2009 Call for Applications

EDIS invites applications for the Scholar in Amherst Program. The scholarship, which is awarded annually, is designed to support research on Emily Dickinson at institutions such as the Frost Library of Amherst College, the Jones Public Library, the Mount Holyoke College Archives, the Dickinson Homestead, the Evergreens, and the Amherst Historical Society.

The award is a \$2,000 fellowship to be used for expenses related to that research, such as travel, accommodations, or a rental car. Upon completion of their research in Amherst, recipients will write a let-

ter to the EDIS Board outlining what they achieved as a result of EDIS support. 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.

The Scholar in Amherst Program was inaugurated in 2002 by a generous donation from Sylvia F. Rogosa, made in honor of her daughter, Vivian Pollak, second president of EDIS. The 2003 award was named in honor of Myra Fraser Fallon, mother of EDIS Treasurer Dr. James Fraser. The 2004 award was named in honor of renowned Dickinson scholar Brita

Lindberg-Seyersted and those in 2005 and 2006 for Professor Everett Emerson to recognize his contributions to Dickinson studies as well as early American literature. The 2007 Scholar in Amherst Award honored Suzanne Juhasz and Jane Donahue Eberwein, Dickinson scholars and founding members of the EDIS. The 2008 Scholar in Amherst Award honored Roland Hagenbüchle, an influential international Dickinson scholar and avid supporter of EDIS. The 2009 award will once again be made in honor of Everett Emerson.

To apply for the 2009 Scholar in Amherst Award, please submit a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction (written by the applicant), a two-page project proposal, and a brief bibliography, by May 15, 2009, to Paul Crumbley at [paul.crumbley@usu.edu](mailto:paul.crumbley@usu.edu); inquiries may also be directed to Martha Nell Smith at [mnsmith@umd.edu](mailto:mnsmith@umd.edu) and Eleanor Heginbotham at [heginbotham@csp.edu](mailto:heginbotham@csp.edu). Letters of recommendation are not accepted as part of the application packet.

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### EDIS 2010 Annual Meeting Call for Abstracts

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The Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS) is soliciting abstracts for presentations at its 2010 international conference to be held at the Rothermere American Institute, Oxford University, England, August 6-8. The conference theme is "were I Britain born': Dickinson's British Connections." Preference will be given to papers that focus on Dickinson's transatlantic reading, connections with specific British writers, her British reception, and transatlantic influences on Dickinson's thought and writing, but papers on all related topics will be welcomed. Please send abstracts of 250 words to Paul Crumbley ([paul.crumbley@usu.edu](mailto:paul.crumbley@usu.edu)), Jed Deppman ([jdeppman@oberlin.edu](mailto:jdeppman@oberlin.edu)) or Cristanne Miller ([ccmiller@buffalo.edu](mailto:ccmiller@buffalo.edu)) by October 15, 2009.

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### New Dickinson DVD

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Sawmill River Productions has just released a new 32-minute DVD, *The Poet in Her Bedroom*, produced in collaboration with the Emily Dickinson Museum. Shot on location in the family mansion and on the grounds of the family compound, the DVD introduces Dickinson as a poet in midlife in her working environment. The link below will take you to the Dickinson page on our website and provide you with more details about the new production. <http://sawmillriver.com/videstore/emilydickinson.html>

*The Poet in Her Bedroom* has been shown at the ED museum on several occasions and has received an enthusiastic response from audiences.

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### EDIS Annual Meeting "Queen Without the Crown"

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The 2009 Annual Meeting will take place July 31- August 2 in Regina (the "Queen City"), Saskatchewan, Canada. In keeping with city's name, the meeting will emphasize the theme of royalty in Dickinson's work.

The meeting begins Friday, July 31, with registration and a royal banquet held at the conference center, the Hotel Saskatchewan, the hotel where Queen Elizabeth II stays when she or members of the Royal Family visit the city of Regina. On Saturday morning, four innovative teachers and scholars of Dickinson—Martha Nell Smith, Thom Tamarro, Stephanie Tingley, and Emily Seelbinder—will "teach" the audience a poem or cluster of poems, each implementing his or her own distinctive method.

After a lunch with the membership, participants will attend the annual meeting. That evening, all participants are invited to attend *The Belle of Amherst* at the Schumiatcher Theatre in the MacKenzie Art Gallery, performed by fellow EDIS mem-

ber, actor/writer Barbara Dana.

Following the research circle on Sunday morning, we will make an excursion to Government House, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan, representative to the Queen. Built in 1891, this heritage building is set in the beautiful Edwardian Gardens where participants will be guests of the Lieutenant-Governor at a Victorian Tea served by members of the Saskatchewan Historical Society dressed in period costume.

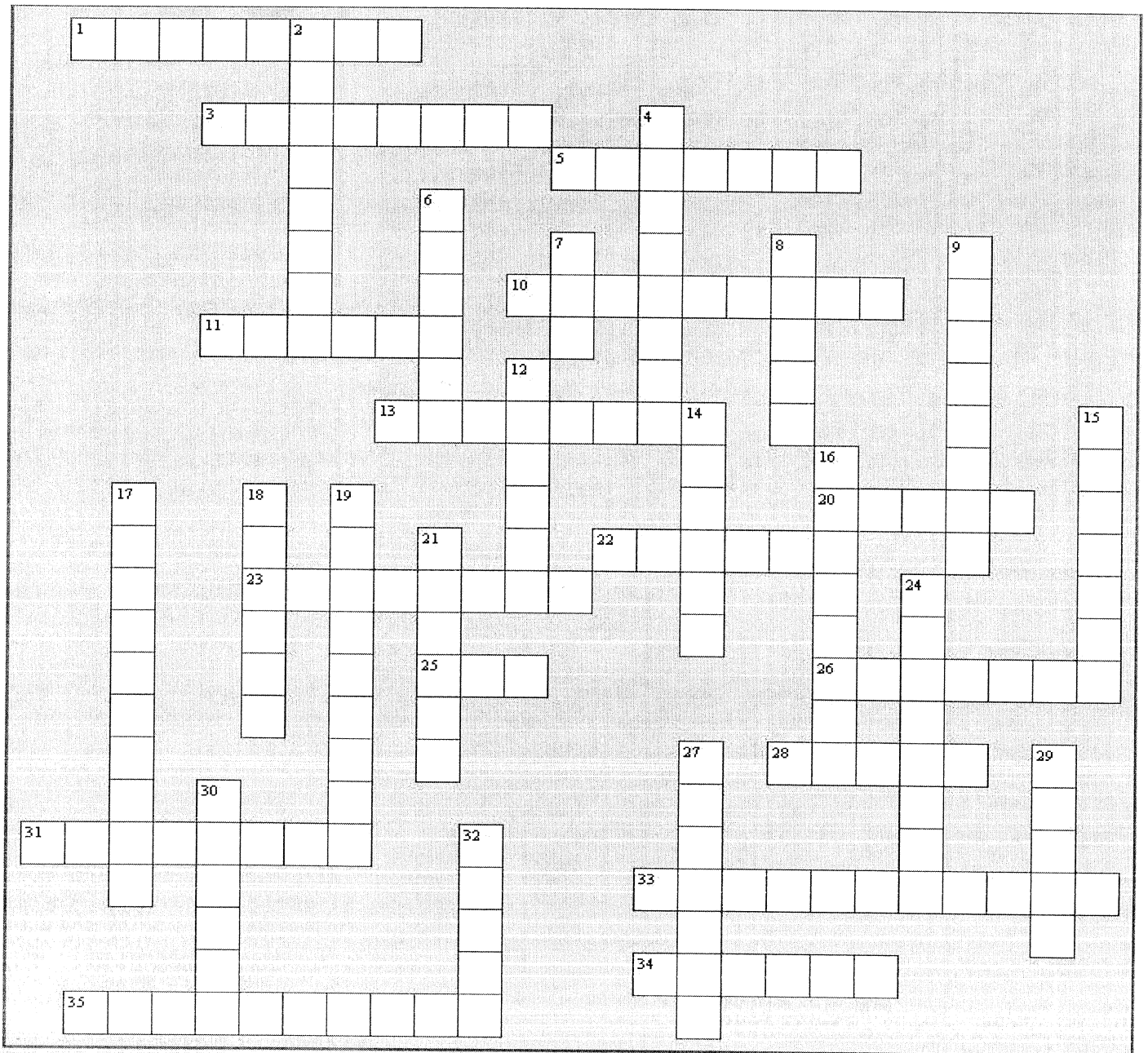
The meeting will conclude with a luncheon back at the Hotel Saskatchewan. Any update on the activities for the weekend will be announced on the EDIS website, <http://www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org/>. See page 23 of the *Bulletin* for a registration form; registration forms are also available on the EDIS website.

# WORDS TO *LIFT* YOUR HAT TO

## A DICKINSON CROSSWORD

*By Greg Mattingly*

Test your Emily Dickinson vocabulary! Each word or name is from one or more of the poems. Clues are on the following page; a solution will be provided in the fall issue—not that any true Dickinsonian will need it!



### Across

1. Light, playful banter or play; to banter with or tease playfully
3. A mountain range in Italy
5. A stone imagined by some to be of impenetrable hardness; a name formerly given to diamonds or other stones of unbreakable hardness
10. A member of an Indian people living originally in North Carolina and later, after their admission into the Iroquois confederacy, in New York
11. A city in Bolivia claimed to be the highest city in the world at a nominal 4,090 m (13,420 feet) It lies beneath the Cerro Rico ("rich mountain") — a mountain popularly conceived of as being made of silver ore.
13. A cerecloth [wax coated] in which dead bodies are wrapped for burial
20. Brilliant or conspicuous acclaim; success
22. Coveted varieties of apple that were raised from seed (so called since c.1432); any of numerous superior eating apples with yellow or greenish yellow skin flushed with red
23. In theology, freed from sin; redeemed
25. British.: A lease
26. Oldest of the three fates; chose the method of death and cut the cord of life for each mortal.
28. The shaft of a buggy
31. A light, two-wheeled, open carriage drawn by two horses abreast
33. The pivoted crossbar at the front of a wagon or carriage, to which the traces of the harness are attached

34. A small boring tool
35. (1) A mineral, composed of silica, magnesia, and iron, of a yellow to green color and common in certain volcanic rocks; — called also olivine and peridot; sometimes used as a gem (2) The seventh foundation of the Holy City, New Jerusalem

### Down

2. (1) A purple or violet variety of quartz (2) The twelfth foundation of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.
4. (1) A hooded cloak for women. (2) A Central and South American monkey, having a prehensile tail and hair on the head resembling a cowl. (3) A friar belonging to the branch of the Franciscan order that observes vows of poverty and austerity
6. (1) Lord; master (used as a title of address). (2) A name given to a pastor of the Reformed Church; The word is also applied locally in the United States, in colloquial speech, to any clergyman.
7. A dull, greyish brown
8. Money or property brought by a bride to her husband at marriage
9. "I shall rise again."
12. A man's wig of the 17th and 18th centuries, usually powdered and gathered at the back of the neck with a ribbon; periwig
14. A scarf, usually of fur or wool, for covering the neck, or the neck and shoulders, and usually having ends hanging down in front
15. The uncrowned King Charles VII sent Jean D'Arc to this city as part of a relief mission. She gained prominence when she overcame the dismissive attitude of veteran commanders and lifted the siege in only nine days

16. An empty tomb or monument erected to honor someone buried elsewhere
17. From the Spanish word for cord; an extensive length of mountains, or mountain ranges, especially the main range of a continent
18. One of the celestial beings hovering above God's throne in Isaiah's vision. Isa. 6; a member of the highest order of angels, often represented as a child's head with wings above, below, and on each side
19. The largest of the Canary Islands, off the NW Coast of Africa (Dickinson's spelling)
21. A grotesque sprite or elf that is mischievous or malicious toward people
24. A loose-fitting, broad-sleeved white vestment, worn over the cassock by clergy and choristers
- 27 (1) A lace in which the pattern details are defined by a flat thread. Also called malines. 2. A city of north-central Belgium north-northeast of Brussels. Founded in the early Middle Ages, it enjoyed its greatest prosperity during the 15th and early 16th centuries.
29. Chief magistrates in the former republics of Venice and Genoa
30. A thin cotton fabric, white, dyed, or printed, woven with a stripe or check of heavier yarn
32. A thin, fine, net of silk

*Greg Mattingly will be moving soon to Orange, Massachusetts, "with an eye to being closer to the Museum." This is Greg's second contribution to the Bulletin.*

# EDIS ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

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Return with payment by June 20, 2009 to:

James Fraser  
159 Prospect Street, Unit 7  
Acton, MA 01720  
Email: [jcfraser@att.net](mailto:jcfraser@att.net)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration confirmation will be by email unless another method is specifically requested.**

## Registration Fee

*Participants may choose to attend the Friday banquet. Admission to the Saturday night play, The Belle of Amherst as well as the Victorian Tea at Government House on Sunday are included in all tickets.*

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fri.-Sun. Meeting—Current EDIS member —Including banquet— \$100..... | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fri. -Sun. Meeting—Non-member or late registration — \$110.....      | \$ _____ |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Fri.-Sun. Meeting— Non-member — No banquet \$85.....                 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Banquet Tickets— Non-member —\$30.....                    | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Banquet Tickets—Current EDIS member -- \$25.....          | \$ _____ |

TOTAL enclosed..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable(in \$U.S) to Emily Dickinson International Society. We regret that credit cards cannot be accepted. For information about becoming a member or renewing a membership, see the EDIS Website: <http://www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org> For information about registration contact [jcfraser@att.net](mailto:jcfraser@att.net).

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## EDIS Bulletin

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