

# Bulletin

Volume 3, Number 2

November/December 1991

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

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## To Quote or Not to Quote?

### Questions and Answers about the Copyright Status of Dickinson Works

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Emily Dickinson protected her literary property by putting it in a box in a dresser drawer. Her heirs and those who published her work after her death, a process extending from 1890 to 1958, relied on more formal legal means—the copyright laws of the United States. Today's scholar wanting to quote Dickinson poems or letters in a book or article is faced with a bewildering array of facts relative to their copyright status, particularly since so many of the poems have been published in variant forms.

With this in mind, and especially for the benefit of members preparing to publish in Dickinson for the first time, we turned to Harvard University Press for answers to frequently asked questions. The responses that follow were prepared by Beth Kiley Kinder, Copyright and Permissions Manager at HUP, and Maud Wilcox, Harvard's former Editor in Chief.

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**Q: Do I need written permission to quote from Dickinson's writings?**

**A:** In a work that is to be published, yes, if the material in question is in copyright.

**Q: How can I tell whether a particular poem or letter is still in copyright?**

**A:** Dickinson's published writings, and indeed all works published prior to 1978, are covered by the copyright law in effect during most of this century. Copyright extended for an initial term of 28 years from the date of publication and upon application could be renewed for an additional term. The second term

was, like the first, limited to 28 years until Congress, while deliberating revisions in the copyright law, began extending the renewal term, which was eventually fixed at 47 years; as a result, any work with a valid copyright properly renewed was granted a total of 75 years of protection. Thus the copyright on *The Single Hound* (1914), for example, expired on December 31, 1989.

The publication dates of the volumes issued in the 1920s and later can be misleading, however, since many of the compilations included items that had already appeared in print. Your best guide is the notes to the Johnson editions of 1955 and 1958, which give the prior publication history of each of the poems and letters. Any item initially published within the last 75 years can be assumed to be still under copyright in its entirety. Anything published more than 75 years ago is now in the public domain *in the form in which it was published at that time*. All the new material introduced in Johnson's editions, in particular the variorum *Poems*—corrections, restorations of doctored texts, ED's alternative readings and variant versions, as well as the 41 poems appearing for the first time—is covered by the copyrights to his editions.

**Q: Isn't there such a thing as "fair use"?**

**A:** Yes, for quotations from published works, though its limits have never been precisely defined. In general, most publishers hold that up to two lines of poetry in copyright and usually up to 500

words of prose may be reprinted without permission, as long as credit is given to author, title, and publisher and no complete unit, such as a poem or letter, is included. These are the guidelines observed in the case of Dickinson's writings. Note that the word or line count refers not to each separate quotation but to the total of all your quotations from the copyrighted work.

There has been much discussion of fair use lately in relation to unpublished works, to which it has not in the past applied. It has long been held that nothing whatever may be printed from an author's unpublished writings without explicit permission; but when the courts recently reaffirmed this ruling in two much-publicized cases, a flurry of debate and controversy ensued. It is quite possible that Congress will act to extend the concept of fair use, in some limited fashion, to unpublished materials.

**Q: To whom should I write for permission, and what information should I include?**

**A:** The two principal publishers of Dickinson's poetry, Little, Brown and Harvard University Press, jointly administer the poetry permissions. For quotations from the poems, address your request to the permissions manager at either house. Both have detailed records on which poems are controlled by the original publisher by virtue of the publisher's contract with the copyright owner; which ones are now in the public domain, in whole or in part; and which poems or lines are covered by the copy-

right to the variorum edition. For quotations from the letters, write to Harvard University Press, which has similar records for those. It is worth mentioning in passing that you must also request permission from the Harvard Press if you wish to reproduce one of the facsimile pages from *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, Ralph Franklin's edition of the fascicles, and of course, as with any illustration, credit your source.

In writing for permission, be as explicit as possible. List all the Dickinson material you intend to use. Identify each poem both by number in the variorum edition and by first line, and specify the exact line numbers of the portions to be quoted (and of alternative readings, if any, that you choose to adopt from Johnson's textual notes). Identify excerpts from the letters by their dates and page numbers in the Johnson edition, together with the opening and closing phrases of each passage and an indication of the approximate number of words or lines.

In addition, provide the following information about your work: the title of your manuscript, its length in double-spaced pages, and the probable season of publication; if it is an article, the name of the periodical (circulation figures, if available, are helpful); if it is a book, the name of the publisher, proposed format (hardcover, paperback, or both), projected number of copies to be printed, and estimated list price.

**Q: How much time should I allow for obtaining permissions?**

**A:** As much time as possible. A pub-

lisher with a backlist of several thousand titles receives a large volume of permission requests. Even if most letters receive at least a preliminary response within two to four weeks, in a small permissions department vacations, illnesses, and other contingencies can create backlogs and delays.

You should not send out permission requests until your manuscript has been accepted for publication and any revisions that might affect the quotations have been completed and approved. But you should do so as soon as possible after that. Your publisher will undoubtedly allow editing to proceed while permissions are pending but probably will not release the manuscript for typesetting until they are in hand.

**Q: What can you tell me about the fees that are charged?**

**A:** When you use the variorum text of a poem whose text as originally published is in the public domain, the only lines, if any, for which a fee is charged are ones in which there are actual changes of wording. No fee is asked for the use of Johnson's corrections of line divisions or stanza breaks or, more important, his restorations of Dickinson's idiosyncratic punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

The fees vary considerably, depending on a number of factors. The charge for a scholarly book or article would at present be well under a dollar per line of poetry in copyright, whereas the charge for a commercial textbook or anthology might be ten times as much. For the letters in copyright there is a similar range, though the fees are naturally much lower in

relation to the length of the passages quoted.

You may wonder where the fees go. They are customarily divided between the publisher, who has responsibility for administering the permissions, and the author or copyright owner. The proprietor's share of the Dickinson permissions fees has gone, in turn, to Emily's niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, until 1943; to Alfred Leete Hampson, Martha's legatee; to his widow, Mary Landis Hampson; and, following Mrs. Hampson's death in 1988, to the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust.

**Q: What about quoting in dissertations?**

**A:** In the case of dissertations, Harvard University Press grants permission free of charge but does expect that permission will be requested and the proper copyright notices carried. Although dissertations are not published in conventional fashion, many are published on demand by University Microfilms, and those that are not are available in the university library to scholars and students. If the thesis, or part of it, is subsequently to be published in article or book form, new permissions will have to be secured; a dissertation writer is therefore well advised to be sparing in the use of nonessential quotations from copyrighted sources, especially poetry.

Beth Kiley Kinder  
Maud Wilcox

*Further questions may be directed to Ms Kinder at Harvard University Press, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.*

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## **Emily Dickinson Journal Nears Publication**

We are busy preparing the first issue of *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, which will go soon to our publisher, the University Press of Colorado, and is scheduled for mailing in Spring 1991. We are pleased to be introducing the work of five new Dickinson scholars in a volume that offers a range of exciting approaches to the poet.

The first issue contains essays on Dickinson's gothic and the reading process; the relation between prose and

poetry in her letters; her poems about death as they challenge conventional Christian eschatology; her inclusion of the feminine in Christian discourse; and her responses to the singer Jenny Lind. Two review essays, by Gary Stonum and Wendy Barker, covering six recent books about Dickinson, will complete the first issue.

We have had enthusiastic response to the journal in the form of many letters of encouragement as well as a flow of sub-

missions, and we are anticipating subsequent issues that will further explore the amplitude of current approaches to Dickinson and her art.

Starting in 1992, all members who wish to receive the journal will pay a membership fee of \$35.00. Members who do not want to receive the journal will pay \$15.00.

Suzanne Juhasz  
Editor, *The Emily Dickinson Journal*

## Dickinson Libraries: The Jones Library Collection

The Jones Library treads a fine line with its Emily Dickinson Collection. Housed in the public library of the Town of Amherst, the collection is designed to be both a scholarly research center and a popular reading and exhibit space for the general public.

In 1924, the same year Martha Dickinson Bianchi published a new edition of Dickinson poems and a biography of her aunt, Jones Library director Charles Green began collecting Dickinson. In 1926 he proposed the development of a major collection and wrote of it to Madame Bianchi. She replied, "I should never care to put the treasures of my family in a room with others, but I have thought that if an Emily Dickinson room could be suitably and artistically provided, I might eventually like to fill it." The library was, in fact, constructing a new building at that time. Frank Prentice Rand's book *The Jones Library in Amherst* (Amherst, 1969, pp. 83-86) describes what happened next:

So Green wrote to Mme. Bianchi: "Putnam and Cox (the architects) are working on plans,...if we could secure enough Emily Dickinson material. Your interest and response to this matter will be of help to us in planning a room." There seems to have been no "response," and the building was going up....

As was her custom Mme. Bianchi spent the winter of 1930 in Italy. During her absence Mount Holyoke College observed Emily's birthday with appropriate exercises, featuring Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd.... Green cooperated with Mount Holyoke by providing an excellent Dickinson exhibit....

When Mme. Bianchi returned to Amherst she made it perfectly clear that she resented the entire performance, including Green's part in it.

Green had to content himself with creating a collection from other sources. In 1930, Green published one of the earliest Dickinson bibliographies, based on his collection. In reviewing it, the *Saturday Review of Literature* noted that at that time the library had "what is probably the most complete (public) Dickinson collection in the country."

What Charles Green began in the 1920s



Profile of Emily Dickinson by Barry Moser  
Courtesy of The Jones Library

has been expanded many times through the decades. It contains extensive collections of first editions, biographical and critical studies, journal articles, dissertations, translations, photographs, recordings, videotapes, and artwork. Material of significant research value is added by gift and purchase. Most recently, the library acquired microfiche copies of all probate records for Emily's immediate family. The documents shed light on the Dickinsons' relationships with each other and with the broader community.

The library has developed a small collection of manuscript poems and letters, available to scholars for research. Several are normally seen as part of our continuous Dickinson exhibits. In addition, one can see a detailed model of Dickinson's bedroom, one of two typewriters used by Mabel Loomis Todd to edit the poems, family china and silver, needlework, buttons from one of Emily's dresses, and a bonnet worn by the poet.

Early photographs and bird's-eye-views of Amherst show the town in the Dickinsons' period. One may also view the Dickinson account at the general store where they shopped or the entry

noting Dickinson's birth in the daybook of her doctor.

The library's collection is unique in that it places the poet within the context of her nineteenth-century community. The department contains over 50,000 photographs, including those of J.L. Lovell, the town's most important nineteenth-century photographer. As the main archive for the history of the town of Amherst, the library includes records that are vital to the study of the poet. The archives of the First Congregational Church of Amherst, for example, were recently assembled at the library. Family papers, diaries, and land and business records for many families associated with the Dickinsons can be found here.

The Jones Library is currently expanding and renovating its 1928 stone building. Exhibits are temporarily in storage, but the collections are still available for research. The Dickinson Collection, as part of the Special Collections Department, will be moving into a new wing of the library in the spring of 1992. New exhibit spaces and research facilities have been designed, retaining the comfortable, homelike atmosphere for which the library is known.

The library is planning a comprehensive Emily Dickinson exhibit for its stunning new exhibit space. We hope to create what we have heretofore been unable to provide—a lively permanent exhibit about Dickinson's life and work, appropriate for both the general public and scholars. The library would welcome contributions large and small to build special cases, purchase audio/visual equipment, and design imaginative displays.

The Special Collections Department is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 5:00, Saturday from 10:00 to 5:00, and Tuesday evening until 9:00.

Daniel Lombardo  
Curator of Special Collections  
The Jones Library, Inc.  
43 Amity St., Amherst, MA 01002  
Phone: 413-256-4090

# EDIS International Conference Plans Move Forward

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## Translating Emily Dickinson in Language, Culture, and the Arts

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Plans are moving ahead for the October 1992 conference, "Translating Emily Dickinson in Language, Culture, and the Arts," to be held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. I am pleased to report that more than fifty American and international scholars, translators, and artists, representing the great diversity within contemporary Dickinson studies, have been invited as key participants in dialogue and workshop sessions focused on the linguistic, cultural, and artistic issues involved in translations of Dickinson's life and work.

At present I have letters of acceptance from Dickinsonians in Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Japan, and Poland, and I look forward to announcing an even wider range of participation in the next *Bulletin*. The spring issue also will carry a list of speakers and brief descriptions of the topics for sessions and workshops.

Although the conference will not be made up of traditional papers to any considerable extent, everyone who attends will have ample opportunity to contribute actively to the sessions and workshops planned. Please also note on the tentative schedule the time-slot on Friday afternoon during which EDIS members will be presenting scholarly papers or creative work related to the conference themes. Abstracts must be postmarked by April 1, 1992, and notices of acceptance will be sent in June, following the conference committee's meeting at the American Literature Association convention over Memorial Day Weekend.

I am still in need of volunteers from among our international members to participate in the translation workshops slated for Friday afternoon. Specifically, I am looking for native speakers from the Asian, Teutonic, Slavic, or Latinate linguistic traditions who are willing to bring

a working draft of a translation of one of the conference's featured Dickinson poems (#322, 341, 712, 861, 1068, and 1247) and to make a brief presentation of the principal problems that emerged in attempting to translate that poem. Anyone interested in taking this role should write to me at Mount Vernon College, 2100 Foxhall Rd. NW, Washington, DC 20007, USA.

As many of you know, EDIS has commissioned Robert Chauls to compose a musical cycle of Dickinson poems for the tenor voice. The world premiere of this work, performed by William Wallis, will be part of Friday evening's program, "A Dickinson Celebration." Thanks to Cristanne Miller, the program also will feature composer Carol Herman's musical settings of Dickinson poems for the viola da gamba and soprano voice. A reading of Dickinson poems, coordinated by Suzanne Juhasz, will conclude the evening.

Conference brochures, including forms for registration and hotel reservations, were mailed to international members in October. Members residing in the United States will receive their materials in January.

The Conference committee requests that you make every effort to meet the April 10 deadline for registration and hotel reservation. Since the Society did not receive the National Endowment for the Humanities grant to help underwrite conference costs, it will be extremely helpful to our planning to know in advance how many participants we can expect. It also will help keep down the overall cost if as many conference participants as possible stay at the Mayflower, especially Thursday and Friday nights. If you have friends coming, you may want to arrange to share a room, since there is no difference in the price of singles and doubles.

Please be sure to send your registration form directly to me at my Mount Vernon address and to return your hotel reservation form separately to the Mayflower Hotel.

If you have comments or questions about the conference, please feel free to contact me by phone at 202-625-4563 or by FAX at 202-337-0259.

Jonnie Guerra  
Conference Director

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### Tentative Conference Schedule

#### Thursday, October 22

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Conference check-in

7:00-9:00

Opening plenary session

9:00-11:00

Cash bar reception

#### Friday, October 23

8:30-12:30

Concurrent dialogue sessions

2:00-3:45

Translation workshops

4:15-5:30

Special sessions of work in progress

8:00-10:00

A Dickinson Celebration

#### Saturday, October 24

8:30-10:15

Concurrent dialogue sessions

10:45-12:30

Application forums

2:00-3:30

Closing plenary session

3:30-5:00

EDIS annual business meeting

Tea in honor of international participants

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## Mutual Plums: Dickinson's Letters Cultivated at ALA

A rebuke Emily Dickinson administered after receiving a jointly addressed letter warns against intruding into private correspondence:

A mutual plum is not a plum. I was too respectful to take the pulp and do not like a stone.

Send no union letters. The soul must go by Death alone, so, it must by life, if it is a soul.

If a committee—no matter. [L 321]

Yet the May 25 panel on Emily Dickinson's letters, held at the Washington, D.C., American Literature Association meeting, coordinated by Margaret Dickie and chaired by Vivian Pollak, drew three skilled readers to compare judgments on that correspondence while functioning with the audience and with respondent Jane Eberwein as a lively committee of the whole.

William Shurr's paper, "New Poems of Emily Dickinson: Additions to the Canon," advised mining the letters for passages that can either be realigned to stand alone as additions to the canonical 1,775 poems or else be recognized as fragments of potential verses.

Paula Bennett countered in "'By a Mouth that Cannot speak': Emily Dickinson's Letters to the World," by rejecting the boundaries editors impose between poetry and prose in the fluid, intimate context of these letters.

In "'Candor—My Preceptor—is the only Wile': Emily Dickinson's Epistolary Autobiography," Stephanie Tingley pushed against a different generic boundary in her argument that the letters benefit from being read as autobiographical self-fashioning.

Consensus emerged on several ideas: that the letters focus understanding of Dickinson as woman and poet, that they reflect her artistry as truly as the poems, that they were written and intended to be read in a social context we can never fully reconstruct, and that they present editorial challenges.

Presenters observed fluid boundaries between Dickinson's poems and letters, recognizing an "amphibious" quality that Tingley and Bennett ascribed to a nine-

teenth-century women's aesthetic. All found Dickinson committed to communication, although they differed about her intended audience.

Speakers reminded the convention audience that the original recipients of these letters read them differently than we do. Each received, one at a time, fewer Dickinson missives than we find in Johnson and Ward's edition, and each read the communication in a specific context involving events in that person's life as well as in Dickinson's. The letters might well include a poem or two and perhaps accompany a small gift. Much that remains riddling to us would have been obvious to Dickinson's friends. Yet, as Tingley observed, much else becomes evident to us that would have been concealed in the original epistolary interchanges—including repetitions of phrasing that prompted Shurr to speculate that words of consolation to Sue after Gilbert's death might earlier have memorialized Charles Wadsworth.

Central to discussion of Dickinson's letters was realization that we are always reading over someone else's shoulder, experiencing them artificially, whether we sit down with printed texts or squint at microfilm in a rare-book library. Thomas Johnson came in for sharp attack from Professor Bennett, who chose agricultural metaphors to depict the editor as pruning letters and harvesting poems by yanking them from the soil in which their author had gently planted them. Bennett thereby distanced herself from Shurr's "excavations" by which he joyfully spaded up parts of letters for transplant to the more frequently visited poetic garden.

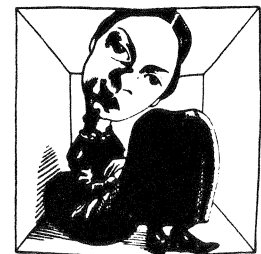
Sharpest disagreement at this session concerned closure. Shurr proposed reopening the three volumes of *Poems* to incorporate material now scattered in *Letters*. Tingley, while wary of imposing arbitrary structure on the letters, still perceived benefits from reading Johnson and Ward's "closed text" that furnishes us with "a single work" for sustained analysis. Bennett rejected as "re-writ-

ing" of Dickinson any attempts at closure that inhere in our print culture.

How, then, should we transmit these letters to readers of the next century? Is there any way to preserve general access to Dickinson's writing without distorting the experience? Concluding discussion elicited suggestions ranging from presenting readers with boxes full of manuscript facsimiles, through printing individual correspondences with accompanying poems written out in the form the original recipient saw, to formation of a "letter of the month club" or development of an interactive video game.

Possibilities abound, but the main point is to recognize that whatever experience we provide as readers, teachers, and editors differs substantially from that of Dickinson's first readers. Yet energetic discussion of these stimulating papers demonstrated clearly that Dickinson's twentieth-century readers feel profound gratitude for what has inevitably reached us as our "mutual plum."

Jane Donahue Eberwein  
Oakland University



EMILY DICKINSON

### Call for ALA Papers

Two Dickinson sessions are planned for the 1992 annual meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held Memorial Day weekend in San Diego. Topics will be "Feminist Reading of Emily Dickinson: A Reconsideration" and "The Influence of Emily Dickinson." Anyone interested in presenting a paper should send an abstract, by December 15, to Margaret Dickie, Department of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 (phone 404-548-8969).

## Members' News

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### EDIS Annual Meeting

The 1991 Annual Meeting of the Society took place during the American Literature Association convention in Washington, D.C., over Memorial Day weekend. Fourteen members of the Society, in addition to twelve Board members and associates, were present.

Margaret Freeman, EDIS president, welcomed those members present and introduced the Board, including two new Board members: Polly Longworth, who had been elected to the membership seat; and Walter Powell, replacing Joanne Dobson, who did not seek reelection. Freeman also announced the appointment of Niels Kjaer (who could not be present) to fill a one-year vacancy caused by the resignation of Mark Pachter. See the accompanying article for more information on these appointments.

Several reports indicated the very healthy status of the Society at that time, including a treasurer's report, membership report, a report on the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, and a progress report from the conference director. Updated versions of those reports appear elsewhere in these pages.

Members' input was sought on two questions: what our policy should be in responding to requests to release the Society's mailing list to other organizations, and how we can refine the process of sending out calls for papers. If any readers have experience in handling of mailing lists for other organizations, their input would still be welcome. There was a consensus that calls for papers should be mailed separately from the *Bulletin* and *Journal*.

In her president's report, Margaret Freeman pointed out that, with the conference and the first issue of the *Emily Dickinson Journal* approaching realization, EDIS will have fulfilled three of the Society's four goals. In the coming year she and the fundraising committee will be tackling the fourth goal, that of developing a foundation to help support the two Dickinson houses in Amherst. Members will be hearing more from this committee as their work moves forward.

The 1992 annual meeting will be held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., next October 24 in conjunction with the International Conference. We hope that many members will be able to attend.

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### Membership Report

Society membership continues to grow, with 364 members recorded as of the start of September. Our 51 international members represent eighteen countries outside the United States: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and Thailand. Thirty-eight persons have joined as contributing members. A gratifying trend is evident in gift memberships presented by EDIS members to Dickinson-loving friends around the world.

The Society encourages members to organize local affiliates so that Dickinson-inspired programs can be offered wherever there is a core group of her admirers. If you are interested in organizing such an affiliate, the Membership Committee can provide names and addresses of members in your geographic area. The *Bulletin* welcomes news notes from regional and national groups.

Our new membership year begins in January, so members should expect a renewal mailing shortly. For those who

joined midyear, we shall provide both 1991 *Bulletins*. If you have missed a mailing or changed your address, please notify Jane Eberwein, chair of the Society's Membership Committee, at the Department of English, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309-4401.

### New Board Members

At our annual meeting in May, three new members joined the EDIS Board of Directors. Polly Longworth was elected to occupy the membership seat on the Board (see the spring 1991 issue of the *Bulletin*). Walter Powell and Niels Kjaer also graciously agreed to serve.

Walter Powell is executive director of the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association. He has a doctorate in American literature from Kent State University, with a dissertation on Edward Taylor, and maintains his strong interest in New England poets. He has taught in several colleges.

Niels Kjaer is minister of an Evangelical Lutheran church on the island of Lyø, Denmark. He acquired his interest in American literature from his parents, who lived in the U.S. before his birth. He

has published several collections of poems and literary studies, including translations of Milton and Whittier, as well as Dickinson. He was organizer of "Emily Dickinson Live," a series of lectures and performances throughout Denmark (see the spring 1991 issue). He promises to describe his collection of Dickinson items in a future issue.

In addition to these Board appointments, EDIS is fortunate in having Anne Gurvin of Washington, D.C., act as our new international consultant. Anne will be helping the Board develop new ideas and programs for the Society.

### Help Needed for International Visitors

Some of our international members who have been invited to participate in the conference are finding it difficult to meet the necessary expenses of airfare and hotel accommodation. If any of our members would like to sponsor an international visitor to the conference, join with others in doing so, or help by contributing to the General Fund, please contact our Conference Director, Jonnie Guerra. (See page 4.)

## HoCoPoLitSo Brings Dickinson to Maryland

EDIS welcomes a new member organization, the Howard County (Maryland) Poetry and Literature Society, which has been active for several years in bringing awareness of Emily Dickinson to local schools and adult audiences.

Poet and actress Prudence Barry, one of the society's founding members, has appeared three times in William Luce's *Belle of Amherst* in a version directed by John Harding. The play will be presented a fourth time on Friday, March 6, 1992, at Howard Community College in a performance for 300 county high school students, funded in part by the Maryland Humanities Council. The performance will be followed by a discussion of Dickinson's life, led by Dr. Diana Rowland, who will also work with teachers of the attending students to prepare them and, through them, their students, before the performance. Ms. Barry and Mr. Harding will also participate. Several years ago the society presented a preview screening of the Emily Dickinson film in the *Voices and Visions* TV series on American poetry.

Dickinson lovers in the Maryland area wanting more information about HoCoPoLitSo and its activities should contact Ellen Conroy Kennedy, the society's president, at 10446 Waterfowl Terrace, Columbia, MD 21044 (301-596-6183).

## EDIS Dues Increased

Starting with 1992, membership dues in the Society have been increased to reflect the addition of *The Emily Dickinson Journal* to our publications. Contributing members and regular members who pay \$35.00 in dues will receive two issues of the *Journal* each year. Dues for members who wish to receive copies of the *Bulletin* only are \$15.00.

New members may join the Society by returning the application form on page 11 (or a photocopy of it) to Martha Nell Smith, EDIS treasurer.

## Dickinson Studies Celebrates 25th Anniversary

EDIS salutes *Dickinson Studies*, which begins its 25th year of publication on January 15, 1992, and its founding editor, Frederick L. Morey. In celebration of the occasion, subscribers will receive four issues in January, three of *Dickinson Studies* and one of *Higginson Journal*, as well as one issue in June. January highlights include an anniversary salute, an issue on Dickinson scholarship, a multicultural issue, and a bibliography by Barbara Kelly. Articles for the June issue are still welcome.

A three-year subscription to *Dickinson Studies* is available for \$50 for individuals, \$100 for institutions, from DH Press, 1330 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20005-4150. Make checks payable to Frederick L. Morey.

## Variorum Procedure Revised

Ralph Franklin suggests that he would be happy to hear directly from EDIS members who have queries, suggestions, and corrections relating to the revised variorum edition of Dickinson's poems now in preparation. Correspondence should be addressed to him at: The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 1603A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

## Notes & Queries

Harold L. Warner, Jr., of Laurel Hollow, New York, has written to ask if any member can supply him with the source of the quotation cited by Ted Hughes in his introduction to *A Choice of Emily Dickinson's Verse* (Faber & Faber, 1968) that Dickinson became "the greatest religious poet America has produced." Mr. Warner adds (quoting from a well known source), "Had you the leisure to tell me I should feel quick gratitude." Responses may be sent to the editor of the *Bulletin* for forwarding.

A news item from the *Jerusalem Post*, sent by Roger White focuses on Ruth Miller, who won the Melville Cane Award for *The Poetry of Emily Dickinson* in 1969. Now approaching her seventieth birthday, Miller teaches at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to which she immigrated in 1987, and recently published *Saul Bellow: A Biography of the Imagination*, a seventeen-year project.

William Luce reports that the LP recording of Julie Harris in *The Belle of Amherst*, listed in the spring issue, is still available. It can be ordered for \$19.96 plus \$2.50 shipping from Pathways, Six Craigil Circle, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Dickinson scholars and collectors may wish to acquaint themselves with Book Marks, an Amherst bookshop specializing in used books by and about Emily Dickinson (and other subjects). Under the proprietorship of Fred and Barbara Marks, the shop is located in the Carriage Shops at 1 East Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002 (413-549-6136).

Dickinsonians compiling Christmas lists may want to consider Tom Tierney's *Notable American Women Paper Dolls*, which includes their favorite poet, complete with two dresses—a "simple silk day dress" in brown (see page 12) and a "more formal afternoon dress" in white. Catalog #26011-9, \$3.95 (plus \$2.50 shipping) from Dover Publications, 31 E. 2nd Street, Mineola, NY 11501.

If you've graduated from paper dolls, there are now **Emily Dickinson t-shirts** from Shirtwerks' "Largely Literary T-Shirts" collection. Available in sizes L and XL only ("but they shrink"), they can be ordered from Charing Cross, Inc., 1135 E. 38th St., #105, Tulsa, OK 74135 (918-747-9574). Design (as shown on page 5) in black on white. (Keep in mind that we may have our own t-shirts at the conference next fall.)

The price for **back issues of the Bulletin** has been set at \$5.00 each. Copies of all back issues are available by sending your check (made payable to EDIS) to Georgiana Strickland, 133 Lackawanna Rd., Lexington, KY 40503.

## New Publications

### Dissertations

Information supplied by Karen Dandurand.

Luther, Carol Janette. "Mutability and the Moment in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson." Emory Univ., 1989. (DAI 51, July 1990)

Olsen, Stephen Tau. "Emily Dickinson's Sublime." SUNY-Stony Brook, 1989. (DAI 51, Oct. 1990)

Rosenthal, Melinda M. "Obtaining Her Own Extent: The Singular Quest of Emily Dickinson." Univ. of California, Riverside, 1989. (DAI 51, Aug. 1990)

Thomas, Mary Jo. "Articulation and the Agoraphobic Experience in the Poems of Emily Dickinson." Univ. of Florida, 1989. (DAI 51, 1990)

### Article

Hirshhorn, Norbert. "A Bandaged Secret: Emily Dickinson and Incest." *Journal of Psychohistory* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1991): 251-81. An examination of the Dickinson family in light of the "incest-family profile" and of the poet's reclusive behavior as a possible response to an experience of incest. [To be reviewed in the May/June issue.]

### Books

Walsh, John Evangelist. *This Brief Tragedy: Unraveling the Todd-Dickinson Affair*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991. 240 pp., illustrations. ISBN 0-8121-1119-X, \$18.95. [To be reviewed in the May/June issue.]

Dickie, Margaret. *Lyric Contingencies: Emily Dickinson and Wallace Stevens*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1991. 192 pp. ISBN 0-8122-3077-9, \$23.95. Explores "the ways in which the lyric genre is eccentric to, even disruptive of, the Emersonian tradition that has shaped American literary history" and "examines the radically experimental ways in which Dickinson and Stevens

used the genre to question cultural certainties of gender, language, and the nature of the individual" (catalog copy).

### Reviews

Cady, Edwin H., and Louis J. Budd, eds. *On Dickinson: The Best from American Literature*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1990. 239 pp. ISBN 0-8223-1014-7. \$35.00, £31.80.

The essays presented in this compilation of fourteen of the "best" works on Dickinson originally published in *American Literature* span seven decades and provide a significant range of approaches to her life and work. In their introductory remarks, the series editors define "best" as "original yet sound, interesting, and useful for the study of an author" (ix).

Yet the term "best" can be somewhat misleading. *American Literature* has not published a great deal of criticism on Dickinson. In their effort to present a volume that would include works from each decade since 1929, the editors often had no choice; to represent certain decades they had merely to reproduce every essay on Dickinson originally published in their pages.

The volume is weighted toward the explication of recurrent images or themes and reproduces essays that concentrate on groups of poems—for example, those about winter or starvation, or Dickinson as Latinist or Christocentric or a Metaphysic. Separately, these essays give solid readings to individual poems; when read together they are testimony to the varied and complex nature of Dickinson's *oeuvre* as a whole.

Also included is Betsy Erkkila's "Dickinson and Rich: Toward a Theory of Female Poetic Influence" (1984). While its focus is Rich's evolution as a poet, Dickinson is firmly set in place as her poetic precursor and influence.

Only two of the fourteen essays presented are biographical: George F. Whicher's "Dickinson's Earliest Friend" (1934), which discusses the poet's relationship with Ben Newton, and Heather

Kirk Thomas's 1988 work defining Dickinson as anorexic. The gap of more than fifty years in biographical entries is regrettable, but those chosen nicely illustrate two of the contending trends of much Dickinson biography: those that speculate about her relationships with different men and those that pathologize the unusual circumstances of her life.

Particularly conspicuous for their absence are Karen Dandurand's prize-winning 1984 "New Dickinson Civil War Publications" and David J.M. Higgins's 1966 "Twenty-five Poems by Emily Dickinson: Unpublished Variant Versions." In choosing not to reproduce them, the editors betray a bias against bibliographic work, despite their introductory claim that "*American Literature* honors literary history and criticism equally—along with bibliography" (ix).

The Dickinson scholar will appreciate this compilation for its convenience: rather than having to thumb through back issues, she or he will now be able simply to reach for one book. This volume will also be useful for students in that it illustrates the critical shift that has taken place in Dickinson studies. While considering her work with respect, the early essays nonetheless treat her as "one of the most interesting of our minor poets" (Anna Mary Wells, 17), a poet for whom should not be sought "the status of a great thinker" (Charles Anderson, 35). Students reading through the essays will be able to watch Dickinson's reputation blossom to the point where her complexity and subtlety of thought and style are considered in full.

Beth Olivares  
Fordham University

Kirkby, Joan. *Emily Dickinson*. London: Macmillan, 1991. 165 pp. ISBN 0-333-42067-5. Price unavailable.

Speaking about her first chapter, "Emily Dickinson's Life," Joan Kirkby acknowledges that in order to reveal "the nature and quality of [Dickinson's] attachments and the preoccupations of her imagina-



tion," Dickinson's "words will be used wherever practical" (2). The announcement serves as a motto for Kirkby's whole enterprise. While informed by a feminist perspective as well as a thorough knowledge of the range of Dickinson criticism, this slim volume in the Macmillan Women Writers series consists largely of close readings of Dickinson's poems and letters.

Because Kirkby's readings are often startlingly fresh and compelling, this clear and compact general overview of Dickinson's life, her poetic themes and strategies, and her twentieth-century critics will prove useful to scholar, teacher, and general reader alike.

Kirkby begins by describing Dickinson's home and education, then her passion for friends, especially Susan Gilbert, and for living by Emersonian lights, and finally her relation to various mentors and the possibilities of publication. Kirkby reminds us that Higginson's contradictory relation to Dickinson as an artist—"censoring, while purporting to assist"—was typical of male reactions to women writers in the nineteenth century, while the "bitter complexities of the Susan-Austin-Mabel triangle" both helped and hindered the publication of her poems over time.

Chapter 2 offers an explanation for Kirkby's chapter divisions when she remarks that "Inevitably the themes of the poetry are as protean as the mind itself. The first editors divided them into Life, Love, Nature, Time, Eternity, but any grouping would do" (19). Kirkby's own categories—"The Grammar of Self," "The Poetry of 'As If,'" "Poems of Gender," "The Gothic Mode," and "Nature Writings"—are amply justified, however, by the close readings that document and dramatize the particular theme or mode explored.

Chapter 4, "Poems of Gender," for example, makes a strong case for Dickinson's awareness and indictment of the "power relations of patriarchy" and her resultant sense of exclusion. According to Kirkby, "the violence inherent in masculine authority" is revealed in poem 315 ("He fumbles at your Soul"), while poem 754, "My Life had

stood—a Loaded Gun," offers a critique of the woman who gains power through complicity with a male power. As Kirkby puts it, the gun or woman "is used for the purposes [the master] appoints, and his prove to be deadly pursuits; they specifically 'hunt the Doe'; the woman is complicit in acts of violence against her own sex" (79).

The other chapters similarly undertake brief and intelligent readings. "The Grammar of the Self" reveals Dickinson to be confident of "the power of the mind to adapt"; "The Poetry of 'As If'" underscores the common-sense view that "our conjectures of the world *are* our world"; "The Gothic Mode" celebrates Dickinson's capacity for exploring the forbidden and dangerous border between life and death; and "Nature Writings" finds Dickinson affirming mutability.

Kirkby's last chapter, "Dickinson Criticism," a compressed tour de force, continues the book's project of illuminating the force and importance of Dickinson's self-conscious choices in her life and art.

Diane P. Freedman  
Skidmore College

*Editor's Note: The book listing under the name Joan Kirby in the spring 1991 issue of the Bulletin was apparently a mistaken identification of Kirkby's book.*

**Loeffelholz, Mary. *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1991. 179 pages. ISBN 0-252-01789-7, \$32.50 cloth; 0-252-06175-6, \$13.95 paper.**

The dictionary defines a boundary as "something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent." In this new critical work, Mary Loeffelholz examines the dividing lines between Dickinson and the feminine literary tradition, both past and present, and details the division between the male romantic tradition and the voice that was distinctly Dickinson's. To these ends, she uses both psychoanalysis and deconstruction to "pose important questions" (4) of Dickinson's text.

Though the task is formidable, Loeffelholz succeeds in highlighting aspects of Dickinson that are unique, belonging to neither the male nor the

female tradition. She wants to "address Dickinson's fundamental contribution to our very idea of a 'women's literary tradition'" (3) and to "extend the conjunction of deconstruction and feminism in Dickinson studies to include varieties of psychoanalytic theory...that take language seriously into account" (4).

In chapter 1, Loeffelholz examines a direction Dickinson begins in her early work, and distinguishes it from the experience of the male Romantic poet, who finds in nature a supportive and sympathetic ear which he easily differentiates from himself because of gender. Dickinson, in contrast, finds no such support and, though she tries to be heard, is denied speech: "The language of nature...falls upon unresponsive ears" (33).

Chapter 2 argues that Dickinson's voice identifies not with the mother that figures so prominently in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* but with Christ, the suffering son, whom she equals in suffering in order to gain recognition from the Father. Dickinson's voice is strong in her self-crucifixion, and she claims language for her own.

A close examination of passages from *Aurora Leigh*, which "Dickinson seems virtually to have known by heart" (67), shows how unlike Barrett Browning's heroine Dickinson's speaker is and how much closer it is to the tradition of the mad wife in *Jane Eyre*, who sacrifices her own body.

Beginning with Adrienne Rich's poem "From an Old House in America," Loeffelholz discusses violence in Dickinson's poems. "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun" provides the avenue along which the author travels to clarify "boundaries between inside and out in Dickinson's poetry" and to link this imagery to "recurrent themes in other nineteenth century poetry by women" (84).

Loeffelholz demonstrates how prison imagery, so popular among nineteenth-century women writers, portrays an inward division in the work of Dickinson and that, unlike "the unified, imaginary individual woman" (110) posited by such feminist critics as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, represents rather a place of division that results in a violent interior

split. According to Loeffelholz, “this split is female identity” (111). She also uses poem 652, “A Prison gets to be a friend,” to show how Dickinson’s work can be better understood with reference to Freudian and Lacanian theories.

Chapter 4 deals with Dickinson’s withdrawal into the house and again distinguishes the poet from the feminist identification of the female body with the house. Loeffelholz suggests that for Dickinson the house was a sheltering image that allowed her to be within a safe boundary yet be able to venture outside, especially through the sense of hearing.

The final chapter explores the differences between the male and female traditions of elegy. Whereas the male elegy depends on separation and “rupture” (152), the female tradition demonstrates the desire to connect. Leaving us in the twentieth century with the voice of Adrienne Rich, who measures the distance and changes between Dickinson’s time and her own, Loeffelholz concludes that differences within the female literary tradition must be acknowledged. She chooses Rich’s own words to end her study, calling for some “hermeneutics of suspicion” (171) in order to attain a truer understanding of individual poets and their literary tradition, an approach she herself has admirably demonstrated in her challenge of literary boundaries.

Maryanne Garbowsky

**Small, Judy Jo. *Positive as Sound: Emily Dickinson’s Rhyme*.** Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1990. 261 pp. ISBN 0-8203-1227-4. \$35.00.

The “music” of poetry is a musty concept to readers today, but it wasn’t to Dickinson, as Judy Jo Small argues at the outset of her suggestive, clear-headed study of Dickinson’s rhyme. In a fine, polemical introduction, Small grants Dickinson a good deal of control over the jingle that cooled her tramp, while cautioning with refreshing plainness that “We cannot suppose that every formal feature of her style is politically motivated or that her poetry is advancing (or retreating) into a kind of indecipherable babble.”

The introduction sheds light on some of the blind alleys charted by students of Dickinson’s rhymes. They are not careless or clumsy, any more than they are antipatriarchal “maneuvers” or “dissonances that reached her ears from a fractured universe.” Even figuring out what constitutes a “kind” of rhyme in Dickinson is difficult, and Small avoids becoming a sub-sub-categorizer while usefully showing the range of questions left out of others’ calculations and statistical compilings, particularly matters of stress.

Dickinson’s rhymes are not just hymnal harmonies soured. Rather, their honey is best tasted in the variety of curious alliances, phonetic, etymological, and allusive bloodlines that may link members of rhymed pairings, as well as the affiliations of surrounding words unlinked by sound. Small’s vigorous comparison of the rhymes of “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain” and “I felt a Cleaving in my Mind” brings this home.

*Positive as Sound* is organized around groupings of poems on the basis of their rhyming effects. Chapter 2 treats rhyme as an indicator of poetic structure, looking first at poems that shift from full to partial rhyme, then vice versa. Dickinson replaces “the familiar chime of ordinary rhymes with a moderate acoustic instability and ambiguity.” In other cases she is experimental, daring, using “progressions and dynamic modulations of rhyme that help shape and support the structure and movement of whole poems.”

Dickinson’s “Experiments in Sound” (chapter 3) thrive on an auditory flexibility “that leans at times in the direction of pure phonic play,” in which rhyme may go against the grain of expectations. Rhyme’s arbitrariness can be a spur to invention, as in Small’s ingenious hunch in examining *rime riche* or homonymic rhyme (chapter 4) that “*Earn* probably played a heuristic role in suggesting to the poet the dazzling idea of ‘merry Dust’ dancing within a funereal Urn.”

The final chapter, on how Dickinson uses rhyme to bring her poems to resounding or muted endings, applies Herrnstein Smith’s taxonomy of “anticlousural devices” to Dickinson, for the

most part convincingly. One quibble: Small’s argument about how rhyme mutes poetic endings requires a belief in the “recurrent tendency in her poetry...to surprise closural expectations with abrupt stops.” Small here fails to address a familiar problem in reader-response arguments; effects attributed to readerly surprise surely must diminish as they are repeated.

A brief conclusion recognizes the danger of overstating the aptness of whatever acoustic effects one discovers, of finding in any aural patterns grist for any thematic mill, while calling eloquently for further attention to how “acoustic difference gathers meaning” in Dickinson.

A strength of Small’s argument is her considered refusal to turn claims for the overall aesthetic effect of Dickinson’s rhyme into infallible clues for local readings: each poem, each line, each acoustic slippage and phonetic slantiness cannot ride the same hobbyhorse. Granted that, after a while, Small’s reader can predict that a paragraph on a poem will have a happy ending and we will be assured that whatever the rhyme is doing is “brilliantly consistent” or “perfectly suited” to the poem’s concerns. On the whole, Small knows that an overall thesis about the poet’s acoustic contours cannot be used as a map to navigate any particular hump in the topography.

“Dickinson’s poetry indicates that there are ways that rhyme-sounds can undergird meaning and even constitute meaning,” she argues, while refuting the claim that certain phonetic kinships “have some particular emotional shading.” It is not a matter of slant rhymes reflecting unorthodox thoughts or the speaker’s despair or the speaker’s sense of the disruptions of the world. Nor do “full rhymes” register assurance and orthodoxy or—if you hedge your bets the other way—ironically, chimingly undercut assurance or orthodoxy. Rhyme is less programmatic and more protean than that: “Rhymes have whatever meaning they do have only in the context of a rhyme pattern, which exists in the context of the whole pattern of words, ideas, rhythms, and other sounds of a poem,

and that pattern in turn exists against the historical background of previous poetry."

This book should lead to alert listening to the commerce between syllable and sound, not only in Dickinson but in poetry generally. Small finds the music without splitting the lark.

Debra Fried  
Cornell University

**Waugh, Dorothy.** *Emily Dickinson Briefly*. New York: Vantage Press, 1990. 332 pp. ISBN 0-533-08762-7. \$16.25.

For the second time, Dorothy Waugh has privately published a biographical study of Emily Dickinson, written with the authority of one who grew up and spent many years of her long life in Amherst, one who can convey a sense of how life there was lived. Despite certain problems, her book should not be overlooked.

Jay Leyda always insisted that *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson* was only the start of an effort to unearth the myriad materials that could shed light on the poet's life. Waugh's obsession with getting at the factual record, her persistence in scouring genealogies, forgotten memorials, and obscure nineteenth-century anniversary publications has yielded valuable new information about people and families close to Dickinson. Her gleanings, for instance, give new breath

to the circle of friends so dear to Dickinson growing up, the seven or eight young females who wove in and out of Emily's girlhood and were recipients of her early letters.

That the network of interrelationships surrounding the poet was far denser than is generally realized emerges with Waugh's portrayals of some of Dickinson's early teachers and the fuller attention given several young men whose friendship Dickinson enjoyed in the period after attending Mount Holyoke Seminary.

Repeated here is the thesis Waugh advanced in her previous volume, *Emily Dickinson's Beloved: A Surmise*, that Dickinson's "Master" letters were drafted to Richard Salter Storrs Dickinson, an Amherst College graduate and Emily's fifth cousin once removed, whose family had many ties with the Edward Dickinsons. Rev. Richard Dickinson was settled as a young minister in Philadelphia and engaged to be married when Dickinson visited that city in the spring of 1855. Although there is certainly reason to imagine that she may have met him socially at that time and also been saddened a year and a half later by news of his death from consumption, the conclusion is not "inescapable," as Miss Waugh would have it, that the poet fell in love with Rev. Dickinson. More to the point, another interesting possibility has

been added to the speculative list of candidates for the "Master" role.

*Emily Dickinson Briefly* is not without its faults. Several idiosyncratic features, including Waugh's writing style, her manner of incorporating lists of Dickinson's poems to illustrate her points, and an eccentric and incomplete index, are off-putting but should not deter readers from appreciating the investigative and at times refreshing qualities of this book.

Another hurdle remains: documentation for the new factual material is far from user-friendly. In order to confirm its accuracy, one must send for lists of references and sources to the Jones Library in Amherst, where Waugh has deposited these materials. Her system is difficult to decipher, its paging sequence does not align with the book's pagination, and neither the number of references provided nor the sources listed are as complete as they should be. The foot- ing, therefore, is a bit treacherous; anyone citing the book's information should do his or her homework first.

Still, some new trails worthy of attention have been blazed. Dorothy Waugh's researches have enriched the record and should inspire those Dickinson devotees engaged in the search for further enlightening information.

Polly Longworth

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## Adequate Circumference

("She's and endstop"—Oates)

Emily stitches another bundle of twenty or so, another life's work. She hears father erupting on the staircase, she hears Austin writing next door, she hears her sister's sociality. Yet another bundle she stuffs in the desk, as dashes and capitals spill out of anonymous drawers. The society of her empty room moves toward the cemetery window, causing lines without stops and adequate rhymes to phrase her urgent terror. No one ever escapes from upstairs not Hitchcock or Higginson, not Holyoke or Master, not even the edited daguerreotype herself. The reddish hair and white frock rebel into a circumference, so adequate a circumference of white heat that she utters mystic hymns of sustenance, sustenance enough.

F.J. Schaack

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## In This Issue

- 1 To Quote or Not to Quote? BETH KILEY KINDER and MAUD WILCOX
- 2 *The Emily Dickinson Journal* Suzanne Juhasz
- 3 Dickinson Library Collections: The Jones Library DANIEL LOMBARDO
- 4 EDIS International Conference Plans and Schedule JONNIE GUERRA
- 5 Mutual Plums: Dickinson's Letters JANE DONAHUE EBERWEIN
- 5 Call for ALA Papers
- 6-7 Members' News
  - Annual Meeting
  - Membership Report
  - New Board Members
  - International Visitors
  - HoCoPoLitSo
  - Dues Increased
  - Dickinson Studies* Anniversary
  - Variorum Procedure Revised
  - Notes and Queries
- 8 New Publications
- 8 Reviews
  - Cady and Budd. *On Dickinson: The Best from American Literature* BETH OLIVARES
  - Kirkby, Joan. *Emily Dickinson* DIANE P. FREEDMAN
  - Loeffelholz, Mary. *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory* MARYANNE GARBOWSKY
  - Small, Judy Jo. *Positive as Sound: Emily Dickinson's Rhyme* DEBRA FRIED
  - Waugh, Dorothy. *Emily Dickinson Briefly* POLLY LONGSWORTH
- 12 "Adequate Circumference" [Poem] F.J. SCHAACK



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That such a Doll should grow"

*EDIS Bulletin* (ISSN 1055-3932) is published twice yearly, May/June and November/December, by the Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc. Second-class postage is paid at Lexington, KY 40506. Membership in the Society is open to all persons with an interest in Emily Dickinson and her work; for further information, contact Margaret Freeman, President, EDIS, 1300 Greenleaf Canyon, Topanga, CA 90290.

Annual dues are \$35.00 for regular members (includes subscription to the *Bulletin* and *The Emily Dickinson Journal*), \$15.00 for special members (the *Bulletin* only), and \$50.00 for contributing members. Membership inquiries and changes of address should be sent to Jane Eberwein, Department of English, Oakland University, Rochester MI 48009. Membership applications should be sent to Martha Nell Smith, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Submissions and other communications for the *Bulletin* should be sent to Georgiana Strickland, 133 Lackawanna Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Submission deadlines are February 1 and September 1. All articles become the property of the *Bulletin*. Back issues are available for \$5.00 each. Copyright ©1991 by the Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc.

## EDIS Bulletin

c/o Georgiana Strickland  
The University Press of Kentucky  
The University of Kentucky  
Lexington, KY 40506

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY  
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