

Bulletin

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

Entertaining Plated Wares

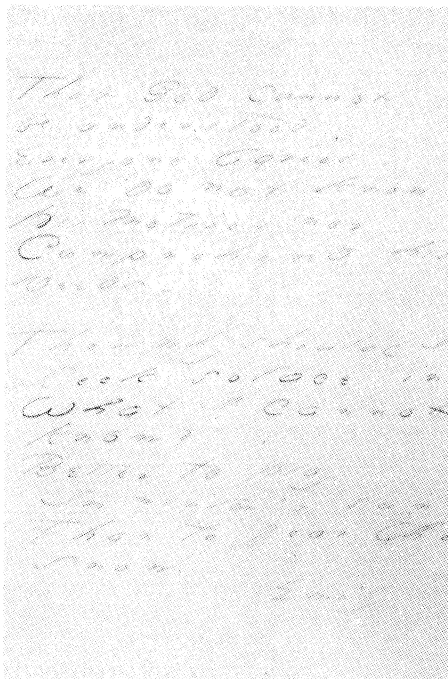
By Daniel Lombardo

Editor's Note: The discovery of a previously unknown Dickinson poem is an event of extraordinary importance—not only to Dickinson enthusiasts but to the literary world as well. In the article that follows, Daniel Lombardo, Curator of Special Collections at the Jones Library in Amherst, tells of such a discovery and its startling conclusion. The *Bulletin* is pleased to present his tale of modern-day literary detection.

The word that comes first to mind is passion—the passion of those who read Emily Dickinson, the passion for truth and, conversely, for deception, my own loss of passion when my worst fears proved true, and my regaining of it when the Dickinson world rallied.

In the midst of planning for the 1997 EDIS Annual Meeting in May, I received from Sotheby's, the famous New York auction house, their Fine Books and Manuscripts catalog for a sale to be held June 3. Lot 74 was listed as "Dickinson, Emily / Autograph poetical manuscript signed ('Emily'), in pencil . . . on blue-lined paper with embossed insignia at top left corner . . . portion of integral blank marked 'Aunt Emily' in an unidentified hand in red ink . . . / UNPUBLISHED POETICAL MANUSCRIPTS BY DICKINSON ARE OF THE UTMOST RARITY." On the facing page was a photograph of the manuscript in Dickinson's distinctive hand. The estimated value was given as \$10,000-15,000. I knew that such a rare item could easily sell for more than \$20,000 and that, with only a few days until the sale, the Jones Library alone could not assemble such funding.

As a courtesy, I contacted Ralph Franklin to be sure he knew of the poem, as he is working on a landmark edition of Dickinson's poetry, expected to appear in 1998. He was aware of the poem and of the sale at Sotheby's. With that, I considered my



part done. As the EDIS Annual Meeting approached, though, I kept thinking of the poem and felt some responsibility to attempt to bring it "back" to Amherst.

On Saturday, May 31, as part of the EDIS meeting, Marcy Tanter held an informal luncheon session at which everyone was invited to share news relevant to the world of Dickinson. I announced the upcoming sale of an "unpublished Dickinson poem" and read it to the group. Within twenty minutes, generous members of that group pledged \$8,000. I think we

were all stunned by the eagerness and sense of purpose of the twenty-five or so people in the room.

With only three days till the auction, hard questions had to be faced immediately. Where would the rest of the money come from? Could I get to New York on June 3 and still leave for Italy the next day, as I had planned? I knew we needed to have the poem for study, regardless of any questions of its quality, but was I sure it was from Dickinson's hand? (I recalled that Sotheby's had previously put up for auction a Mabel Loomis Todd transcript as an authentic Dickinson manuscript.¹)

The handwriting, as compared with examples in the Jones Library collections, was right for sometime in the 1870s. The paper, as described in the catalog, is a paper she is known to have used. I had no reason to doubt the authenticity of the manuscript at that point, but I did talk again with Franklin, the scholar most intimate with Dickinson manuscripts, about the possible range of bids. He told me he was planning to include the poem in his edition, and he wished us luck.

I then called Bonnie Isman, director of the Jones Library, who offered to come into the library and determine how much gift money was in my department's budget. Since it was impractical for me to get to New York for the sale, I called Sotheby's and arranged to bid by phone during the auction.

The following day, Sunday, June 1, at the EDIS annual business meeting, I was asked to give an update. My department was able to add \$5,000 to what had been raised the day before. To my surprise,

members of EDIS pledged another \$4,000. Coincidentally, the Friends of the Jones Library System would be meeting the next morning. At that meeting, we were pledged a generous \$5,000.

On June 3, what had seemed impossible only a few days before became reality. I successfully bid \$21,000 on the poem (the 15 percent commission brought the total to \$24,150). My assistant, Jessica Teters, volunteer Nonny Burack, and I then had the euphoric task of calling donors with the good news. The next day I left for Italy, leaving to Isman the pleasant job of responding to a press eager to announce an exciting acquisition.

I returned on June 18 to find a series of published articles and requests for interviews about the poem. On June 20 I phoned Marsha Malinowski at Sotheby's to see if she would release the name of the poem's consignor. As often happens, the seller wished to remain anonymous, but Malinowski offered to contact that person on my behalf, and a week later she called with the following information: According to the consignor, he or she had bought the poem from a dealer who had bought it from a midwestern collector who had since passed away.

At the same time, I began researching the "Aunt Emily" written in red on the reverse side. I compared it to both juvenile and adult versions of the handwriting of Emily's niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, from the Jones Library collections. I contacted both Mark Brown at Brown University and Leslie Morris at the Houghton Library at Harvard for examples of the writing of her nephew, Edward (Ned) Dickinson and her Norcross and Newman cousins, on the chance that one of them may have referred to the poet as "Aunt" Emily. None of the samples

matched, but other cousins were possibilities and remained to be explored.



Embossed on the manuscript was the papermaker's mark: the word CONGRESS over a depiction of the U.S. Capitol. Using Franklin's *Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, I found two such bosses, one from paper Dickinson used in 1871-72 and another used in about 1874. The boss on our manuscript more closely resembled the former, used in Set 10.

I compared the handwriting to that in Set 10 and to original Dickinson letters and poems in the Jones Library collections. Though no expert in handwriting analysis, I noted multiple similarities specific to the Dickinson hand of the early 1870s, particularly two forms each of lowercase "e" and "d" that matched those found in the 1875 poem "A little madness in the Spring" (P 1333) and in Dickinson's 1871 letter to Fanny Shepard Boltwood (L 363), both from the Jones collections.

The first of several critical days in this unexpected scenario came on Tuesday, July 22. Ralph Franklin telephoned me to tell me of a call he had received from collector Brent Ashworth of Provo, Utah, who said he had seen our poem in the hands of one Mark Hofmann in 1984. Hofmann's name was not unknown to me. I knew of him as a dealer and, more significantly, as the forger of Mormon Church documents who is now in prison for the 1985 pipebomb murder of two people in connection with that forgery. Franklin obtained Ashworth's permission for me to telephone him.

When I phoned Ashworth on July 23, he told me that Hofmann had shown him

the poem in his (Hofmann's) living room in about 1984 or 1985. Ashworth had had no interest in purchasing Dickinson manuscripts at that time, and the doubts about God expressed in the poem conflicted with his own Mormon beliefs. He believed the poem had soon after gone from Hofmann to a gallery in Las Vegas, Nevada, then known as the American Museum of Historical Documents (now the Gallery of History), owned by Todd Axelrod.

Ashworth had not questioned the genuineness of the poem at the time and was not sure, as of our conversation, whether it was authentic or not. He commented that Hofmann had been a dealer in authentic documents as well as a forger. He told me he himself had lost close to a million dollars to Hofmann and that before the June 3 sale he had telephoned Sotheby's to tell them that Hofmann had at one point owned the poem.

In light of these new developments, Ralph Franklin, in the midst of preparing for a trip to Austria, quickly arranged to come to Amherst, and on July 25 he made a thorough examination of the paper, the papermaker's boss, the poem (letter by letter), the signature, and the words "Aunt Emily." He noted subtle variations in letters that Dickinson used in the early 1870s that would have been appropriate to the date of the paper: the form of "d" that appeared only at ends of words, the style of double "e" in words like "seek," the way "an" is linked in one appearance of "cannot" and unlinked in the other. Like brushstrokes on an artist's masterpiece, all were points characteristic of Dickinson. Yet, as Franklin pointed out, Vermeer and Van Gogh have had their forgers, too.

We discussed the fact that if Hofmann had access to Franklin's *Manuscript Books*,

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he could have seen her handwriting of the period and known the types of paper she used. Franklin noted, however, that Hofmann would have had to use other sources to get the right style of the signed "Emily" for that period, as it does not appear in his book. He was not ready to say the manuscript was either authentic or a forgery. We agreed that announcing our suspicions at that point would serve only to taint the poem forever, and as yet we had no proof that it was forged. It is often easier to expose a fake (through chemical analysis, for example) than to prove beyond doubt that a manuscript is authentic. It was clear that a lot more research was needed.

Meanwhile, we had been planning a gala celebration of the newly acquired poem. On July 31, nearly 200 people came to the Jones Library to see the manuscript and the exhibit that went with it and to hear speakers and performers. It was a moment none of us will forget. Regardless of the fate of our new poem, the enthusiasm for and deep appreciation of the life and work of Dickinson were wonderful to see.

I of course talked to Franklin about how he had first become aware of the poem. In late 1994, he had been sent a fax of it from the Gallery of History in Las Vegas. The Gallery, which already had 1871-72 as a date for the manuscript, asked him for any additional information he might have—Was it unpublished? To whom had it been sent?—but not whether it was authentic. There was no mention of Hofmann nor any other information about provenance, though Franklin asked for it. At the end of the exchange, the Gallery asked him if they could use his name when offering the manuscript to potential buyers, an endorsing role that he declined. The Gallery, he was told, would be offering the manuscript for \$45,000.

On July 30, I telephoned the Gallery of History and spoke to Senior Vice-President Garrett Williams. He said his business had had the poem for quite some time before 1994. He recalled that the manuscript had been "acquired in California as part of an estate of a collector who died." But according to Brent Ashworth, the Gallery of History had acquired the poem shortly after he saw it in Hofmann's

hands. Without mentioning Hofmann, I pressed Williams for more details, at which point he said his computers were down and he had no access to his records. He suggested I call back in a week.

I had by this time been reading several books published on the Mark Hofmann case. In August I noted in Richard E. Turley Jr.'s *Victims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case*² that investigators had found a paper in Hofmann's cell on which he had listed the Mormon documents he forged. On the reverse side were names of literary and historical figures whose writing he alleged he had also forged. Among such figures as Milton, Myles Standish, Paul Revere, and Mark Twain, was Emily Dickinson.

On August 3 Franklin e-mailed me that, given the provenance then unfolding and further study of the document, his confidence in it was greatly diminished and he planned to remove the poem from the main part of his edition. Later I learned from him that, among other things, the lack of slant on the crossbar of the capital T's, while findable in Dickinson's handwriting, was exceedingly rare, yet this document had three of them. The "E" on "Everyone" was awkwardly formed, as though the hand was unfamiliar with the expected pattern, and the same letter in "Emily" was formed quite differently—in a way characteristic of Dickinson but at a later time than this manuscript purported to be from.

On August 4, I telephoned Selby Kiffer and Marsha Malinowski at Sotheby's. I explained that suspicions had arisen and asked their help in tracing the manuscript's provenance and proving its authenticity. Malinowski assured me that there was "absolutely no question" of its authenticity. Kenneth Rendell, nationally known manuscript specialist, had seen it, and Kiffer told me that "ten to fifteen manuscript specialists" had examined it. He reassured me that Sotheby's fully guarantees the authenticity of what it sells.

Frustrated that the text of Turley's book offered nothing else on Hofmann's non-Mormon forgeries (as did none of the others), I read through more than 100 pages of notes at the back of the book. There I found the name Jennifer S. Larson

of Yerba Buena Books, San Francisco, who had "devoted considerable attention to Hofmann's non-Mormon Americana forgeries." After several calls, I located her home in Rochester, New York, but her husband gave me a number in Colorado where she was currently on a business trip.

When reached, Jennifer Larson proved to be extremely valuable and generous. She asked me the first lines of the poem and said she was suspicious but that all her files were back in Rochester. She offered to go through them when she got home and send me copies of relevant material.

On August 6, I attempted to contact Kenneth Rendell, who had been an expert witness in the Hofmann trial and a consultant on the Hitler Diaries case. He was in the South Pacific, but his office offered to forward a fax to him. Rendell declined to examine the manuscript for authentication, and his office informed me he no longer provides that service. I asked if he had indeed seen the poem before Sotheby's sold it. If he had done so, his office was unaware of it.

I then contacted Robert Backman, a clinical graphologist who had worked for the Defense Department detecting forgeries during World War II. Backman examined the manuscript and compared it to other Dickinson manuscripts. He said the paper and handwriting were right and the pencil used for the text of the poem was nineteenth century. (The fact that the manuscript was *not* written in ink made detection much more difficult.) The "Aunt Emily" he said was not written in ink, as Sotheby's had described it, but in red indelible pencil, which was correct for the period.

Backman declared the manuscript authentic and said there was no reason to return it to Sotheby's. I then told him there was one more element to consider: evidence that the poem had been in the hands of Mark Hofmann. Backman replied, "That changes everything."

On August 10 I again phoned Jennifer Larson, who was back in Rochester. She revealed that Hofmann had told Michael George, an investigator from the County Attorney's Office in Salt Lake, that he had forged a Dickinson poem and sold it

Continued on page 21

“Saint Emily” and Kathleen Norris

By Eleanor Heginbotham

Last spring's *Bulletin* announced the publication of Kathleen Norris's *Cloister Walk*. I am pleased in this issue to present Eleanor Heginbotham's exploration of the affinities between Norris and Dickinson. Those interested in studying the relationship further can do so when the next Norris book, *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*, is issued from Riverhead this spring. According to Heginbotham, the new work is “spiced with Dickinson-like humor.”

Jonnie Guerra, *Series Editor*

I believe that references to scripture may be found in every one of [Dickinson's] poems and letters.... Emily Dickinson is the patron saint of biblical commentary in the poetic mode.

—*The Cloister Walk* [222]

Kathleen Norris has absorbed, contained, and transmuted to the twentieth century the woman she calls “one of the bravest poets who ever lived” and “our saint” (“Let Emily Sing” 219, 229). If Dickinson is brave to Kathleen Norris, Kathleen Norris is brave to readers of her six books—the last three best sellers. It is true that Norris does *not* disdain “print”; it is true that she *did* take “the honorable Work/Of Woman, and of Wife” (P 732); it is true also that she has accepted serenely that she could not escape a growing “fame.” Nevertheless, she emulates her saint. For Norris and for Dickinson, writing represents a deliberate choice of vocation, one governed by the transcendent value they give to poetry, prayer, discipline, and love, words that, for both, merge metaphorically into synonyms.

Serious as all this sounds, Norris and Dickinson play. Readers of the *Bulletin* know how true this is of Dickinson. Those who have heard Norris on her book tours or who, as I, have had the chance to visit with her know how she spices up her meditations with funny stories. A vivid picture accompanying a *People* maga-

zine profile reveals how she loves to laugh—even in church. Pictured there in the sanctuary of St. John's Abbey in Minnesota, surrounded by brown-robed monks, she sits in a scarlet dress, her head thrown back, laughing. All the monks are laughing too.¹ In that picture Norris seems to be reenacting the spirit she conveys in “Emily in Choir,” the last poem in her collection *Little Girls in Church*.



David Dwyer

The poem conflates two Emilys. The contemporary Emily “dances through the Invitatory” in the [St. John's] abbey church. To break the boredom, she asks her father, “Why are the men/wearing costumes?” Her father's answer, “They're brothers,” prompts a line that leads directly to that other Emily. “Well!” she says, “They must have a very strict mother!” “*The Grave is strict*,” the poem continues, and then, as the reader can see, through Norris's use of Dickinson's words,² the two “children” merge. Beginning the poem with the little girl dancing in place, ending it with the zithery freedom of the trinitarian Bee, Butterfly, and Breeze (easily standing in for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), and centering it with the repeated “strict,” Norris not only talks about Dickinson, but also emulates her

mentor's ability to balance gravity with levity.

On the one hand, Norris celebrates “the brat” in Dickinson, using the term both in her *Cross Currents* article (223) about Dickinson's religious life and in *The Cloister Walk*, where Norris speaks of Dickinson and her contemporary, St. Therese. “Here a saint emerges,” says Norris of Therese, “an astonishing brat who dares to speak thus to God, in a voice that Emily Dickinson might well recognize as kindred to her own” (CW 28). The “brat” quality Norris ascribes to Therese and Dickinson results from “a temerity equal to that of Paul.” For Therese, Dickinson, and, one gathers, Norris herself, that temerity enables or provokes a lifelong grappling with God. To Dickinson, says Norris, God “was capricious, a patriarchal tyrant who had perversely let her desire and experience something only to snatch it from her.”

This God was jealous (childishly so, Emily thought), and had a decidedly cruel streak in His dealings with human beings” (“Let Emily Sing” 222). If Dickinson reacted to such perceived cruelty as a “brat,” as Norris says, “‘the Brat’ in Dickinson never quite conceals her acute sense of pain.” Such an insight into Dickinson, together with her own autobiographical revelations in her memoirs and poetry, suggests that Norris would echo Dickinson's assertion that “Power is only Pain —/ Stranded thro' Discipline” (P 252). “Discipline,” the necessary ingredient in transforming pain into poetic power, returns us to that word “strict” in Norris's poem discussed earlier. Neither “strict” nor “pain” is pejorative to either poet.

Early in *The Cloister Walk* Norris parallels the discipline of Dickinson with that of St. Therese (28). Although even a short visit with Norris convinces one of her down-to-earth, in-this-world, good humored, chatty nature and makes one hesitate to nominate her to complete a triumvirate of saints, what she says of

Emily in Choir

Emily holds her father's hand;
she dances in place
through the Invitatory,
and refuses the book with no pictures.
"This is boring," she whispers
in the silence between psalms.

Candles lit in honor of the guardian angels
make rivers of air that bend the stone
walls of the abbey church. "Why are the men
wearing costumes?" Emily asks.
"They're brothers,"
her father explains, and Emily says, "Well!
They must have a very strict mother!"

The Grave is strict, says another Emily;
Emily-here-and-now plays with the three
shadows her hands make
on the open page. *While the clergyman
tells Father and Vinnie that "this Corruptible
shall put on Incorruption,"* it has already done so
and they go defrauded.

Brimful of knowledge, Emily shakes my arm:
"They're the monks," she says,
"the men who sing," and she runs
up the aisle, out into the day,
to *where the angels are . . .*

In the name of the Bee –
And of the Butterfly –
And of the Breeze – Amen!

From *Little Girls in Church*, © 1995 by Kathleen Norris.
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Therese and Dickinson fits her as well. As did Dickinson and Therese from their monastic rooms, she too has stayed still and "travelled extensively." Admittedly, her route has been different from the two about whom she writes so vividly, but in the past few years, literally from her own cell in a Benedictine monastery, she has crafted memoirs and poems that call to mind and include snippets from those of Dickinson.

Paraphrasing Dickinson's famous remonstrance to Higginson not to confuse her with the speaker of the poem (L 268),

Norris says, "The 'I' in a poem is never me—how could it be?" (*Dakota* 171). As one reads her poems and autobiographical meditations, however, one comes to know what drove Norris to admire Dickinson. Born in Washington, D.C., to a musician with the Navy Band and the daughter of a midwest doctor, Norris grew up in Illinois, South Dakota, and most influentially in Hawaii, where high school teachers encouraged her to read Dickinson because of her interest in nineteenth-century recluses. At Bennington College two professors introduced her to

the three-volume Johnson edition of Dickinson's letters. How much the Dickinson letters had to do with what happened later Norris doesn't say, but she does tell us that during the 1970s in the New York stage of her life "a [Dickinson-like] question crept into my consciousness, seemingly out of the blue: 'What is Sin?'" (*Dakota* 92).

Forming the question for fresh examination led Norris to make two deliberate and difficult choices—and to write two popular books of prose-poem essays. First, twenty years ago she and her husband, poet David Dwyer, moved to the plains. In *Dakota*, which is subtitled *A Spiritual Geography*, Dickinson's presence is less overt than in the poetry, but the essays reflect the earlier poet's humor, aphoristic twists, and spiritual struggles. Early in the book, for example, Norris notes the contradictory impulses of the plains people. Dickinson's sometimes ascerbic attitude toward her town of "Dimity Convictions" (P 401), where people "live without any thoughts" (L 342 a) is not so different from Norris's analysis of the "tensions and contradictions ... between hospitality and insularity, change and inertia, stability and instability, possibility and limitation, between hope and despair, between open hearts and closed minds" (*Dakota* 7).

Norris's move to the Benedictine Monastery ends *Dakota*: "It's hard to say what monastic people mean to us," she muses. "I suppose they're a lot like poets: nice to have around until they ask to be taken seriously" (200-201). Like Dickinson, "spreading wide" her "narrow Hands" to "gather Paradise" (P 657), Norris defines the effect of her association with the monks: "My narrow world had just opened wide, and I had glimpsed such a love" (*Dakota* 201). Norris decided to "dwell in Possibility" by joining the Benedictine monastery as an oblate for two nine-month periods. *The Cloister Walk*, organized around the rhythms and rites of the order, is about her life during those periods.

Central to both books are her attempts to answer the question that sent her to Dakota in the first place. Quoting a Benedictine friend, Norris decides that "Sin, in the New Testament...is the failure

Continued on page 22

Painting the Flowers of Emily Dickinson

By Susan Loy

As an artist and calligrapher, I like to combine watercolor painting with texts from the literary classics. One of my favorite subjects is the literary flower, and one of my favorite poets is Emily Dickinson, so I came naturally to paint her flowers. My goal was to create a suite of four pieces, one for each season. Each piece would include one seasonal poem, lettered in a circle, surrounding a bouquet of flowers that are mentioned in four of Dickinson's poems, one poem in each corner.

My work on the suite began with reading and research to select the texts and identify the flowers. I first chose the seasonal poems, four poems of equal length that express a certain quality of a season—a color or the quality of light. Because Dickinson favored seasonal themes and because many seasonal poems were already familiar to me, my task was easy. What a pleasure to have more than enough poems to choose from and to be able to take up such great poems: "A Light exists in Spring" (P 812), "There came a Day at Summer's full" (322), "The morns are meeker than they were" (12), and "There's a certain Slant of light, / Winter Afternoons" (258). I was able to letter poem 12 in its entirety, which is preferable, and the first two stanzas of each of the others.

To find the sixteen flower poems, I read all the poems in the Thomas Johnson edition, highlighting each reference to a specific flower, such as rose or daisy, as well as references to flowers in general—flower, blossom, garden. In the poems, I found 187 references to specific flowers as well as 121 to flowers in general. In the letters I found 195 references to specific flowers plus 201 general references, and there may be even more.

The poems and letters mention at least 103 varieties of flowers and 8 fruits. The rose is mentioned most frequently, 33 times in the poems and 34 in letters. Daisy is second, and clover third. I had plenty of material from which to choose.

In selecting the sixteen flower poems, my main constraint was fitting the poem into the corner space. I first selected a couple of poems that I really wanted to use, and they set the scale for the rest. As might be expected, spring and summer flowers are the most abundant in Dickinson's writings, although the other seasons are well represented.

For the spring flowers, I chose poems 31, 142, 812, and 1337. I debated long and hard over which lilac poem to use, "The Lilac is an ancient shrub" (1241) or "Upon a Lilac Sea" (1337). I chose the latter because, at twenty-three words, I could fit the entire poem into a corner. I likewise debated between two equally delightful clover poems, "The pedigree of Honey" (1627), and "To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee" (1755), again choosing the one that fit in its entirety. To complete the piece, I also chose stanzas from poem 31 that mention anemone, and 142, a poem about the coming of spring that names crocus, epigea, and rhodora, among others.

I began to get a sense of how profoundly flowers and botanical knowledge informed Dickinson's poetry when I read the line in poem 142, "Hush! Epigea wakens!" I looked in my dictionary for the meaning of Epigea and found that its root was the Greek word for earth. So I thought the line read something like "Hush! *Earth* wakens!" Later, in reading Dickinson's herbarium list, I discovered that it also refers to *Epigea repens*, the mayflower or trailing arbutus. So the poem blossomed for me.

As with the spring flowers, there was an abundance of summer flower poems to choose from. Because the rose is the flower mentioned most frequently, I decided to make the summer flowers all roses and selected poems 19, 1582, 163, and 93. The history of the rose during this period was one of tremendous change. The old-fashioned roses were single blooming and rarely red. It was not until 1815 that the first ever-blooming, hybrid

China rose was developed, leading the way for many new varieties of ever-blooming and red roses. Poem 93 mentions "new species" of roses. A rose revolution would take place during Dickinson's lifetime, but for most of her life, "Roses of a steadfast summer" (163) were found only in poems.

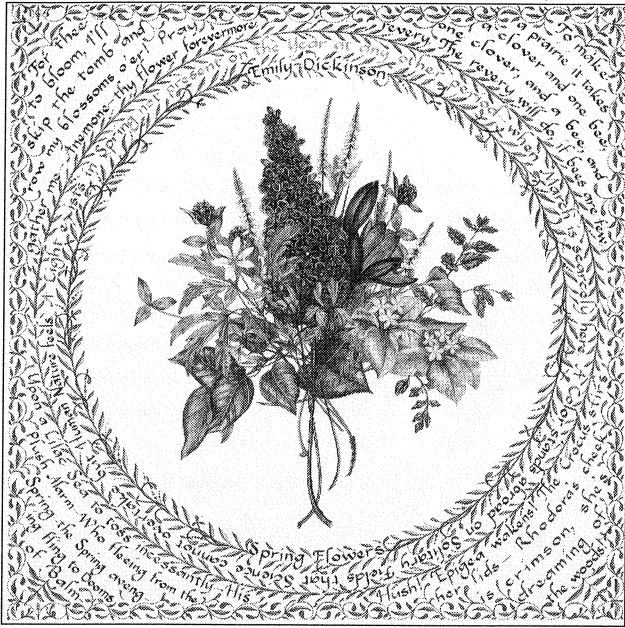
Poem 19 is a gem that summarizes the lessons of botanical reproduction in thirty words: "A sepal, petal, and a thorn / Upon a common summer's morn - / A flask of Dew - A Bee or two - / A Breeze - a caper in the trees - / And I'm a Rose!" Poem 1582 suggests that roses served as ambassadors in Dickinson's day in much the same way they do today.

For autumn flowers, I chose poems 213, 229, 342, and 1624, which mention asters, burdock, gentians, harebells, and the wild rose. Poem 229, "A Burdock clawed my gown," is another excellent example of how botanical knowledge informs. The botanical name of burdock is *Arctium lappa*; *arctium* is from the Greek word for bear. So the poem is transformed to "the bear clawed my gown...who went too near the bear's den."

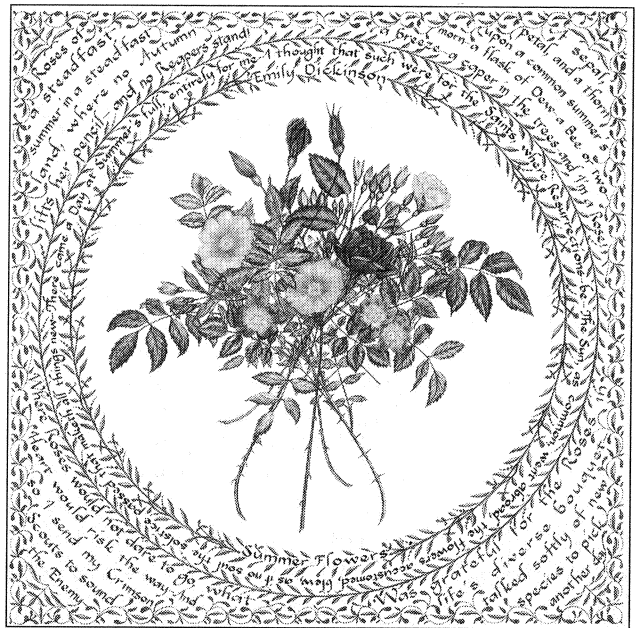
Finding winter flower poems can be problematic, but not so with Dickinson. She had a conservatory whose flowers she described in letter 315, to Mrs. J.G. Holland in 1866: "My flowers are near and foreign, and I have but to cross the floor to stand in the Spice Isles." She traveled far in her gardens. In letter 279 she lists some of her conservatory flowers. For the winter piece, I chose poems 100, 339, 486, and 525, which mention dandelion, fuchsia, geranium, and hemlock.

The next step was to identify the species of flowers Dickinson might have known or even grown in her conservatory or family garden. My main source for identification was Dickinson's herbarium. When she was a student at Amherst Academy, Dickinson collected, preserved, and inscribed in her herbarium

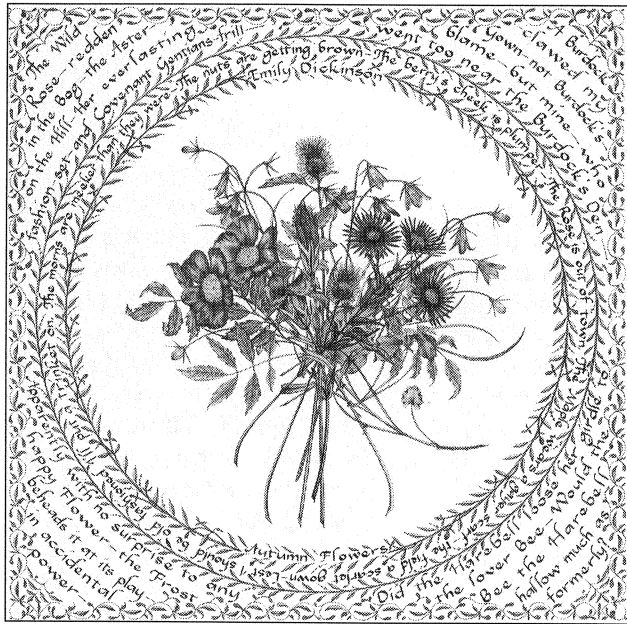
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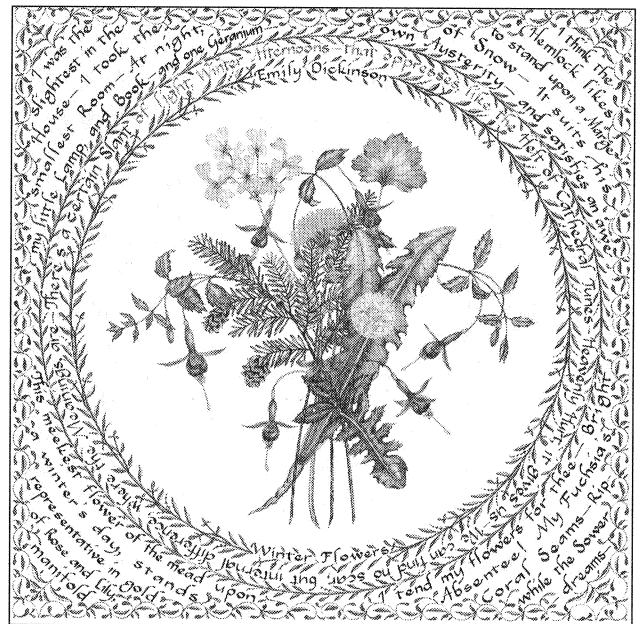
Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter

Emily Dickinson's Seasonal Flowers by Susan Loy

Emily Dickinson in the Viewfinder of Chinese Poetics

By Bai Jinpeng

Readers familiar with Chinese culture may have sensed something very much Chinese in Emily Dickinson. The similarities are mainly in the realm of ideas and viewpoint. While Dickinson may at times seem strange to the modern American eye, viewed from the Chinese perspective her unusual ideas and lifestyle are not so much weird as admirable.

Dickinson avoided secular popularity, thinking that “Publication – is the Auction/– Of the Mind of Man –” (P 709) and considering it “dreary – to be – Somebody!” (P 288). She hid her poems in a drawer, intending them for hands she could not see, since she firmly believed that the attar she wrung would make summer again (P 675). In this she resembled many Chinese poets and intellectuals who have resisted worldly fame. Some ancient Chinese poets went into voluntary reclusion, the most notable being seventh-century monk/poet Han Shan, who wrote his poems on rocks, bamboo, and tree trunks, having no intention of procuring fame for or by them.

This turning away from society is closely related to Taoism, the native religion of China, which advocates selflessness and inaction and “does not aim at popularity.”¹ The Chinese people are curiously fond of hidden-and-found papers, perhaps because they think that only works of utmost value are worth the trouble of “hiding them in famed mountains and passing down to posterity.”² Many Chinese religious classics and art masterpieces were once kept in remote mountain caves, such as the Dun Huang Grottoes, famous for their cultural treasures. The compilers of the great Taoist classic *Treasure of Tao* divided it into three parts: “First Cave,” “Second Cave,” and “Third Cave,” suggesting that it had been discovered in mysterious caves. The fact that Dickinson kept her poems in a drawer and withheld them from publication thus kindles both curiosity and a sense of familiarity in the Chinese heart.

Dickinson contemplated death and wrote of it not as something ghostly and ghastly but as a courteous person (P 712)

or something desirable (P 160). The Chinese have a popular anecdote about the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu (ca. 369-286 BC). When his wife died, he sang happily over her dead body. Questioned about this, he replied, “How can one know that life is preferable to death? How can one know that the dead does not prefer death?”³

In Poem 712, Dickinson compares life to a journey. As she approached death herself, she told her cousins that she was being “Called back” (L 1046). The Chinese reader sees nothing eccentric in this. The famous poet Li Pai (701–762) wrote, “The living are all passengers / the dead those who have come back home.”⁴ “To see death as going home” appears in almost all dictionaries of Chinese idioms, and in the Chinese language “to die” is sometimes expressed as “returning to Heaven.”

But the correspondences between Dickinson and the Chinese people are not confined to culture at large. They carry over into particular poetic works. Dickinson’s Poem 609, “I Years had been from Home/And now before the Door/I dared not enter, lest a Face/I never saw before” immediately reminds the Chinese reader of a poem by He Chih-chang (ca. 659–ca. 744): “Left home a child and came back an old old man, / My hair has turned gray but my accent is the same. / Kids in the village did not know me when we met, / Said ‘Where did the guest come from?’ with the funny smile.”⁵ The two poets chose similar subjects and achieved equally touching effects.

In Poem 303 Dickinson writes about the reclusion of her soul: “The Soul selects her own Society – / Then – shuts the Door –.” Almost all ancient Chinese poets secluded themselves, and “shutting the door” or “the shut door” were subjects they loved to write about. Wang Wei (d. 761) wrote most about the door or gate. His “Living in a crowded neighborhood, one can be a recluse by shutting the door if one would” is miraculously close to Dickinson’s lines.

One poem by the renowned Tao Yuen-ming (365–427) might well serve as a poetic summary of Dickinson’s poetic career: “I build my hut in a zone of human habitation,/Yet near me there sounds no noise of horse or coach./Would you know how that is possible?/A heart that is distant creates a wilderness round it.”⁶

If these similarities are coincidences, they undoubtedly originate in a higher coincidence—in the poetics that guides the poet.

Seeing Tao in the Seen

To be productive in a world as limited as hers, Dickinson had to use as poetic vehicle almost anything she saw or experienced, and her poems tend to be philosophical. Here she corresponds to the many Chinese poets who have found their subject matter in anything they see or visualize, from the rock to the cicada, from ghosts to gods. Chung Jung (468–518), a poetic critic, held that only those of high talent can turn all their experiences into poetry. In his *Ranking of the Poets*, he lionized Hsieh Ling-yun (385–433), who “versified all that met his eyes, displaying rich feelings and imagination and leaving nothing untouched.”⁷ The eleven-page Subject Index in the Johnson edition of Dickinson’s poems displays an equally wide range of subjects. But the poetic principle of “seeing Tao in the seen,” central to Chinese poetics, has a more profound meaning than merely writing about common things. Its true spirit is “seeing Tao.”

Tao, I should explain, is not an isolated entity but dwells in everything. In a chapter entitled “Chih Travels North,” Chuang Tzu records the following philosophical conversation:

Tung Kuo Tzu asked Chuang Tzu: “Where is the so-called Tao?” Chuang Tzu said: “Everywhere.” The former said: “Specify an instance of it.” “It is in the ant.” “How can Tao be anything so low?” “It is in the panic grass.” “How can it be still lower?” “It is in the earthenware tile.” “How can it be still lower?” “It is in excrement.” To

this Tung Kuo Tzu made no reply. Chuang Tzu said: "Your question does not touch the fundamentals of Tao.... There is not a single thing without Tao."⁸

So Taoism asks us to see and understand Tao by looking into things far and near. All things, noble or humble, harbor Tao.

Major Chinese literary criticism composed since the third century has been deeply influenced by Taoism. Liu Hsieh (sixth century) spent the whole first chapter of his *Wen Hsin Tiao Lung* on "The Prime Tao," discussing the relations between Mother Nature, human nature, and the nature of poetry. SuKung Tu (837–908) borrowed many Taoistic terms to express his ideas of poetics. Incorporated into poetics, Tao naturally acquired richer meanings. It is not only the way of the universe but even more the way of poetry. Since Tao is omnipresent, everything can be and indeed is poetic, and poetry is more than a literary expression: it becomes an epistemological instrument, a way of understanding the world. That is why Chinese poetry, though seldom religious, is more often than not philosophic.

Among the implicitly philosophic poems is Wang Wei's "Resigned into Chung Nan Shan." Its two lines—"Pause where the rivulet diminishes / Sit down to watch when clouds are ready to rise"⁹—illustrate the spatialization of time and the meaningfulness of limited space absorbing endless time.

The principle of "seeing Tao in the seen" also enabled SuKung Tu to convey his theoretical ideas through nature images in his *24 Styles of Poetry*. When discussing the style of repose, for example, he presents the images "Remote cottage embraced by green firs, at sunset the air is cool and clear / Uncapped, the host strolls alone, occasionally birds chirp and twitter." When discussing the style of grace, he writes of "Lying down with a lyre under green shade, watching the downflying cascade / Falling flowers are silent and dumb, the man tranquil as chrysanthemum."¹⁰ The poet's method here is "securing the truth by analogy with things and seeing Tao in the seen."

Emily Dickinson was probably unfamiliar with Taoism but seems to have

been fairly Taoistic, seeing a prevailing mystic force in things around her. She believed that "God made no act without a cause" (P 1163), and in the acts she saw the existence of God. But for her, God was not God in the Christian sense but a combination of elements she saw in many different things. God may be "a distant – stately Lover –" (P 357), may be jealous (P 1719), or may have other homely qualities. He is also part of and a representative of nature. Dickinson did not profess the doctrine of "seeing Tao in the seen," but she found beauty everywhere and ready to be written of: "Beauty is nature's fact" (P 1775).

Dickinson also saw truth in almost everything and told it in her poems, if sometimes "slant." Many of her poems are contemplations of the world, although her messengers are frequently common objects. Marcus Cunliffe comments that in Dickinson's poetry, "the far away and enormous are seen in terms of the humble and familiar, or vice versa."¹¹ That is, Dickinson understood higher truth through ordinary phenomena, and nature sometimes provided her with Taoistic inspiration. In the way a daisy vanishes she saw how humans vanish, without fuss and matter-of-factly (P 28). The lowly grass taught her the significance of natural existence and self-perfection through inaction: "The Grass so little has to do / I wish I were a Hay –" (P 333).

In Poem 1142 she summarizes psychological maturation, comparing it to the completion of a house. The props or scaffolds are the means and form, while the house is the end and meaning. If the soul has matured, then is it necessary to remember the individual experiences that helped in its maturation? Or does this poem offer an apology for the seeming ungrammaticality of many of her poems? If the poem can stand for its beauty, what is the use of keeping the scaffolds of language complete and in order? This idea is much the same as the Taoistic saying "Get the meaning and then forget the words."¹² Indeed, as David Porter says, "Dickinson's radical modernism... is not a theme but a way of knowing."¹³ She discovered both Tao/Truth and the poetic beauty of the world.

Dissolving the Emotion in the Scene

Seeing Tao is essential in writing poetry, but "merely knowing Tao makes no poetry."¹⁴ In poetry are to be found both the subjective and the objective elements that combine in various ways. But the effect that Chinese poetics values most is the "dissolution of the emotion in the scene." To achieve this, the poet has three possible approaches: first, deriving inspiration from the scene and expressing emotion by means of the scene. The scene is both the generator and the carrier of the emotion. Take, for example, a line from Li Pai's "Autumn Song,"¹⁵ "In Chan An City the moonlight prevails," which tells of a wife missing her husband, who has been drafted and stationed far beyond the Jade Pass. The moonlight reminds her of his long absence and causes her to worry about how he will spend the coming winter. In Chinese poetry the moon is an archetype of homesickness, lovesickness, and nostalgia. So while the "moonlight" is a description of the nocturnal scene, it is as well the expression of the poet's emotion.

In the second approach, the poet has a preestablished emotion or idea and tries to convey it by inventing a scene. This requires straining the imagination to bridge the gap between the reader's mind and the poet's. Take, for example, two lines from "Ascending Yeuh Yang Tower" by Tu Fu (712–770): "From friends or kinsmen not a word heard, / in old age and illness but a lonely boat anchored."¹⁶ This poem is a travelogue in nature. "Not a word" and "a lonely boat" are only exaggerated examples aimed at depicting the unhappy personal situation. Here Tu Fu uses poetic license to convey disappointment in life's ambition.

The third approach is similar to the first but more spontaneous. The expression of the emotion and the description of the scene are so forged that they are inseparable. Take two lines from Tu Fu's "A View of Spring": "Moved by changes of times, flowers are covered with tears, / hating to part, birds are all fears."¹⁷ Is it that the flowers, in response to the alteration of the seasons, bear morning dew-drops? Or that the poet, touched by the fluctuation of luck, sheds tears that drop

Two Conservation Projects Seek Funding

By Cindy Dickinson and Gregory Farmer

Paintings at the Evergreens

When Austin and Susan Dickinson moved into the Evergreens in July 1856, they carefully attended to the design and furnishing of each room. Austin's love of art and Susan's penchant for decorating led them to acquire gradually a large and varied assortment of oil paintings that were displayed prominently throughout the house.

The Dickinsons' art collection, which quickly grew to include paintings, sculpture, prints, and large-format photographs, was admired by friends and visitors alike. Many of the paintings were personally selected by Austin and purchased by him at galleries in New York and Boston. The major paintings and their influence on Emily Dickinson are discussed by Barton St. Armand in *Emily Dickinson and Her Culture: The Soul's Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

The current state of the oil paintings reveals little about Austin's discerning eye or the artists' abilities. The paintings have aged and darkened and the frames are dry and loose. Professional conservation treatment is needed to restore the original appearance of the artworks, stabilize the elaborately carved frames, and reveal the original colors and tones of the paintings so admired by Austin, Susan, and their guests at the Evergreens.

The Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust is currently seeking private sponsors to help restore the oil paintings and return them to public view. The initial conservation program, with a fund-raising goal of \$14,000, will focus on four of the larger paintings that were prominently displayed at the Evergreens:

Abram and Sara, by the Italian artist Azzo Cavazza, is a dramatic mid-Victorian allegory of love. The large, brightly-colored painting hung in the front hall of the Evergreens. Visitors could not help but be intrigued by the

emotions expressed by the two principal figures, the eavesdroppers lurking in the background, and the exotic Egyptian details of the scene.



Courtesy of the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust

Country Farmhouse in Winter (above) was painted in 1857 by Cornelius Krieghoff, known as "Canada's best snow painter." It is a colorful genre scene depicting a typical *habitant* farmhouse in Quebec. It hung on the east wall of the library and was one of Austin's favorite artworks.

Norwegian Landscape with Bears by Hans Friedrich Gude is a dynamic scene that Austin considered "the gem of the collection." It was painted in Dusseldorf and acquired by Austin in 1862. The large painting was the focal point of the parlor and was admired by many distinguished guests at Susan's famous parties.

Autumn Evening in the White Hills by Sanford Robinson Gifford is one of the most important American paintings in Austin's collection. The small, soft-toned landscape painted in 1858 represents the work of a leading American artist. It hung on the east wall of the Evergreens parlor.

All four paintings have been examined in detail by conservators at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The proposed conservation treatments include removing surface dirt and darkened var-

nish, lining the backs of the canvases for additional strength, repairing the stretchers and frames, restretching the canvases, inpainting minor losses, applying new varnish, and adding new hanging hardware.

Once the \$14,000 goal is achieved, the conservation work will take about twelve months to complete. The process of conservation will be highlighted in future issues of the *Bulletin* and in local newspapers. When the paintings return to public view at the Ever-

greens, they will be available to scholars and the public for the first time in more than fifty years.

Individuals and groups interested in becoming sponsors may forward contributions to the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, P.O. Box 603, Amherst MA 01004-0603 U.S.A., or contact Gregory Farmer, Project Manager, at (413) 746-1513 for further information.

Emily Dickinson's White Dress

Because so few of Emily Dickinson's personal effects remain to illuminate the poet's material life, the objects that do survive have achieved legendary status. One of these objects, a white dress (ca. 1870s) attributed to Emily Dickinson's wardrobe, has come to symbolize Dickinson as a person and a poet.

Owned by the Amherst Historical Society and long on view at the Dickinson Homestead, the original white dress will soon be placed in storage for proper conservation. With the permission of the Historical Society, the Homestead is commissioning a reproduction of the dress for exhibition at the house.

In 1946 Mrs. E. Abbot Bradlee, a distant cousin of the poet, gave the white

dress to the Amherst Historical Society. (Mrs. Bradlee, who had received the dress from her sister, Mrs. Kate Ives Porter, remembered having tea with Lavinia Dickinson at the Homestead [*Amherst Record*, June 20, 1946].)

In the 1970s the Society placed the dress on extended loan to the Homestead, where it became an integral part of a visitor's experience at the house. The dress was also featured in the 1986 Dickinson Centennial celebration at the Folger Shakespeare Library and in the Mead Art Museum's recent "Language as Object" exhibition. Since the close of the Mead show in June, the dress has been housed in temporary storage.

Why does the original dress need to be removed from exhibition? Historic costumes are particularly sensitive to light damage and to stress from hanging on mannequins. Textile experts recommend that such costumes—particularly those as historically significant as the Dickinson dress—"rest" in flat, dark storage and appear on public display only for special occasions. Because the Dickinson dress has been on public display for so long, the Homestead and the Historical Society agree that it is overdue for an extended rest period to protect it from further deterioration and to preserve it for future generations.



Courtesy of the Amherst History Museum

In addition to insuring the long-term survival of the original dress, the Homestead's dress reproduction project will address a number of questions long pondered by Dickinson enthusiasts. How is the dress constructed? How is it similar to and different from other dresses of the time? What statements was Emily Dickinson making

about herself and her society by choosing to wear such a dress?

The overall project has several components: the selection of appropriate fabric, the manufacture of two reproduction dresses (to allow for rotation), the purchase of a new mannequin, and the development of a small exhibition that outlines the reproduction process and explains the importance of conservation for historic objects.

The Homestead has selected an experienced costume maker, Adrienne Saint-Pierre, to oversee the project. Ms. Saint-Pierre has worked most recently as curatorial assistant in the Department of Costume and Textiles at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and has more than fifteen years of experience in researching, curating, and reproducing nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historic costumes for museums and individual clients.

Estimated to cost \$6,500, the project is expected to be completed next year. Individuals and groups interested in becoming sponsors of this project should contact Cindy Dickinson at (413) 542-8161, or send contributions directly to the Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main Street, Amherst MA 01002 U.S.A.

Cindy Dickinson is curator of the Emily Dickinson Homestead. Gregory Farmer is Project Manager for the Evergreens.

Has Mabel Loomis Todd Been Given Her Due?

By Dorothea A. Kissam

A while ago, I visited the grave of Mabel Loomis Todd in Amherst's Wildwood Cemetery. The stone erected by her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, is a simple black slate marker standing next to a similar one for Mabel's husband, David Peck Todd. Mabel's stone is distinguished by a relief of the Indian pipe design she originally painted to give to Emily Dickinson, later used on the cover of *Poems by Emily Dickinson*, which was transcribed and edited by Mabel, with

Thomas Wentworth Higginson as co-editor. A small stone at the foot of Mabel's grave cites her founding of the Mattoon chapter of the D.A.R. of Amherst, and of the Amherst Historical Society. I looked for some mention of her staggering feat of transcribing the Dickinson poetry, but this is not there.

In Amherst, the house built in 1886 by Mabel and David Todd stands decaying. It is owned by an absentee landlord who rents out rooms. There seems to be no interest in preserving it. The interior still shows evi-

dence of the designs painted by Mabel around the moldings of the rooms. No group has stepped forward to rescue the house where Mabel spent those months and years transcribing the poems.

The lack of acknowledgment on Mabel's grave marker, where other accomplishments are cited, and the sad plight of her Queen Anne house, standing with peeling paint and rotting boards, has led me to these questions: What does this neglect actually mean? How do people regard Todd's accomplishments?

Continued on page 12

Mabel Loomis Todd, continued from p. 11

Mabel's name is often spoken with derision. This stems from public knowledge of her thirteen-year liaison with Austin Dickinson, Emily's brother. To this day, more than a hundred years later, she is still regarded in some circles as a scarlet woman.

As far as I can determine, the memory of Austin is on a different plane entirely. After his death in 1895, Susan, his widow, erected a large boulder to mark his grave, also in Wildwood Cemetery, with a commendatory plaque attached, reading: "Self forgetting in service for his town and college. Resolute in his convictions—At one with nature—He believed in God and hoped for immortality." These sentiments reflect the high esteem in which Austin was held during his life as the leading lawyer of the town and treasurer of Amherst College, as his father had been before him.

Mabel Todd was one of the few who, from the beginning, saw genius in Emily Dickinson's poetry. After Emily's death in 1886, her sister Lavinia carried boxes of Emily's poems to Sue. But Sue did little with the poems entrusted to her, and after two years Lavinia, in despair, took them to Mabel and begged her to

prepare the poetry for publication. Mabel at this time was actively helping her husband, an astronomy professor at Amherst College, with preparations for a trip to Africa to photograph a total

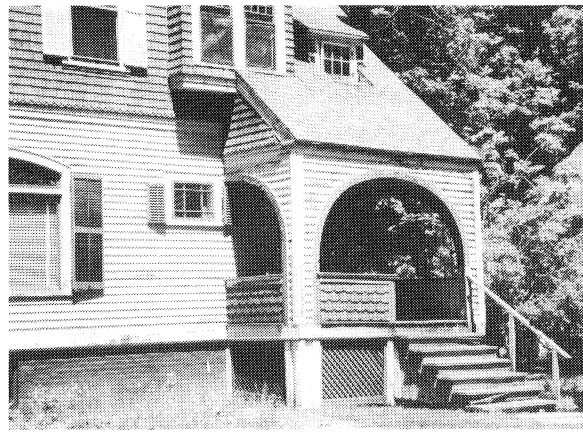


Photo by Robert Hoopes

eclipse of the sun. Although occupied, Mabel acquiesced. Like Lavinia, she had faith in Emily's poetry. She worked on the poems for some time before turning to Higginson, who had corresponded with Emily Dickinson from April 1862 until her death.

In her first letter to Higginson, Emily asked him to tell her if her poetry "breathed," and included four poems now considered among her finest: "Safe

in their Alabaster Chambers" (216), "The nearest Dream recedes – unrealized" (319), "I'll tell you how the Sun rose" (318), and "We play at paste – /'til qualified, for Pearl" (320). Higginson's reply is not extant, but from later correspondence, it is inferred that he replied with his Victorian idea of what constituted a poem: regular meter and rhymes, attention to grammar and punctuation, and ideas that were more substantial. The criticism did not deter Emily. She simply did not take his advice, and continued to write him, even requesting that she be his "scholar."

Higginson did not change his mind about Emily's poetry until Mabel Todd sought him out to help her prepare the poems for publication. In her journal of November 30, 1890, a year after she met with Higginson, she wrote:

I took the poems with me when I went to Boston. Colonel Higginson called upon me and looked them over with me. He did not think a volume advisable—they were too crude in form, he

Continued on page 25

Kitchen Table Poetics: The Walk

By Domhnall Mitchell

There was a timely break in Amherst's wintry spring weather on Sunday, April 20, for a Dickinson tour with a difference, led by Irish-American artist and critic Aife Murray. Murray's mixed-media installation "Pantry DRAWer," which celebrates the creative relationship between Dickinson and the family's Irish-born servants, including Thomas Kelley and his sister-in-law, Margaret Maher, was part of the *Language as Object* exhibition at the Mead Art Museum, where the tour began.

Stopping at six points of interest that have historical connections with Maher, Kelley, and the poet, Murray walked, jogged, and talked in splendid sunshine for over an hour and a half, accompanied by an enthusiastic crowd of more than

200. The group included forty-one of Kelley's descendants, who had been especially invited to the event, together with the present staff of the Dickinson Homestead: curator Cindy Dickinson; Judy Atwood, the gardener; John Bator, the landscape technician; and Richard Beauregard and Robin Degenais, the housecleaners. Comments made by those working at the Homestead and other college sites had been incorporated into handmade books (called "Art of Service") that were featured as part of the "Pantry DRAWer" installation.

The tour's itinerary began at Amherst College, where Tom Kelley had worked as a night watchman, and continued to Converse Hall, once the site of the Boltwood Mansion, where Margaret had been

employed as a maid prior to her Homestead tenure. It then proceeded across the Common to North Pleasant Street and the current St. Brigid's Catholic Church. Since Kelley was a carpenter, he almost certainly helped in the construction of the original building, which stood on the present site of the Cathedral Apartments. Edward Dickinson is thought to have contributed financially to the building of the first Catholic church in Amherst.

Murray spoke briefly of early hostility in Amherst to Irish Catholics—and to other ethnic minorities—and read part of a letter from the poet that suggested that Emily herself was affected by these sentiments when young. Murray's thesis, however, is that familiarity helped to eradicate her contempt, and she pointed

Continued on page 26

PERFORMANCES

Sleeveless Theatre's *Emily Unplugged*

Reviewed by James C. Fraser

When I accepted the invitation to write a review of Sleeveless Theatre's *Emily Unplugged*, little did I realize that I would experience something like what Zelda Fitzgerald's narrator describes in *Southern Girl*: "Obligations have a way of increasing their proportions more rapidly than the hopes and abilities that begot them."¹ Notepad and pen in hand, I experienced a little stage fright of my own as the curtain opened.

In this wildly original script, various female personae provide comical and thoughtful demonstrations of the power Dickinson can have over us. Written by Sleeveless Theatre Company members Kristine (K.D.) Halpin and Kate Nugent, *Emily Unplugged* is a dynamic, fast-paced one-woman performance acted by Halpin and directed by Nugent. Their collaboration was seamless and professional.

Performed in conjunction with the exhibition "Language as Object: Emily Dickinson and Contemporary Art" at Amherst College's Mead Art Museum, the play was the opening event of the 1997 EDIS Annual Meeting.

The play was billed in the program as "a comic look at Dickinson in the context of today's Amherst." Was this to be a William Luce look-alike? I wondered. But soon after the curtain rose, that worry vanished. The styles of Luce's *Belle of Amherst* or Connie Clark's *Emily*, while fulfilling in their own ways, don't fit the billing "today's Amherst." Devotees of MTV's acoustic-style music show *MTV Unplugged* will immediately recognize the connection to the theme "today's Amherst."

The show opened to an SRO house in Kirby Theater on the Amherst College campus. More than 400 people of all ages were there. The performance happened to coincide with the college's Alumni Weekend. As Susan Danly mentioned in her welcoming remarks, one could imagine that some members of the audience could have been there twenty-one years

before, waiting expectantly for Julie Harris to begin her 252nd performance of *The Belle of Amherst*.

The stage is set simply, with a large bookcase, a desk, and a wooden chair. Dominating the set is a giant caricature of the famous daguerreotype hanging far upstage: the lighting suits the nearly bare



K.D. Halpin plays a modern Emily Dickinson in *Emily Unplugged*. Courtesy of Sleeveless Theatre.

stage. Emily enters from upstage, her hair parted in the center, and moves slowly, hesitantly downstage. A booming, off-stage director's voice immediately clues us that this is an audition, à la *Chorus Line*. Emily is auditioning for a part as herself in *The Sweetie Pie of Amherst*. But her violently dramatic interpretation of "This is my letter to the World" doesn't cut it with the director. He wants something cute and childlike. He tells her to lighten up and try "Because I could not stop for Death." She responds, shifting from morbid to silly, dancing to the *Gilligan's Island* theme as the audience enjoys their first big laugh. "Bitch," she exclaims later, when she learns that Katie Lee Gifford got the part.

Musically, *Emily Unplugged* leaps unabashedly from Alanis Morissette to Albinoni. Music by Van Morrison and

Nirvana figures prominently. Somewhere in the middle of this zaniness appears Downtown Julie Brown "on your MTV dial." She exhorts fans to "give it up for Emi D." with her new hit single "Wild Nights." In music video style, Emi D. delivers a strong reading of "Wild Nights" to canned cheers—and a great real-audience response. The scene fades to the music of Morrison's "Wild Nights," and Emi D. the rock star makes her appearance.

K.D. Halpin is a marvelously versatile actress, performing perfectly the very demanding, abrupt changes. Unlike *Belle* or other plays that require a single, intense interpretation of Dickinson, *Unplugged* brings her to life through multiple personae. Imagine playing Emily Dickinson one moment, an instant later Barbara Walters or Marlene Dietrich, the next moment Emily as a rock star mugging a classic, daguerreotype-like pose for a publicity photo for her fans. K.D. handled these transformations beautifully, and the audience loved it.

The playwrights skillfully interpret Dickinson through the minds of her contemporaries and twentieth-century women writers and examine what it took to be as prolific as she was. Exclaiming "Vita, Vita come here!" K.D. becomes Virginia Woolf, the first of a series of female writer advocates for Emily. With her newly published copy of *A Room of One's Own* in hand, she recalls the advantage of Emily's middle-class status—"a room of one's own" and freedom from financial worries. Woolf treats us to a reading of "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—." The audience laughs as K.D., in the persona of a scholar, reports; a "romantic pastoral piece," a "tall-tale of good ol' Western humor." "In poetic standards," she concludes, "this poem is a failure."

These musings are momentarily interrupted by Charlotte Brontë, who enters dancing like Julie Andrews to the *Mary Poppins* theme. Appearing slat-

Continued on page 17

The Magic Circle of Charles Roberts Anderson

By Benjamin Lease

Benjamin Lease, original editor of the *Bulletin's* Dickinson Scholars series, provides this tribute to Charles Anderson. Best known to Dickinsonians for *Emily Dickinson's Readings of Men and Books: Sacred Soundings*, Lease is also author of *That Wild Fellow John Neal and the American Literary Revolution* and *Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature*, and co-editor of *The Genius of John Neal: Selections from His Writings*. A resident of Evanston, Illinois, he is professor emeritus of English at Northeastern Illinois University.

Jane Donahue Eberwein, *Series Editor*

The Achievement

Just listing the titles of Charles R. Anderson's major writings evokes his magical encirclement of generations of students, teachers, scholars in America, in all parts of the world. Here are some of them: *Melville in the South Seas* (1939); *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise* (1960); *The Magic Circle of Walden* (1968); *Person, Place, and Thing in Henry James's Novels* (1977). Among the many books he has edited are: *Journal of a Cruise in the Frigate United States with Notes on Melville* (1937); the ten-volume *Centennial Edition of Sidney Lanier* (1945); the two-volume *American Literary Masters* (1965); and *Thoreau's World: Miniatures from His Journal* (1971).

Anderson is a two-time winner of the Christian Gauss Award for literary criticism and is Caroline Donovan Professor (Emeritus) of the Johns Hopkins University. He has held a number of fellowships, including a Fulbright and a Guggenheim. After retirement he served as USIS lecturer in American literature in more than twenty-five countries throughout Europe and Asia.

Anderson in the Classroom

According to Anderson, his purpose as a professor, scholar, and author has been

to "open the eyes of undergraduates to the magical world of literature...." This was his first goal. Close after were continuing attempts to inspire postgraduates to original research—and also, through his lectures and writings, to enlarge an understanding of American literature around the world.



Courtesy of the Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, Johns Hopkins University.

I want here to say something about the importance to me in the classroom of Anderson's *American Literary Masters*. Most (virtually all) of the two-volume anthologies flooding the field in the 1960s closed out volume 1 with Whitman—and opened volume 2 with Dickinson. I wanted my undergraduates to see and experience these language experimenters and thought divers side by side. Anderson's volume 1, closing out as it did with both Whitman and Dickinson, made it possible for me and my students to dive deep into the ways in which these poets explored, in vastly different ways, the same vast sea.

Anderson provided my students with a thoughtful and lucid antidote to the flabby sentimentalization of Dickinson very much in the air at that time. He provided the texts of seventy-five strong poems, along with easily accessible but unob-

trusive annotations—and a sampling of letters (with emphasis on the poet's relationship with Higginson). In his introduction, Anderson included detailed analyses of fifteen of the poems and invited the student to explicate others ("the only sure way to understand their meanings").

Anderson's fine textbook drew on his earlier *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise*, a pivotal work placed high on my list of library reserve books for both undergraduate survey courses and graduate seminars. Anderson closes *Stairway of Surprise* with the claim that Dickinson's art "will not be assayed by the source hunter or biographer, but by the close student of her poetry." I had some reservations about this claim but found his teachings an invaluable classroom tool. He was a pioneer in emphasizing the need for close engagement with the poems, in demanding that we look more intently and see more clearly the poet's verbal strategies as she pursues her unorthodox spiritual quest.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

In his most recent book, *Charleston: A Golden Memory* (1992), Anderson provides a vivid personal reminiscence of a year-long visit to the oldest city in South Carolina by the newly married young assistant professor, on sabbatical from Duke University in 1938. On a shoal in the harbor, clearly visible from the shore, is Fort Sumter, where the Civil War began; South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union. Anderson's sabbatical project was the gathering of materials for a cultural history of antebellum Charleston, a study of its intellectual life that would focus on literature, art and architecture, religious and scientific writings—while standing clear of the slavery controversy and the terrible war that followed. Looking back, the old scholar refers to the young scholar's projected "Cultural History of Antebellum Charleston" as the "one book he

Continued on page 27

M E M B E R S ' N E W S

Help Celebrate Our Tenth Anniversary

EDIS invites you to attend our 1998 annual meeting, to be held in Boulder, Colorado, on July 18-20. This gala Tenth-Anniversary Celebration will include a banquet and comic theatrical presentation, as well as a series of daytime workshops devoted to discussion of individual poems

Boulder, home to the University of Colorado and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, is a charming town in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The meeting will be held in the university's intimate conference facility, the College Inn, an easy walk from the university and from the

many fine downtown restaurants and unique shops.

Boulder is an hour's drive from Denver International Airport. Shuttle and regional bus service from the airport is available.

Rooms will cost \$52-56 per person per night for a single room or \$28-31 per person for a double room. We anticipate a small fee to cover some of the meals and other conference-related expenses. More details will be available in the spring *Bulletin*. We look forward to seeing many of you at this exciting event.

New Press for *The Emily Dickinson Journal*

By Suzanne Juhasz and Lynne Spear

We are pleased to report that in July 1997 the Johns Hopkins University Press agreed to publish the *Emily Dickinson Journal*. They will be taking over from the University Press of Colorado, which discontinued its journals division in the spring of 1997. Johns Hopkins is the premier publisher of humanities journals in the United States. We are proud and honored to become one of its journals, and we look forward to new development and stability under its aegis.

Johns Hopkins will become our publisher formally in 1998. For 1997, the *Journal* is providing camera-ready copy to the press, which will print and distribute the

two issues to subscribers. Volume 6, no. 1 is at the press now, and volume 6, no. 2, the Special Issue "Translators on Translating Emily Dickinson," guest-edited by Margaret Freeman, Gudrun Grabher, and Roland Hagenbüchle, is now being prepared. We thank our subscribers for your patience during the necessary delay in the publication of these issues.

The sponsorship of the Johns Hopkins Press is an acknowledgment of the excellence of our publication and the high status it has achieved in its five years. This is an auspicious time for members who have not yet done so to subscribe to the *Journal*.

Academic Meetings

EDIS will sponsor two sessions at the **Modern Language Association** meeting in Toronto, December 27-30. The first (Sunday, December 28, 8:30 a.m.), on "Intertextual Dickinson," will be chaired by Vivian Pollak, with Paula Bennett, Faith Barrett, and Nancy Johnston as speakers. The second panel (Tuesday, December 30, at 10:15 a.m.) will be a panel discussion on "Unfastening the Fascicles." Participants will be Robert Bray, speaking on Fascicle 18, Paul Crumbley on Fascicle 1, Eleanor Heginbotham on Fascicle 21, Marget Sands on Fascicle 24, and Daneen Wardrop on Fascicle 28. Martha Nell Smith will moderate.

Two Dickinson panels are planned also for the 1998 **American Literature Association** meeting, to be held May 28-31 in San Diego. The first will focus on "Pain and Memory in Dickinson." The second will be organized jointly with the H.D. Society; papers for this panel must deal with both poets.

One-page proposals for either panel should be sent by December 31 to Gudrun Grabher, Universität Innsbruck, Innrain 52, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria; phone: +43-512-507-4171; fax: +43-512-507-2879; e-mail: Gudrun.M.Grabher@uibk.ac.at.

News of the ED Society of Japan

The most recent issue of the *Emily Dickinson Society of Japan Newsletter* carries summaries in English of three papers delivered at the recent Twelfth General Meeting of the Society.

In the first, Miho Kondo, writing of "Destructivity in Emily Dickinson's Poetry," speaks of the self-destructive note in many poems and the poet's effort to destroy, through poetic imagery, those things she finds fearful. In her "attempt to destroy the world around her, she is only confronted with a breakdown and her own helplessness." For Dickinson, a poem is a "battlefield" on which she attempts to "balance her mind by dramatizing herself within [its] framework," thereby achieving catharsis.

Takashi Shigesako, in "Emily Dickinson's Personification," finds, in contrast, that the poet's humor "has much to do with her affirmative view of life." "Using personification, Dickinson can discuss the serious issues playfully and archly." He concludes that "personification is, for Dickinson as a poet, one of the most effective devices to describe the abstract, the fearful and the unfamiliar," resulting in poems of "grandeur and elevation."

Toshikazu Niikura, in "Dickinson as Persephone" (parts of which were summarized in the Spring 1997 issue of the *Bulletin*), offers a Jungian interpretation of "the primordial experience implicit in many of Dickinson's poems." The Persephone myth, he finds, is, for Dickinson, "an ideal poetic figure of a doomed maiden who became the Queen of the Dead, 'Royal - all but the crown.'" He reads "Because I could not stop for Death" as "the rape of the bride as an allegory of death" and finds in Dickinson's late letters to Otis Lord "at last the climactic return of our Persephone to the earthly paradise."

The *Newsletter* also includes a bibliography of works published in Japan from April 1996 through March 1997, compiled by Tsuyoshi Omoto, and a notice of the death of Motoshi Karita, a former adviser to EDSJ and a former president of the American Literature Society of Japan. EDIS offers sympathy to the members of the Society and to Professor Karita's family.

Third International Conference Announced

Plans already are well under way for the third EDIS international conference, "Emily Dickinson at Home," to be held August 12-15, 1999, at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Dickinson attended Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1847-48 and was considered a member of the class of 1849. Thus in a sense the EDIS gathering in 1999 will mark the poet's 150th Mount Holyoke reunion.

A unique feature of the conference will be programming in three locations. While conference papers, panels, and plenary sessions will be held at Mount Holyoke, additional events will be held on August 13, in nearby Amherst at the Dickinson Homestead, the Evergreens, and the Jones and Frost libraries. On August 14, the Houghton Library at Harvard University in Cambridge will present a special exhibit of Dickinson manuscripts and will publish for the first time a

comprehensive catalog of its Dickinson holdings. Transportation will be available between the three sites.

Already scheduled as opening plenary speakers are Marjorie Perloff of Stanford University and Heinz Ickstadt of the Free University of Berlin. Also at the opening events, Ralph Franklin of Yale University will be recognized for his lifetime contributions to Dickinson studies.

Directing the conference will be Martha Ackmann, Cristanne Miller, and Gary Lee Stonum. The call for papers appears below. Registration materials will be sent to EDIS members next fall. Anyone wishing further information in the meantime should contact the conference directors at the following addresses: Martha Ackmann, Women's Studies Program, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA 01075 USA (by e-mail at: mackmann@mtholyoke.edu); Cristanne

Miller, IBZ, Wiesbadenerstr. 18, nr004, D-14197 Berlin, Germany (ccmiller@zedat.fu-berlin.de); Gary Lee Stonum, Department of English, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106-7117 USA (gxs11@po.cwru.edu).

Mount Holyoke College was founded in 1837 by educational pioneer Mary Lyon and is among America's oldest institutions for the higher education of women. Writing of her first few months at Mount Holyoke during its earliest years, Dickinson observed, "One thing is certain & that is, that Miss Lyon & all the teachers, seem to consult our comfort & happiness in everything they do & you know that is pleasant." EDIS hopes that those coming to Mount Holyoke in 1999 will share a similar experience.

Chapter News

The executive committee of the **Minnesota Chapter** will hold a dinner on December 10, Dickinson's birthday. The full chapter will meet next on February 15, with Gudrun Grabher of the University of Innsbruck as speaker. Her topic will be "Dickinson and the Unsayable."

The **Utah Chapter** met August 28 at Utah State University in Logan. The theme of the meeting was "Emily's 'superior Eyes,'" and participants were invited to share ED's I/eye poems. Newly elected president Paul Crumbley led a brief discussion of Poem 1258, "Who were the 'Father and the Son.'" Winning entries in the second annual ED Parody Poetry contest were read, and prizes were awarded to Martin Corliss-Smith, Rosalyn Collings, Terry Gorton, and Alan Manning, with honorable mention going to Gene Washington, David Sullivan, and Catherine Wagner.

"Dishonorable mention" went to Mark Hofmann, forger of the "Dickinson poem" purchased by the Jones Library in June. Crumbley led a discussion of the forgery, news of which had broken the previous day. One person noted that Hofmann had acquired some of his skills while employed at the Utah State University Library. [For more on that story and the involvement of former Utah Chapter president Brent Ashworth, see the story beginning on page 1.]

Call for 1999 Conference Papers

EDIS invites papers on all aspects of Dickinson's life, work, and significance for presentation at the Society's third international conference, "Emily Dickinson at Home." See the article above for more details on the event.

Abstracts or completed twenty-minute papers should be sent by November 30, 1998, to Gary Lee Stonum at the address given above. Anyone seeking to organize a full panel should contact him as soon as possible.

Letters to the Editor

In the May/June 1997 number of the *Bulletin*, Anna Mary Wells expressed pleasure that in my musical on Emily Dickinson, *Shatter Me with Dawn*, I had "discovered the real Thomas Wentworth Higginson" (as portrayed in her 1963 book *Dear Preceptor*), but then lamented that apparently I had "never heard of" her work. "In fact," she continued, "it seems that not only my work but readily available original source material is being ignored by recent Dickinson scholars."

I am writing to state for the record that *Dear Preceptor* was indeed of seminal importance in my character development of Higginson. The work of Ms Wells added scope, nuance, and complexity to this crucial role. She will be glad to know also that virtually all of the words spoken and sung by Higginson on stage were drawn from original source material.

Ms Wells, in the same letter, mentions the work of Judith Farr. I would like to

publicly acknowledge that Farr's *Passion of Emily Dickinson* also made an invaluable contribution to the musical. Her incisive scholarship invited me to "Realms unratified where Magic is Made."

To both of these women I am indebted, and I appreciate the opportunity to say so before the esteemed members of EDIS.

James Steven Saucedo

I am in the final stages of compiling an electronic archive of late fragments and related texts by Dickinson, to be published by the University of Michigan Press. Currently I am searching for three manuscripts reported to be in private hands in the 1950s: a poem beginning "Immured in Heaven" (P 1594, Parke); a letter to Mrs. Jonathan Jenkins (L 506, Sister Mary James); and a letter to Sara Colton Gillett (L 1011, Holcombe). I am also seeking information about several manuscripts presumed lost: "Drowning is not so pitiful" (P 1718); "No

man saw awe, nor to his house" (P 1733); a letter to Dickinson's Norcross cousins (L 400); and a letter to George Montague (L 703). Any readers willing to share information about any of these manuscripts or seeking further information about my project may contact me at the Department of English, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA 30303 USA, or by e-mail at engmlw@panther.gsu.edu.

Marta Werner

From the Ulysses Bookshop in London, I recently purchased *Selected Poems: Emily Dickinson* (Catalog 63, #170), published in the Netherlands in 1940, in English, by A.A. Balkema. The catalog reads: "Printed clandestinely during the Nazi occupation in an edition of 200 copies....The selection by S. Vestdijk is taken from the London, 1937 edition of the *Collected Poems*."

Fifty-four poems come from the three 1890s series edited by Todd and Higginson and are arranged within the original categories in revised order: Life, Nature, Love, Time and Eternity. Five are from *The Single Hound* (1914), edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Many of the most familiar poems are here (cited as printed): "The soul selects her own society," "I taste a liquor never brewed," "I like to see it lap the miles," "I started early, took my dog," "The gentian weaves her fringes," "Mine by the right of the white election," "Wild nights! Wild nights!" "Safe in their alabaster chambers," and "Ah, Teneriffe! Retreating Mountain!"

One would like to think the selection had a special plangency for the Dutch as they endured the horrors of the occupation. Just the beauty of the poems, passed from hand to hand, would have consoled in the way Dickinson's letters so often consoled others in her own lifetime.

Norbert Hirschhorn

Notes & Queries

Bob Lucas, an antiquarian book dealer who specializes in Dickinson-related titles, now has a Web site that is updated weekly with new offerings. The site can be reached at: <http://www.lucasbooks.com>.

Several new items may appeal to Dickinson collectors and Christmas shoppers. A **T-shirt** with the inscription "Emily D. Lives" carries a cartoon version of the Dickinson daguerreotype on the front and "The Dickinson Houses/Amherst, Mass. 1997"

on the back. The shirt, designed by Jim Fraser, sells for \$12.00 plus shipping. To order, write to the Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main Street, Amherst, MA 01002 or call the Homestead at 413-542-8161. All proceeds benefit the Homestead.

If you're lucky enough to own a Dickinson stamp, you can have it made into a **lapel pin**. For information, contact Barbara Geipe Lubinski, 2925 Circle Dr., Silver Lake, OH 44224 (phone 216-928-7179).

Novelkeys, of Hyannisport, Massachusetts, produces a **keychain** with a tiny pewter book bearing the inscription "Emily Dickinson" on the cover and spine (also available for other American writers). The price is \$2.20 each. They can be ordered from Novelkeys at 508-771-7837 (phone or fax).

Unplugged, continued from page 13

ternly, reminiscent of Carol Burnette's charwoman, Brontë tells of struggles with family tragedy, governess duties, marriage, tuberculosis, and writing without "a room of one's own." Exiting, she says, "How can you write a body of work like Dickinson's with a life like mine."

Still puzzling out the meaning of "My Life..." K.D. quotes Adrienne Rich, then interprets: "If you were a nineteenth-century woman poet, you were a freak!"

The search for understanding through the minds of twentieth-century women writers continues with a caricature of Camille Paglia. Retrieving a copy of *Sexual Personae* from the bookshelf, K.D. vamps and tramps us in a black leather boustier-vest. She reads "The name – of it – is 'Autumn' –," with comic effect, and in Paglia's own words reports that we have "a mass murder . . . in Amherst." The audience roars as Dickinson is characterized as "Amherst's Madame de Sade."

The attention turns to Emily herself as K.D. discovers love letters to Sue and Master. The mood darkens in a tension-mounting, seat-squirming scene with persona Zelda Fitzgerald who, in a drunken state, inducts Dickinson into the "club of tormented souls, . . . the Society of Dead Poets and Writers." This honor is bestowed because of Higginson's remark that she impressed him as having "an excess of tension and an abnormal life," something Zelda understands. Emily "accepts" her membership, reading "Pain –

has an Element of Blank –." The audience is in a state of breathless silence at this point as K.D. says, speaking about herself: "When I was a teenager, I was painfully shy and trusted very few people. I had a small circle of friends. I felt a connection with Emily, her reclusiveness and her timidity. Because I was weird, I wanted her to be weird."

Is there some of this sentiment in our feelings and passion for Dickinson? Perhaps we understand how she belongs more to the twentieth century than to her own. The play, with its humorous frolics, zany action, and seemingly irreverent exaggerations, unfolds some of the qualities that are fundamental to our own love and appreciation of Dickinson, the mystery and emotion that she wields so strongly.

The play nears the end as K.D. turns to a chalkboard, revealing the Todd version of "I had a daily Bliss," with many of Dickinson's words replaced. An entranced "Emily," eraser and chalk in hand, sweeps over the board in choreography with the music of *Enya*, erasing words and restoring the poem as she had meant it to be—complete with dashes. Hair and scarf fly as she thrashes about. The effect was so energizing that one could almost hear cheers coming from the audience!

Dropping the eraser and turning to the audience, spotlight on her, "Emily" begins the final scene with a dramatically triumphant reading of "I'm ceded – I've stopped being Their's –." With a whip of her shawl, her transformation from childhood to adulthood is complete. Emily Dickinson, in "today's Amherst," has grown up, molting the corrupted, popular image of her that has been promulgated since the 1890s.

Notes

1. *The Collected Writings of Zelda Fitzgerald*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1997), 300.

2. David Porter, *Dickinson: The Modern Idiom* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981), 209.

Jim Fraser is a physicist who lives in Northern Virginia and a longtime appreciative reader of Emily Dickinson.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Bennett, Paula, and Vernon A. Rosario II, eds. *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoeroticism*. New York: Routledge, 1995. 286 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-415-91174-5, \$18.95.

Eleven scholars in literature, art, history, and cultural studies probe the "rich network of connections between solitary, non-procreative eroticism and autonomous, imaginative production" in selected works from the sixteenth century to the present. Bennett's essay, "'Pomegranate-Flowers': The Phantasmic Productions of Late-Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Women Poets," discusses the work of Harriet Prescott Spofford, Christina Rossetti, and Emily Dickinson (Poem 339). Bennett argues that "both autoeroticism and its coded incarnations in poetry, especially the excessive use of flower and fruit imagery, were powerful means for autonomous explorations of women's sexuality and imagination."

Felder, Deborah G. *The 100 Most Influential Women of All Time: A Ranking Past and Present*. New York: Citadel Press/Carol Publishing Group, 1996. 374 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8065-1726-3, \$24.95.

Felder ranks Dickinson thirty-fifth among one hundred talented women, identifying her as "one of the world's greatest and most innovative poets." Her work anticipated modern poetry's assonance, elliptical thought, and ambiguity and reveals "an intense, rebellious, and completely original poet." Felder invited women's studies professors to help select and rank outstanding women from a variety of professions. Felder's three-page profiles include Eleanor Roosevelt (1), Marie Curie (2), the Virgin Mary (10), Jane Austen (13), Simone de Beauvoir (15), Mother Teresa (33), Sappho (61), Hilary Rodham Clinton (75), and Lucille Ball (100).

Grabher, Gudrun M., ed. *Semantics of Silences in Linguistics and Literature*.

Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996. 370 pp. Cloth, ISBN 3-8253-0444-2, DM 108.

Margaret Freeman and Carla Pomarè contribute essays on Dickinson in this interdisciplinary collection (in English) on the multifaceted phenomenon of silence. In "Emily Dickinson and the Discourse of Intimacy," Freeman explains how Dickinson's strategies of conversational discourse invite the reader to intimacy but paradoxically lead to "difficult" and elusive poetry. In "A 'Silver Reticence': Emily Dickinson's Rhetoric of Silence," Pomarè discusses the assertive quality of Dickinson's silences and believes her rhetoric opens up new perspectives of experience and owes a debt to Romantic poetry.

Gray, Janet. *She Wields a Pen: American Women Poets of the 19th Century*. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1997. 374 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-87745-574-0, \$29.95; paper, ISBN 0-87745-575-9, \$15.95.

An anthology representing more than fifty almost forgotten women writers, most of whom have been excluded from the canon. Gray singles out Dickinson as the "most securely canonical of all nineteenth-century American women poets." The Dickinson entry focuses on the Fascicle 34 poems, annotated in the right-hand margin with alternate phrasings that Dickinson provided in her manuscripts. The user-friendly format includes a chronology of the poets and historical events, and a useful section on criticism in which excerpts from ten essays span more than a hundred years of Dickinson criticism.

Ioannou, Costas. *Emily Dickinson: The Poetess of Times to Come*. Athens: Editions Gabrielides (116 Aristotle St., Athens 10434, Greece), 1996. 278 pp. Paper, ISBN 960-336-004-X, 4,000 drachmas (about US \$14.50).

Intending to make Dickinson more widely known to Greek readers, Ioannou translates 204 poems into Greek and sets each on

facing pages with the Johnson text. He explains that the few Greek translations to date have been from the 1890s editions without the English text beside them. Writing in Greek, he prefaces his book with three introductory essays—on Dickinson as poet, the poems' publication history, and his translator's comments. The appendix includes a short Dickinson biography and explanatory notes on the selected poems.

Kjaer, Niels. *Emily Dickinson*. Faaborg, Denmark: Emily Dickinson Center, 1997. 64 pp. Paper, ISBN 87-983375-1-3, 200 kroner.

Kjaer translates 66 Dickinson poems into Danish. His introduction (also in Danish) includes a discussion of nineteenth-century religious and literary culture, a brief biography of Dickinson, with special reference to her friendship with T.W. Higginson, and a survey of the poems' characteristics and their publication history. Kjaer believes the poetry combines her Puritan heritage and the optimism and pessimism of the American Renaissance and argues that "the peculiar mixture of Puritanism and Transcendentalism in Dickinson's poetry is what makes it an expression of the American Soul."

Oates, Joyce Carol, ed. *The Essential Dickinson*. New York: Echo Press/Norton, 1996. 94 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-88001-494-6, \$18.00.

Oates regards her selection of 116 Dickinson poems as personal but not private. In her introduction she explains that "certain of Dickinson's poems are very likely more deeply imprinted in my soul than they were ever imprinted in the poet's, and inevitably they reside more deeply, and more mysteriously, than much of my own work." To give the reader a sense of Dickinson's various voices, Oates includes widely anthologized poems and those less well known, both the elegiac and the playful. Oates uses Johnson edition poems and includes a single illustration, the unretouched daguerreotype.

Note: The Bulletin welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books. We would be especially happy to learn of those published outside the U.S. Information should be sent to Barbara Kelly, 444 Washington Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301, U.S.A., or faxed to her at 650-321-8146.

Reising, Russell. *Loose Ends: Closure and Crisis in the American Social Text*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1996. 374 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8223-1887-3, \$54.95; paper, ISBN 0-8223-1891-1, \$18.95.

Reising's "loose ends" are the unresolved cultural conflicts that he finds in the works of Charles Brockden Brown, Phyllis Wheatley, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Henry James, and the Disney Studio. Using a new historicist approach, he assumes that texts always embody socio-ideological issues that take the form of "shadow narratives" that exist within and disrupt the dominant narrative. They are often at odds with the cultural expectations for narrative coherence and closure. In a 47-page critique of Dickinson's Poem 520 ("I started early, took my Dog"), Reising considers the poem's most significant loose end: "Where, amidst the activity and ambiguity of the poem, is her dog?" He regards the poem as one of her most compelling and complex feminist works and approaches it as "a rejoinder to the colonizing tendencies of male authors of the so-called American Renaissance, and as a critique of sexual violence against women."

The Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson. New York: Modern Library, 1996. 295 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-679-60201-1, \$14.50.

Modern Library provides a brief sketch introducing 446 Dickinson poems arranged in four categories: life, nature, love, and time and eternity. For Modern Library's seventy-fifth anniversary, Random House redesigned the series, refurbishing jackets, binding, and type; however, the Dickinson poems, each bearing a Roman numeral, do not come from the Johnson edition, and no rationale is given for a selection predating Johnson.

Selected Poetry of Emily Dickinson. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 299 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-385-48718-5, \$15.00.

One of a series of "Collector's Editions" jointly produced by the New York Public Library and Doubleday, the Dickinson volume includes 266 poems from the Johnson edition, arranged chronologically but unnumbered. Of the seven sections, sections 1 and 3 are notable: the first includes the 9 poems published during the poet's lifetime, and the third includes the 19 poems assembled by Dickinson in Fascicle 13. The

Library provides introductory material and randomly placed illustrations taken from its collections. The volume is compactly sized, as are the Oates and Modern Library editions.

Takeda, Masako. *From Japan to Amherst—My Days with Emily Dickinson*. Osaka: Henshu-kobo Noah (3-17-5, Nakatsu, Kita-ku, Osaka, Japan), 1996. 318 pp. Paper, publication code 0098-9610-7614, Y2060.

Written in Japanese and intended as an introduction to Dickinson for the Japanese general public, Takeda's book includes approximately 40 Dickinson poems, presented in both English and Japanese. The poems are incorporated into her text along with many photographs taken while she was a visiting scholar in Amherst.

Villegas, Anna Tuttle. *All We Know of Heaven*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 180 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-312-14613-2, \$19.95. Abridged audio version: Grand Haven, Mich.: Nova Audio Books, 1997. ISBN 1-56100-996-0, \$16.95.

Villegas's first novel, set in a small California town, is a contemporary love story that explores the nature of love—love when it seems an epiphany and love when harsh reality tests its true strength. When making a crucial decision, the protagonist finds support in Dickinson's "intricately knotted lines where horror and ecstasy, dread and delight, death and love, sit beside each other, betrothed in verse after verse after verse." A Dickinson poem introduces each chapter and corresponds closely with events in the poignant story—written in graceful prose, rich in concrete detail, illustrating Dickinson's "For each ecstatic instant/We must an anguish pay."

Book Notes

Penn State Press has recently reissued in paperback Dorothy Huff Oberhaus's *Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning* (ISBN 0-271-01643-4, \$17.95) and Elizabeth Phillips's *Personae and Performance* (ISBN 0-271-01645-0, \$17.95).

The University of Alabama Press has reissued Robert McClure Smith's *The Seductions of Emily Dickinson* in paperback (ISBN 0-8173-0905-5, \$24.95).

Reviews

Lambert, Robert Graham, Jr. *A Critical Study of Emily Dickinson's Letters: The Prose of a Poet*. Lewiston, N. Y.: Mellen University Press, 1996. 223 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-7734-2270-6, \$89.95

Reviewed by Stephanie A. Tingley

With the recent publication of Robert Graham Lambert Jr.'s 1968 University of Pittsburgh dissertation, long available only on microfilm or through the vagaries of interlibrary loan, Mellen University Press has made this pioneering study of the artfulness of Emily Dickinson's personal correspondence available to a larger audience of Dickinson scholars for the first time in nearly three decades.

Critical studies that center on the poet's prose and focus on her epistles as conscious works of art, rather than simply as sources of biographical or historical context, remain surprisingly sparse, as both the volume's foreword and the author's introduction make clear. Lambert also explains that he deliberately chose not to revise or update his manuscript. Despite the thirty years that have passed since it was written, this "time capsule," as its author describes it, continues to be useful for both Lambert's clear-headed close readings and the variety of critical approaches he employs to analyze and contextualize Dickinson's letter prose.

While it is impossible to do justice to the diversity and complexity of Lambert's project in a brief space, I want to comment on some of the ways in which his thesis identifies and begins to attempt answers to some of the most puzzling questions about Dickinson's life and art—questions that continue to intrigue (or plague?) scholars in 1997.

Lambert's first chapter explores the possibility that Dickinson developed a variety of personae and a range of assumed roles in her letters, as well as in her poetry. His examination of the few letters that are extant from Dickinson's childhood, as well as the poses she adopted in her correspondences with Susan Gilbert Dickinson, Samuel Bowles, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and "Master," not only emphasize the artfulness and craft of the voices Dickinson created for her readers, but also remind us of the work that remains to be done to fully appreciate the complexities of the relationship between the eerily intimate "I" who speaks in both letters and lyrics and the poet who created these personae.

In chapter 2, "The Art of Her Great Letters," Lambert concentrates on close readings of those letters he describes as "so intense in expression [that] they retain their undiminished power to move or delight the reader eighty [and now more than one hundred] years later." Love, friendship, loss, the art of poetry—these are the "Flood Subjects" that both develop in complexity and intertwine in the greatest of her letters as the poet matures. Much remains to be said about the art and artfulness of Dickinson's correspondence and the ways in which the letters link the writer and her readers. As Lambert demonstrates, much can be learned about Dickinson's artful letter writing when the epistles are grouped according to their intended recipient.

Later chapters concentrate on the intriguing intersections between Dickinson's poetry and her prose. Since Dickinson regularly sent poems with letters, as letters, and as parts of letters, Lambert poses some hard, and yet unsatisfactorily answered, questions about the links between letters and poems. Are there letters, for example, that contain the kernel of a later poem—a key image, phrase, idea? Are there instances when the reverse is true? How are readers' experiences of the poems altered or enhanced by reading them in their letter contexts? How does Dickinson transmute source materials from literature, art, current events, and personal experience into her art? Even more challenging is Lambert's assertion that Dickinson deliberately blurred distinctions between prose and poetry to create a fluid, hybrid, often-metered prose poetry.

From start to finish, this groundbreaking study models a variety of productive ways to read and appreciate the enduring power and art of Emily Dickinson's correspondence. Most important, the questions Lambert perceptively posed a number of years ago continue to fuel much of the best of contemporary Dickinson scholarship.

Stephanie Tingley is a professor of English at Youngstown State University.

Lombardo, Daniel. *A Hedge Away: The Other Side of Emily Dickinson's Amherst.* Northampton, Mass.: Daily Hampshire Gazette, 1997. 354 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-9618052-6-9, \$15.95.

Reviewed by Marcy L. Tanter

A Hedge Away is the sequel to Lombardo's *Tales of Amherst*, so I knew before opening

it that I would find pithy stories about Amherst's nineteenth-century history complemented by photographs. As a history buff, I approached the book with interest. Lombardo writes a weekly column for the *Amherst Bulletin*, a local paper, and this book is a collection of some of the columns written during his tenure as a town historian. Once more he has succeeded in collecting a wide array of stories about the Dickinsons, the townsfolk, and famous visitors to Amherst that provide an enjoyable yet profound sense of what the town was like during and just after Emily Dickinson's lifetime.

The book is divided into aptly titled sections such as "Poetry Was in the Air, Rabid Dogs and Typhoid in the Street," "Prostitution, Scams, and Gross Immorality," and "Health: The Benefits of Opium and Wet Sheets." Each section is filled with brief yet complete vignettes that raise questions, provide information, or are just plain fun. In the first of the three sections named above, for example, there appears the story of Henry Paige, a fishmonger who was hounded out of town because the smell of his fish was so strong. Lombardo tells us: "It became clear to Paige that 'the Amherstites preferred to have their fishmongering done on some other planet than the one on which they dwelt'" (40-41).

Also chronicled are more serious events, such as the story of Henry Jackson, a black man born and raised in Amherst, who risked his life and a jail sentence in 1840 to help hide a ten-year-old black girl, Angeline Palmer. She was a servant in the Shaw household, and Mrs. Shaw planned to take her to the South, where she would have been enslaved. Slavery was illegal in Massachusetts, but escaped or freed slaves could be caught and sent back to the South. Jackson was arrested and spent time in jail (he and an accomplice had to kidnap Angeline from the Shaws in order to save her), but he never revealed where she had gone. He was lauded by many people in town, both black and white.

Lombardo also includes some tidbits about the life of the Dickinsons, but that's not the main reason to read the book. I recommend *A Hedge Away* both for the eccentric stories and for the increased understanding of Amherst life that one gains. Lombardo is deeply invested in town history and conveys this in his intriguing and interesting collection. Photographs and excerpts from Emily Dickinson's letters are

scattered through the text. Altogether, the book is an engaging and informative read.

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Ridington, Candace. *Rubicon.* Birmingham, Ala.: Arlington Press, 1998. 496 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-9656773-1-1, \$19.95.

Reviewed by Marietta Messmer

Ridington's novel imaginatively brings to life the engrossing thirteen-year love affair between Dickinson's brother Austin and Mabel Loomis Todd, first editor of Dickinson's manuscripts and a progressive thinker in defiance of social, religious, literary, and gender conventions.

Spanning the years between David Todd's appointment to Amherst College's astronomy department in 1881 and Austin's death in 1895, *Rubicon* vividly captures the complexities of the extraordinary *menage à trois* that develops between David (Mabel's liberal-minded "husband-lover," who comes to depend professionally and personally on Austin's friendship), Mabel (a charismatic activist who divides her time between editing, writing, reviewing, lecturing, painting, performing, collaborating on her husband's research, and reforming Amherst society), and Austin (who grows from an austere lawyer into a sensitive listener and passionate lover after crossing his "Rubicon").

Ridington skillfully contextualizes this extraordinary relationship within the daily life of a conservative nineteenth-century Amherst society and dramatically recreates the townspeople's divided reactions. Particularly compelling is the way in which she captures the emotions of and pressures on the Todd and Dickinson children, specifically Millicent and Ned. It is in the midst of these controversies that Dickinson's poems are shown to assume an almost cathartic force. They not only allow Mabel and Austin to articulate their complex feelings for each other but, in a moving epilogue, also effect the reconciliation between Mabel and her daughter over their shared editorial activities.

Ridington's preface to this, her first novel, emphasizes that "Austin and Mabel often wished someone would tell their story—explain its necessity, its truth, its pain. This is what I have tried to do in *Rubicon*." Aligning herself thus firmly with the Todd-

Bingham-favorable line of criticism (initiated by Pollitt, Taggard, Whicher, and Sewall), and generously acknowledging the formative influence of Polly Longworth's *Austin and Mabel*, Ridington demonstrates a high respect for the historical record while offering an effective critical engagement with several of her sources.

Whereas she accepts the traditional and rather unsympathetic construction of Susan (the "Great Black Mogul" is portrayed as the hot-tempered, knife-wielding wife), she nonetheless counterbalances the depiction of a personal estrangement between Dickinson and Sue by highlighting the importance of their ongoing literary collaboration. Moreover, Ridington convincingly engages with John Evangelist Walsh's *This Brief Tragedy*, rejecting his claim that Sue and Austin's marriage functioned well prior to the Todds' arrival in Amherst, and his contention that Lavinia never intended to sign over the piece of land.

Effectively placed dramatic ironies and humorous allusions to critical controversies (such as Lavinia's initial refusal to publish the Master letters with the words "I won't have people speculating about her and who she may or may not have loved. They do entirely too much speculating about that already") make this captivating novel absorbing throughout. *Rubicon* may be ordered from Arlington Press, PO Box 131021, Birmingham, AL 35213, phone/FAX 205-870-4837.

Marietta Messmer is assistant professor at Göttingen University.

Plated Wares, continued from page 3

to Todd Axelrod. Axelrod had, in 1986, published a book on collecting historical documents in which he pictured a barely legible Dickinson poem. Larson offered to send me her copy of Axelrod's book.

I discussed with her the problem of connecting Hofmann with either Amherst College or Harvard, where he could have studied hundreds of Dickinson manuscripts. I knew that Hofmann associate Lynn Jacobs had enrolled in Harvard Divinity School in the early 1980s. Larson informed me that Jacobs had died years ago. She then generously sent me her Dickinson-related notes on Hofmann, including his travel records, which showed him visiting Massachusetts several times in 1983-84. Three entries were for stays at the Holiday Inn in Cambridge.

Larson also sent me her copy of Axelrod's book *Collecting Historical Documents: A Guide to Owning History*,³ which reproduced a matted and framed copy of the poem. Matted with it was what looked like a transcript of the poem, a paragraph of text, and a copy of the Dickinson daguerreotype. Under magnification the poem proved to be the one we had purchased. When deciphered, the accompanying text read, "Emily Dickinson did not retain a copy of this poem among her manuscript books and papers which were published posthumously. It was probably presented to a niece or nephew as the words 'Aunt Emily' are written on the conjugate leaf in indelible red pencil. Very few of her creations remain unpublished and in private hands. The paper embossed 'Congress' above a capital was only used by Emily in 1871-1872."

On August 11 I located David Hewitt, a journalist who had covered the Hofmann hearings in Salt Lake and still had transcripts from them. He described Hofmann as becoming grandiose after his arrest. In order to plea bargain, he had "cooperated" by confessing to many forgeries—even, according to Hewitt, to some he had not committed. Hewitt added that Hofmann had handled a lot of authentic items but in doing so had given even them "the kiss of death."

On August 13 I attempted to call Shannon Flynn, a former associate of Hofmann's. Flynn had initially been a suspect in the Mormon bombings but had been cleared. People at his former place of employment in Salt Lake gave me a number for his current workplace, a firearms dealer in Salt Lake. I called, but Flynn was away until August 18. On the 18th I left a message on his pager. On the 26th his answering machine said he would be away until September 2. I left another message, asking him to return my call with any information he might have on Hofmann and a Dickinson forgery.

At about this time, I came upon some disturbing information in the epilogue of Robert Lindsey's *A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit*.⁴ Not long after Hofmann began his life sentence at Utah State Prison, according to Lindsey, two inmates told guards that Hofmann had asked them to murder three members of the Board of Pardons. This led investigator Michael George to reopen the Hofmann file. In subsequent interviews,

Hofmann told George he had forged handwriting of "at least eighty-three American and European historical figures," including Emily Dickinson: "I just made up a poem and signed it—and I'll be darned if a year later I saw the poem published in a magazine as a 'newly discovered poem' by Emily Dickinson." I wondered if this was more Hofmann bravado, for the Dickinson world knew of no magazine publication of such a poem. When I spoke with Franklin again on August 11, he suggested that what Hofmann had seen was not a magazine but Axelrod's book with the barely legible photograph of "That God cannot be understood."

On August 15, I met with Franklin at the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale. I had with me the poem and examples of Dickinson letters and poems from the Jones Library collection. Franklin had assembled Dickinson manuscripts from Yale's collections. In a room in the basement of the Beinecke we examined the suspect poem and a dozen authentic Dickinson manuscripts under ultraviolet light. A chapter on the forensic analysis of Hofmann documents by forensic expert George J. Throckmorton⁵ describes a blue haze that appears on documents Hofmann treated with certain chemicals. Under ultraviolet light, Franklin and I noticed such a blue haze in the shape of a brush mark over the papermaker's boss on the suspect poem. It appeared on none of the authentic Dickinson manuscripts we examined.

In another room we examined the manuscript under a stereo microscope. A raking light helped bring out the papermaker's boss. This mark, which had been pressed into the paper with a metal stamp, lacked some of the roofline detail on the U.S. Capitol that appears on Dickinson's authentic paper of 1871-72. Hofmann is known to have forged such stamps. This was either his creation or another variation of this papermaker's mark, of which two authentic versions are known.

By now I felt I had enough evidence assembled to be fully convinced that the piece was a forgery. I sent a summary of the evidence, plus photocopies of certain documents, to Sotheby's. I then arranged to meet with the director of my library, members of the Board of Trustees, and the president of the Friends of the Jones Library on August 25. On their advice, I notified Sotheby's that we would be issuing a press release on August 27, and by that date we would like to

have their assurance in writing that we would receive a full refund for the document. After deliberation, and some discussion with Ralph Franklin, Sotheby's complied.

On August 27 I prepared to meet with members of the press, fax the press release, and telephone all donors who had contributed to the poem's purchase. Then, just an hour before the press conference, I received a call from Shannon Flynn, Hofmann's former associate. We had a long and detailed talk about Flynn's dealings with Hofmann, the manuscript, and other aspects of the case. According to Flynn, in late 1984 or early 1985, Hofmann had some material he wanted to sell to Todd Axelrod, including the poem "That God cannot be understood" and some rare Mormon money. He had Flynn take the papers to Axelrod, who purchased the poem but declined the other items. Flynn said he did not know at the time that the poem was forged, but he wasn't surprised to learn that Hofmann had begun forging mint marks on coins at the age of fourteen, and he warned that there may be hundreds of Hofmann forgeries—both coins and paper—still circulating.

Fresh from this call, I approached the press and the television crews. The journalists were stunned by the announcement. Most asked sophisticated and intelligent questions, but their sense of competition and their rush to get the story out led to some dismayingly inaccurate reporting. I was not surprised that the story of the forgery was bigger news than the discovery of the "new" Dickinson poem.

What I expected to be my saddest task—calling each donor with the news—turned out to be the most heartening. I was touched by the emotional support that each person offered and surprised by the number of people who wanted the Jones Library to keep their donations for future purchases.

Ultimately, what I am left with is immense gratitude to all of the EDIS members who were part of this unforgettable experience, especially Jonnie Guerra and Ellen Louise Hart, and to Ralph Franklin, who was a constant and ever-supportive partner in our search for truth. Everyone had one common driving emotion—a passion for truth—something we share with the poet herself.

A Counterfeit – a Plated Person –
I would not be –
.....

Truth is good Health – and Safety,
and the Sky.

How meagre, what an Exile – is a
Lie [P 1453]

Notes

1. See my article in the *Bulletin*, 2, no. 1 (May/June 1990), 1-2.
2. Champaign: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1992, 340.
3. Neptune City, N.J.: T.F.H. Publications, 1986, rev. ed., 198.
4. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, 377.
5. In Linda Sillitoe and Allen D. Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 531-52.

Daniel Lombardo's latest book is A Hedge Away: The Other Side of Emily Dickinson's Amherst (reviewed on page 20 of this issue).

"Saint Emily," continued from page 5

to do concrete acts of love" (*Dakota* 97). One thinks of all those Dickinson lines: "I scarcely know where to begin," Emily told her Norcross cousins three months before her death, "but love is always a safe place" (L 1034) or "Love – is anterior to Life / Posterior – to Death –" (P 917).

The Cloister Walk's story is intensely Dickinsonian, as if the meditative life had brought Norris closer to her "saint." Excerpts from Dickinson serve as epigrams for the first, mid, and final chapters ("Dawn," "Noon," and "Night") of this work which is not a "spiritual geography" but a "spiritual chronometer."

That Dickinson-like movement from the struggle for survival to the achieved peace of night sums up the book. Her chapter on "The Paradox of the Psalms," for example, not only begins with an inscription from Dickinson, "Pain – is missed – in Praise" ("Unto my Books – so good to turn," P 604), but in that chapter she muses on "the danger that lies hidden in Dickinson's insight...that we will try to jump too quickly from one to the other...sentimentalizing both pain and praise" (94).

The Dickinsonian blessings that close both memoirs bring us back to the poetry collection. *Little Girls in Church* is full of Emily, beginning with a distinctly Dickinsonian Eve: "Mother of fictions/and of irony, / help us to laugh," she says as invocation. This is the Eve of Dickinson's "Paradise Fictitious," the Eve who is not

ashamed to thirst for knowledge, to take on Adam and God, to be, as Norris says at the close of the poem, "a muse of exile,/mother of the road" (3). Another poem, "In Praise of Darkness," begins with an inscription from H.D., but its incantatory call to "Listen. Be still./ Be as deep as the dark/from which you came" certainly also invokes Dickinson's preference for the dark.

Indeed, if according to Norris, "references to scripture may be found in every one of [Dickinson's] poems and letters," it seems to one steeped in Dickinson that nearly every page of Kathleen Norris's works might serve as a mirror for "one of the bravest poets who ever lived."

Notes

1. Emily Mitchell and Margaret Nelson, "Place of the Spirit," *People Weekly* 46 (Oct. 14, 1996): 77-78; photo by Keri Pickett.
2. The words in "Emily in Choir" come from poems 18 and 408, and from L 391.

Works by Kathleen Norris

Falling Off. Chicago: Big Table Publishing, 1977.

"Let Emily Sing for You/Because She Cannot Pray." *Cross Currents*, Summer 1986, 219-29.

Dakota: A Spiritual Geography. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. *Little Girls in Church*. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.

The Cloister Walk. New York: Riverhead Books, 1996.

Works about Kathleen Norris

Bendis, Debora. "Kathleen Norris: Dakota and Other Holy Places." *Christian Century* 111 (July 27, 1994): 720-24.

Seaman, Donna. "Interview: Kathleen Norris." *Booklist* 93 (Oct. 1, 1996): 302-3.

Eleanor Heginbotham, who teaches American Literature at Concordia University in St. Paul, is working on a book on Dickinson's fascicles. She is cofounder of the Minnesota chapter.

Painting the Flowers, continued from p. 7

the botanical names of about 400 species of flowers, leaving behind a record of her botanical knowledge. What a treasure! Richard B. Sewall goes so far as to write, "Take Emily's herbarium far enough, and you have her" ("Science and the Poet: Emily Dickinson's Herbarium and 'The Clue Divine'" (*Harvard Library Bulletin* 3, no. 1 [Spring 1992]: 11).

Another source of plants familiar to Dickinson is Edward Hitchcock's *Catalogue of Plants Growing without Cultivation in the Vicinity of Amherst College* (Amherst, 1829). Dickinson referred to this book in a letter (488) to Higginson that also expresses her attitude that flowers are emblematic of immortality, a theme that appears frequently in her poems and letters: "When Flowers annually died and I was a child, I used to read Dr. Hitchcock's Book on the Flowers of North America [sic]. This comforted their Absence – assuring me they lived."

A third source is one of Dickinson's botany books, Mrs. Almira Lincoln's *Familiar Lectures on Botany...*, *Seventh Edition* (New York, 1838). One of my most thrilling research experiences was finding and purchasing a copy of this edition in an antiquarian bookstore in Wales. Imagine the delight of finding the very edition that Dickinson used.

Mary Adele Allen's *Around a Village Green* (Northampton, 1939) describes Amherst during Emily Dickinson's lifetime and includes fairly detailed identification of Dickinson's garden flowers and recollections of Allen's mother receiving notes from Dickinson that included pressed flowers.

When I could find no direct reference to a species, I used the historical record of plants as listed in such books as Robert Buist's *American Flower Garden Directory* (New York, 1858).

The spring flowers in my print are anemone, clover, crocus, Epigaea, lilac, and rhodora. Dickinson's herbarium includes *Anemone nemorosa* (wood anemone), *Epigaea repens* (mayflower or trailing arbutus), *Melilotus alba* (white sweet clover), *Rhododendron canadense* (rhodora), and *Syringa vulgaris* (common lilac). Hitchcock lists *Trifolium pratense* (common red clover), and Mrs. Lincoln lists *Crocus vernus* (spring crocus).

The summer flowers are all roses, and I wanted to represent both wild and garden varieties. In her herbarium, Dickinson identified three species roses by name: *Rosa lutea*, *R. rubiginosa* (*R. eglanteria*, sweet briar or eglantine), and *R. parviflora* (*R. palustris*, swamp rose), as well as an unidentified species rose. Hitchcock lists *R. corymbosa*, *R. lucida*, *R. parviflora*, and *R. rubiginosa*. I painted eglantine to represent "roses of a steadfast summer," to harken back to Shakespeare's flowers, and to strike the comparison again between the two.

To represent the botanical rose in poem

19, I painted a common species rose, *R. lucida*, with bright pink flowers that bloom June to July. My best source for garden roses was Allen, who names the Bon Silene rose as one of Dickinson's. Bon Silene is a tea-scented China or Tea Rose, *R. odorata*, with petals ranging from rose to crimson, and so I used it to represent the "crimson scouts" of poem 1582. Allen names two other garden roses that grew in Amherst, Baltimore Belle and Queen of the Prairie. Baltimore Belle is a double, blush flower, developed from the prairie rose by Baltimore nurseryman Samuel Frost, and I painted it to represent "new species."

The autumn flowers include aster, burdock, gentian, harebell, and wild rose. *R. parviflora* (*R. palustris*), the wild rose listed in the herbarium, fits the description of the wild rose reddening in the bog. It is an autumn-blooming swamp rose, and although its petals are pink, they redden as they age. The herbarium lists *Gentiana crinata*, the famous fringed gentian, and *Campanula rotundifolia* (harebell or bluebell), as well as an unnamed aster. Hitchcock lists *Aster novae-angliae*, the common New England aster, and *Arctium lappa* (burdock). Mrs. Lincoln notes that arctium is from *arktos*, a bear.

The winter flowers are dandelion, fuchsia, geranium, and hemlock. The common hemlock is *Tsuga canadensis*. Fuchsia is one of the conservatory flowers listed in letter 279, and in the herbarium as *Fuchsia magellanica*, which has coral lobes and purple petals that burst open. Poem 100 does not name the flower but seems to describe the dandelion, listed in the herbarium as *Leontodon taraxacum*, although I admit that it could be golden rod. This golden flower is often the sole representative of all flowers on a winter's day. The herbarium names three species of geraniums, including *Pelargonium odoratissimum* (apple or nutmeg geranium), which I painted.

One poem that names the geranium (486, "I was the slightest in the house, /I took the smallest room") is a reminder that the correspondence between poem and reality is not always exact. When I visited the Dickinson Homestead, I noticed that Emily Dickinson's room did not appear to be the smallest, and although it's interesting for me as an artist to try to identify the species of flower that a poet might have known, the poet need not have had in mind a specific species. Emily Dickinson's flowers are both

specific and emblematic, both near and foreign.

Susan Loy is a professional artist and calligrapher whose literary calligraphy paintings are part of the permanent art collections of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., and the Jones Library in Amherst. A graduate of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, she completed graduate studies in art history, literature, and philosophy at Ohio State.

Chinese Poetics, continued from page 9

onto the flowers? Is it that the birds feared to leave their flock or that the poet dares not look at the fleeing birds, which may remind him of his own parting with family? It is hard to tell because the description and the expression are one from the start.

Of the three approaches, the first and last are more highly valued in Chinese poetics. SuKung Tu insisted that "poetry is come by as one does a fallen petal and not by other means."¹⁸ Chinese poetics holds in highest esteem immediacy and transparency achieved through "dissolution of the emotion in the scene." The so-called "heavenly made" poems are the least subject to logical analysis, displaying little trace of artificiality. The reader is least diverted by the means, for nothing stands between the means and the end.

Emily Dickinson, deemed to be the ancestor of Imagist poetry, seems to have known no difficulty in lodging emotions in a scene. The Imagists strove for "unsentimental concentration of clear imagery,"¹⁹ actually an artful maneuver aimed at poetic immediacy and transparency. Poetry, as Liu Hsieh says, is made for emotion.²⁰ The poet must express ideas or emotions and reveal beauty as he or she sees it, but the revelation must be done with tactics. Or, as Dickinson says, "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant – / Success in Circuit lies" (P 1129). According to her, the prime tactic is the poet's withdrawal from the poem: "The Poets light but Lamps – /Themselves – go out –" (P 883). If the poet goes out, one may wonder, then where is the emotion? In the lighting. The poet lights the lamps to illuminate the scene, selecting a scene that is worthy and arranging the "lamps" so as to betray the poet's emotional response. This is Dickinson's version of the principle of "dissolving the emotion in the scene."

Dickinson seems to have resisted the

second approach, inventing the scene for the emotion. She thinks that “Beauty – be not caused – It is –” (P 516). Since “Beauty is nature’s fact,” it cannot be artifact. Beauty should be disclosed only as it is, and an invented scene is a distortion and therefore less beautiful. It is more appropriate to say that the poet *discovers* beauty than that he or she creates it. If one tries to create beauty, Deity sees that one never succeeds.

Being One with the Universe

The poet writes about the world and people according to his or her understanding of the relation between the two. Chinese poetics upholds the principles of “seeing Tao in the seen” and “dissolving the emotion in the scene” because it adopts the Taoist viewpoint that humans are equal with the universe/nature and the two can therefore be one yet not lose but enhance their respective individualities. “There are four Greats in the universe—Man is one of them. Man imitates Earth, Earth Heaven, Heaven Tao, and Tao itself.”²¹ Since “Heaven and Earth and I came into existence together, and all things with me are one,”²² “How does one know that what one calls nature is not man and what one calls man is not nature?”²³ This belief in oneness with the universe deeply influences Chinese poetics.

In subject matter, Chinese poetics advocates seeing poetic beauty in landscape. To write about the universe or the physical world is, in fact, to write about humanity. Poems concerning nature constitute the bulk and great tradition of Chinese poetry. Some natural images have even acquired the status of archetypes: spring grass, willows, the moon.²⁴ In Dickinson’s poetry, nature occupies an equally important position. She writes lovingly about the robin, the spider, the sunset. We sense her longing to be one with nature (see especially P 162) or at least her feeling of kinship with creatures and plants. Perhaps in her reclusion she touched upon Taoism, much as Thoreau tried to merge into the Over Soul in his Walden cabin. For Tao, like the Over Soul, covers and is open to all.

Influenced by Taoism, Chinese poetics has a different understanding from Western poetics of the genesis of poetry. Poetry is not the mimesis of nature or of the poet’s mind but the result of nature’s action upon the human being. This passivity is a poetic outgrowth of Taoism. The Taoist classic *Huai Nan Tzu* points out that “one who has acquired Tao...will never take the initiative,

but act in response.”²⁵ “The so-called ‘true man’... responds only when he is affected, moves only when he is forced to and goes only when he has to.”²⁶ Derived from this idea is the emphasis by Chinese poetics on the poetic device of *Hsing*—the method of expressing one’s induced emotion by describing the inducer, which is usually isomorphic to the expressed emotion. The most frequently quoted example of *Hsing* is a stanza from *The Book of Songs*: “Guan! Guan! Cry the fishhawks/On sandbars in the river,/A mild-mannered good girl,/Fine match for the gentleman.”²⁷ The description of the water birds is brief, but its implication is rich, and although it appears to be a symbol, it is more general than an ordinary symbol. A symbol follows meaning, but *Hsing* precedes meaning. In using *Hsing* the poet displays artistic passivity—does not violate the physical world by imposing meanings but sees it from a particular angle or is affected by it in a particular way. Chung Jung listed *Hsing* as the first among the three expressive methods in Chinese poetry (the other two being *Fu*, narration, and *Pi*, which includes simile and metaphor).²⁸ Yang Wan-li (1127-1206), a famous ancient poet, once commented that *Hsing* is preferable in almost all poetry.²⁹

In one of her letters, Dickinson expresses her poetics—“Nature is a Haunted house – but Art – a House that tries to be haunted” (L 459A). “Nature is a Haunted House” is identical with “seeing Tao in the seen.” The poet frequently goes to nature for poetic beauty. “To be haunted” refers to the poet’s passivity in poetic creation. Practically, “trying” is waiting. If “tries” indicates anything active, it is the “abdication” of Poem 642:

Me from Myself – to banish –
Had I Art –
Invincible my Fortress
Unto All Heart –
.....
And since We’re mutual Monarch
How this be
Except by Abdication –
Me – of Me?

To subjugate consciousness is to enhance the subconscious, which is more sensitive to the outside world. To abdicate “me from Myself” is to remove activity from the mind to make room for passivity. Only when the poet surrenders the self willingly and completely to the physical world can the deepest emotions be brought out. Dickinson begins many of her poems by describing the scene

and then proceeds to express the contained emotion or meaning. Although this is not *Hsing* in the strict sense, it is very close.

The areas of agreement between Emily Dickinson and Chinese poetics are not so accidental as they at first appear. A deep structure lies beneath them. “Being one with the universe” is a world outlook. When applied to poetry, it dominates the poet’s mode of thinking and poetic style. Both Dickinson and traditional Chinese poets, cherishing such a belief, sought truth and poetic beauty in whatever they perceived, especially in nature. Their poems therefore cover a vast variety of subjects and offer abundant images from nature and ordinary life. Even those dealing with landscapes are often philosophic or metaphysical—“seeing Tao in the seen.” Tao/poetic beauty can be seen *in* things but should not, and indeed cannot, be extracted *from* things. So poetry is *in* the thing and should be presented together *with* the thing—“dissolving the emotion in the scene.” The universe is self-contained but humans are part of it. The only way to oneness with the universe is to give up one’s subjective initiative—to be consciously passive in order to feel, to experience. “Being one with the universe” determines the relationship between the poet and his or her world.

Emily Dickinson and Chinese poetics are of course products of two different cultures. Their convergence reveals that the truism in literary study “The more national, the more international” is not entirely true. If a poet is to be accepted in a foreign culture, he or she must have something in common with that culture. The coincidences between Emily Dickinson and Chinese poetics across such vast space and time adequately prove their respective values and the value of comparative studies such as this.

A poetics is not totally sound and safe until it is tested by foreign poetry. Chinese poetics, formed within Chinese culture, is still valid when applied to a foreign poet. Emily Dickinson, through her lonely efforts, reached many of the same conclusions as Chinese poets, transcended the cultural barrier, and thus made possible her wide reception in China.

Notes

1. Chin Chia-yi and Kung Han-su, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, Chinese ed. (San Lien Publishing House, 1990), p. 118.

2. All translations are by me except where otherwise noted.

3. "Ultimate Happiness," *Chuang Tzu*, English ed., trans. Fung Yu-lan (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1994), p. 7.

4. Li Pai, "Twelve Poems Composed in Imitation of Ancient Style, No. 9."

5. *Poems from Tang and Song Dynasties*, trans. Wang Shou-yi (Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 1989).

6. Trans. Arthur Waley, from *100 Chinese Classical Poems in English*, ed. Wang En-pao and Wang Yueh-hsi (Peking Language Institute Press, 1994).

7. Chung Jung, *Ranking of the Poets*, annotated by Xun Da, Chinese ed. (Guiyang: Guichou People's Publishing House, 1990), p. 64.

8. *Chuang Tzu*, trans. Fung Yu-lan (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1994), p. 7.

9. Hsiao Chih, *Aesthetics of Chinese Poetry*, Chinese ed. (Peking: Peking Univ. Press, 1986), p. 256.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

11. Marcus Cunliffe, *The Literature of the United States* (Peking: China Foreign Service Publishing Co., 1985), p. 173.

12. "External Things," *Chuang Tzu*, annotated by Chang Keng-kuang, Chinese ed. (Guiyang: Guichou People's Publishing House, 1991), p. 497.

13. David Porter, *Dickinson: The Modern Idiom* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981), p. 6.

14. Lu Yuen-chih, *Poetic Philosophy and Philosophic Poetry*, Chinese ed. (Peking Publishing House, 1989), p. 40.

15. *Appreciatory Dictionary of the Tang Dynasty Poetry*, Chinese ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionaries Publishing House, 1983), p. 252.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 594.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 453.

18. Lu Yuen-chih, *Poetic Philosophy and Philosophic Poetry*, p. 145.

19. *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967), 1:40.

20. "Emotion and Diction," in Liu Hsieh, *Wen Hsin Tiao Lung*, Chinese ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House of Ancient Classics, 1994), p. 1158.

21. *Book of Lao Tzu*, annotated by Jen Chi-yu, Chinese ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai Publishing House of Ancient Classics, 1988), chapter 25.

22. "On the Equality of Things," *Chuang Tzu*, English ed., p. 49.

23. "The Great Teacher," *ibid.*, p. 91.

24. Hsiao Chih, *Aesthetics of Chinese Poetry*, p. 227.

25. "The Prime Tao," *Huai Nan Tzu*, Chinese ed. (Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 1994), p. 17.

26. "Spirit," *ibid.*, p. 324.

27. Trans. Burton Watson, from *100 Chinese Classical Poems in English*, p. 8.

28. Chung Jung, *Ranking of the Poets*, p. 11.

29. Hsiao Chih, *Aesthetics of Chinese Poetry*, p. 81.

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Mabel Loomis Todd, continued from page 12

said, and the public would not accept even fine ideas in such rough and mystical dress—so hard to elucidate.

But, I read him nearly a dozen of my favorites and he was greatly astonished. Said he had no idea there were so many in passably conventional form, and said if I would classify them into A B & C he would look them over later in the winter. So I did that very carefully, and sent them to him.¹

Mabel was uniquely qualified to be the editor of Emily's poetry, perhaps the only person other than Susan Dickinson who might have been able to take on the arduous task of transcribing the hundreds of poems written in Emily's difficult handwriting. (Higginson described Emily's handwriting as "so peculiar that it seemed as if the writer might have taken her first lessons by studying the famous fossil bird tracks in the museum of that college town."²

In an article written for *Harper's Magazine* in March 1930, Mabel had this to say:

Emily had been in the habit of sending a verse now and then to acquaintances in town; and many persons told me of having received "queer" lines, as they called them. Some of which had been kept, more thrown aside, and but few really appreciated. Previous to her death, I had been at several dinners in Amherst where certain of the guests had reported receiving poems from her which had been entirely unintelligible to the recipients—But at any rate it made "brilliant" dinner table comment. In one instance, a lady bringing with her some of the verses which she read aloud with an indescribably funny intonation, asking the merry company what could [be] made of such absurd words! The unthinking ridicule of the limited public which had passed

on Emily's writing was a personal and definite grief to me.³

Mabel herself had been the recipient of a number of Emily's poems, including the beautiful hummingbird verse (1463). In the fall of 1882, when Mabel played the piano for the invalid Mrs. Dickinson, Emily would sometimes thank Mabel with a poem.

During the late 1880s, while working on the poems, Mabel discovered that she had fallen under their singular spell. She termed it "uplifting"—"A world of thought in a few lines—a verbal microcosm."⁴

There is no doubt that Mabel understood that she was working on extraordinary material, and she attempted to be as true to the original as possible. Both she and Higginson, however, were wont to smooth a line or substitute a word to create a rhyme. Emily's original dashes were replaced by more conventional punctuation in those early editions. Mabel did not favor titles for most of the poems and took issue with some proposed by her co-editor. But in working with Higginson, who knew the tastes of the Victorian public, Mabel acquiesced in some instances in order to hold out for the inclusion of certain poems not favored by Higginson or the publisher, Thomas Niles of Roberts Brothers.

Early on, Mabel realized the need also to collect the letters Emily had written to friends and many far-flung correspondents. This she began doing shortly after publication of the first two series of Dickinson poems, 1890 and 1891, which were great successes. Emily's letters were often not dated, and to create a more orderly sequence for them, Mabel researched the events described. She had this to say about her efforts: "It was undoubtedly beneficial to the editor who has become, perforce, unimpeachable authority on the dates of most of the births, marriages, deaths, fires,—in short, upon the general local history of the past generation."⁵

No account of Mabel's part in bringing the Dickinson poems and letters to public notice can be complete without reference to the talks she gave on Emily's life and poetry, at first with Higginson and later on her own. Mabel was no novice in speaking before groups. She had initiated "Parlor Talks" when she and her husband returned from their trip to Japan, where they photographed the

1887 total eclipse of the sun. Mabel also gave accounts of her own ascent of Fugi-San. (She was the first white woman to climb that peak.)

After publication of Dickinson's poems, there was great interest in knowing more about the strange life of the reclusive poetess of Amherst. Mabel began her own lecture series on April 1, 1891, and by 1898 had delivered twenty-four lectures on Dickinson to various groups. Her format proved effective. For example, on May 12, 1892, in Northampton before an audience in the First Church, Mabel began her talk by reading some thirty poems, critiquing them, and quoting the critiques of Higginson and the Rev. John Chadwick (the latter had written a particularly spirited and insightful review for the *Christian Register*⁶). Interspersed with the poems, Mabel commented on the Dickinson handwriting, described her reclusiveness with the exception made for children—but not caused by a broken heart—and offered other anecdotes informally, not a part of the written text. Her talks were highly successful. In her scrapbooks, where she kept a meticulous record of her speaking engagements, the newspaper accounts show almost unanimous acclaim for her presentations.⁷

As the book reviewer for the *Home Magazine* in November 1890, the month in which the first volume of poems appeared, Mabel opened her article with this statement: "A book which is perhaps one of the most remarkable collections of recently printed verse [is now available]." She went on: "In the literature of the hour, we are so accustomed to reading verse in good form, to be sure, with proper rhyme and rhythm, but filled with platitudes of thought—...that coming on anything like the present volume is hardly less than a shock." Here Mabel quoted several poems, highlighted her own pleasure in the poetry, and included a description of the "picturesque" life of the author.⁸ Through her lectures and parlor talks and in her capacity as a book reviewer, Mabel brought wide attention to Dickinson's poetry.

Mabel Loomis Todd's part in bringing Emily Dickinson's work to the attention of the public cannot be overstated. Her early awareness of the poetry as extraordinary, her willingness to work those many hours deciphering the difficult handwriting were crucial, and obtaining the help of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a known figure in literary publishing circles, was a brilliant move on Mabel's part. Furthermore, her efforts to collect the letters early on, letters that often included more of the poems, showed her remarkable

fitness for the work. Mabel's close ties to the Dickinson family helped expedite the tasks. It was an amazing set of circumstances. And much of this labor was done without recompense. Mabel's work in publicizing the poetry through parlor talks and in other locales brought newspaper attention to the Dickinson canon.

My original question remains: Why is it that, to this day, we have not accorded Mabel Loomis Todd her rightful place in bringing to light Emily Dickinson's magnificent poetry?

Notes

1. Mabel Loomis Todd, *Journal*, 75 (Nov. 30, 1890).
2. "Emily Dickinson's Letters," *Atlantic Monthly* 68 (1891): 444-56.
3. "Emily Dickinson's Literary Debut," *Harper's Magazine* 958 (1930): 463-65.
4. *Ibid.*
5. "Emily Dickinson's Letters," *Bachelor of Arts* 1, no. 1 (1895): 39-40.
6. Willis J. Buckingham, *Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 62-64.
7. Personal Scrapbooks, 1871-1899, and black record books, Todd-Bingham Archive, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.
8. "Bright Bits from Bright Books," *Home Magazine*, Nov. 1890, 47-48.

Works Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd

- With T.W. Higginson. *Poems by Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1890.
- With T.W. Higginson. *Poems by Emily Dickinson, Second Series*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1891.
- Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1894.
- Poems by Emily Dickinson, Third Series*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896.
- Letters of Emily Dickinson*. New and enlarged edition. New York: Harper, 1931.

Dorothea Kissam has been a guide at the Dickinson Homestead in Amherst since 1991.

Kitchen Table Poetics, cont'd from p. 12

out the many loving references to Maher and the Kelleys in Dickinson's correspondence. Indeed, when Otis Lord fell ill, Dickinson wrote that "Tom had come and I ran to his blue jacket to let my Heart break there—that was the warmest place."

Walking past the former site of the

Dickinsons' Pleasant Street home, the participants followed Murray to the poet's grave, where she spoke of Emily's funeral as having been scripted for the benefit of more than one social group. She outlined the significance of mortuary ritual in Irish culture and the mutual respect symbolized in the choice of pallbearers: in Dickinson's case, all six (Thomas Kelley, Dennis Scannell, Pat Ward, Daniel Moynihan, Steve Sullivan and/or Owen Courtney) were Irish immigrants who worked on the family property. Such a choice represented "a gesture of debt, allegiance, and honor," Murray claimed. "They must have been important to her in life because they were important to her after her death."

At the Homestead, and in full view of the pantry window where Dickinson baked, declaimed poetry, and watched the family servants at their business, the present-day staff described what they do to keep alive the poet's legacy. Murray outlined the nature of the work carried out by Dickinson's servants, and its significance to the volume of Emily's poetic manufacture.

The artist completed her talk/walk at Kelley Square, near the railroad depot and the Hills factory, where in 1868 Thomas Kelley nearly fell to his death. Although this is the place where Maher and several generations of Kelleys lived, all trace of their presence is now gone, but the Square is now featured on maps of Amherst, as it was not when they were alive.

Even after Emily's death, Margaret Maher continued to aid her "letter to the world" by working for Mabel Loomis Todd while she edited the poems for publication. Furthermore, Martha Dickinson Bianchi reported that Maher was instructed by Emily to burn the poems after her death, something she could not bring herself to do. She also preserved the famous daguerreotype. Perhaps we owe a much greater debt of gratitude to Margaret Maher and her fellow Irish servants than we have realized.

Murray concluded by discussing the enfacement of workers from history and hoped that, by outlining the important ways in which the labors of Kelly, Maher, and others helped create some of the conditions necessary for the production of poetry, she had restored their voices and faces to the Dickinson story.

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University of Science and Technology at Trondheim. He spent a year's research leave in Amherst working on aspects of Dickinson's nonpublication.

Charles Anderson, continued from page 14

feels especially tender about—the book he never got around to writing!”

During Anderson's sabbatical year, a notable event took place: the publication of his first book, *Melville in the South Seas*. Drawing on a cache of naval documents that had come to light, Anderson provided new perspectives on the ways Melville's novels, from *Typee* to *Moby-Dick*, departed from the facts of Melville's sea experiences, the ways in which the novelist transformed actuality into art. Melville's career as a fiction writer was, to a great extent, over with the publication of *The Confidence Man* in 1857; he was, for the most part, an antebellum writer.

Anderson has found it inappropriate to apply to Dickinson the biographical approach he used for Melville. He has found that the Civil War was not of central importance in Dickinson's creative career; he believes that she was a quintessentially private poet, that the circumstances in her secluded life were too few and undocumented to shed significant light on her poems. Only her poems can (and do) shed light on her poems.

In the concluding lines of *Stairway of Surprise*, Anderson draws an especially significant lesson from something Dickinson had written: “‘Biography first convinces us of the fleeing of the Biographed,’

she remarked near the end of her life, probably intending the double meaning.” That double meaning, Anderson suggests, is that “Not only has the body died, but the spirit that inhabited it eludes the biographer.”

There are some details here that need to be taken into account—that suggest still another meaning. The biography Dickinson refers to is the eagerly awaited *Life of George Eliot* by her husband, John Walter Cross; the poet had corresponded with its American publisher in keen anticipation of its publication—and had asked Higginson's permission to send him a copy of the book as soon as it appeared. This she did in February 1885 (L 972), along with the sentence Anderson quotes—and the quatrain “Pass to thy Rendezvous of Light.” The context makes clear that the poet is conveying an old truth in a characteristically new and pithy way: It is hard to accept the fact of the death of the George Eliot I have treasured (but not known) until I hold in my hand this book, this biography.

Looking Forward Still Further

Whitman and Dickinson made books of poems totally unlike those of Longfellow and Tennyson, totally unlike any made before their time. Both wrote untitled poems to emphasize their larger plans; both wrote in a daring and distinctive format and in an American vernacular that could reach readers only through the flamboyant New Yorker's self-publication and the less obviously flamboyant New Englander's self-publication (distribution of hundreds of poems through a post office that would not tamper with her texts). Each poem in *Leaves*

of *Grass* is linked to the others in the book; every Dickinson poem belongs not only to its own untitled self but to all the others in her manuscript book, a book that kept growing like *Leaves of Grass*. They were our two great representatives of American modernism—long before the term finally arrived.

A talk titled “The Modernism of Emily Dickinson,” presented by Anderson at the Emily Dickinson Centenary Conference (Folger Library, 1986), adds much to our understanding of the ways in which the poet moved away from Emerson's transcendentalist vision of merging with nature into a modernist world of human hauntings. Her startling nature “still lifes,” Anderson suggests, may well serve as companion pieces to American impressionist and luminist paintings—and to the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock.

Anderson closes his talk with a brilliant new reading of “There's a certain Slant of light” (P 258). “For more than half a century,” he observes, “this poem was placed by her editors under the heading of Nature, but the winter sunlight is simply the overlying image of despair, enclosing the center of suffering that is her concern.” “A certain Slant of light,” Anderson believes, bolsters the case for Dickinson's modernism: “With her despair of the idea of separation from God as imaged in a winter landscape, she seems like a precursor of Eliot, the seminal figure of modernist poetry.” Anderson provides passages from “Burnt Norton” and “Little Gidding” in support of this view.

The magic circle of Charles Roberts Anderson keeps expanding.

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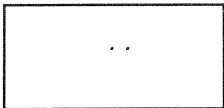
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Why did ED wear white?

She did not have to play in the orchestra.
She did not have to do her own washing.
She could always make the first move.
She could eat her chocolate ice cream fast and
her vanilla ice cream slow.



Emily Dickinson in the Arctic

Lori Lebow

In This Issue

- 1 Entertaining Plated Wares DANIEL LOMBARDO
- 4 Poet to Poet: "Saint Emily" and Kathleen Norris ELEANOR HEGINBOTHAM
- 6 Dickinson and the Visual Arts: Painting the Flowers of Emily Dickinson
SUSAN LOY
- 8 Emily Dickinson in the Viewfinder of Chinese Poetics BAI JINPENG
- 10 The Dickinson Houses: Two Conservation Projects Seek Funding
CINDY DICKINSON and GREGORY FARMER
- 11 Has Mabel Loomis Todd Been Given Her Due? DOROTHEA A. KISSAM
- 12 Kitchen Table Poetics: The Walk DOMHNALL MITCHELL
- 13 Performances: Sleeveless Theatre's *Emily Unplugged* Reviewed by
JAMES C. FRASER
- 14 Dickinson Scholars: The Magic Circle of Charles Roberts Anderson
BENJAMIN LEASE
- 15-17 Members' News
Tenth Anniversary Celebration
New Press for *The Emily Dickinson Journal* SUZANNE JUHASZ AND LYNNE SPEAR
Academic Meetings
News of the ED Society of Japan
Third International Conference Announced
Call for 1999 Conference Papers
Chapter News
Letters to the Editor
Notes & Queries
- 18-19 New Publications: Short Reviews
Bennett and Rosario; Felder; Grabher; Gray; Ioannou; Kjær; Oates; Reising;
Selected Poems of ED; Selected Poetry of ED; Takeda; Villegas
Book Notes
- 19-21 Book Reviews
Robert Graham Lambert Jr., *A Critical Study of Emily Dickinson's Letters*
Reviewed by STEPHANIE A. TINGLEY
Daniel Lombardo, *A Hedge Away* Reviewed by MARCY L. TANTER
Candace Ridington, *Rubicon* Reviewed by MARIETTA MESSMER

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