

# Bulletin

Volume 21, Number 2

November/December 2009

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



# EDIS 2009 ANNUAL MEETING



Eleanor Heginbotham with Beefeater Guards



Emily with Beefeater Guards



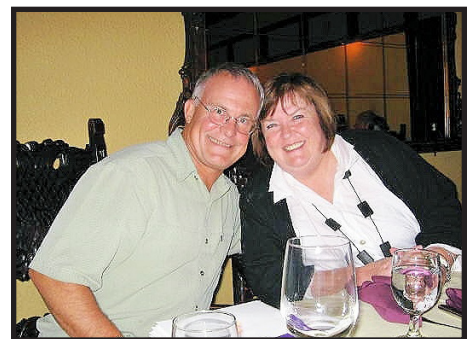
Suzanne Juhasz, Jonnie Guerra, and Cris Miller with Beefeater Guards



Cindy MacKenzie and Emily



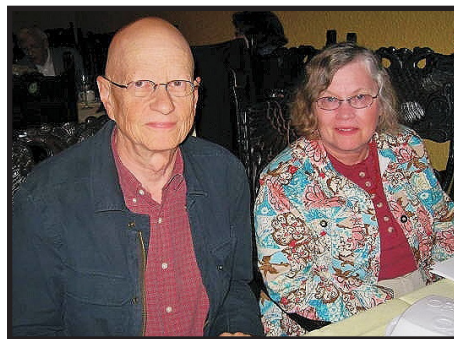
Special Tea Cake



Paul Crumbley, EDIS president and Cindy MacKenzie, organizer of the 2009 Annual Meeting



Georgie Strickland, former editor of the *Bulletin*



Bill and Nancy Pridgen, EDIS members



George Gleason, EDIS member and Jane Wald, executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum



Jane Eberwein, Gudrun Grabher, Vivian Pollak, and Eleanor Heginbotham at banquet



Martha Ackmann and Ann Romberger at banquet



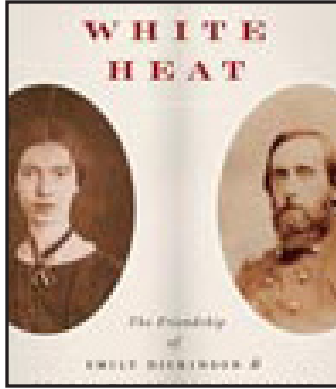
Group in front of the Provincial Government House

Cover Photo Courtesy of Emily Seelbinder  
Photos Courtesy of Eleanor Heginbotham and Georgie Strickland

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*EDIS gratefully acknowledges the generous financial contributions of these members.*

EDIS *Bulletin* (ISSN 1055-3932) is published twice yearly, May/June and November/December, by The Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc. Standard Mail non-profit postage is paid at Chicago, IL 60611. Membership in the Society is open to all persons with an interest in Emily Dickinson and her work. For further information, contact Paul Crumbley, President, EDIS, Department of English, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322 or paul.crumbley@usu.edu. Annual dues are \$50.00 for regular members, \$30.00 for students, \$200.00 for sustaining members, \$113.00 for institutional members, \$100.00 for contributing members (all of whom receive the *Bulletin* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*), or \$20.00 for associate members (*Bulletin* only). Membership inquiries should be directed to James C. Fraser, 159 Prospect St., Apt 7, Acton, MA, 01720-3654, USA. Membership applications and changes of address should be sent to The Emily Dickinson International Society, c/o Johns Hopkins University Press, P.O. Box 19966, Baltimore, MD 21211-0966, USA. Direct changes of address to jrnlcirc@mail.press.jhu.edu, 800-548-1784 (U.S. and Canada), or 410-516-6987; fax to 410-516-3866. Address submissions and other communications for the *Bulletin* to Kathleen Welton, aka associates, 645 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60611 or kathy@kathywelton.com. Submission deadlines are March 1 (Spring issue) and September 1 (Fall issue). All articles become the property of the *Bulletin*. Back issues are available for \$5.00 each from the editor. Copyright © 2009 by The Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc. The *Bulletin* is indexed in EBSCO, Humanities International Complete, and the MLA Bibliography.

## Queen Without a Crown: EDIS 2009 Annual Meeting

By Douglas Evans

Two Beefeater Guards, festooned in scarlet and gold, cordially welcomed the esteemed guests into the elegant crystal salon of the grand Hotel Saskatchewan. The august occasion was to herald the 2009 Emily Dickinson International Society annual meeting in the royal city of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada on July 31-August 2, 2009. Cindy MacKenzie, professor of English at the University of Regina, who hosted and planned the event, gave the convocation, warmly welcoming the guests, and Paul Crumbley, the president of EDIS offered greetings and toasts.

And then—the dinner—a banquet fit for a queen, of roast prime rib of beef, Yorkshire pudding, and English trifle. After all, the theme of this conference was “The Queen Without a Crown,” and the three-day program appropriately reflected this theme.

The queen of the conference, of course, was Emily Dickinson—“The Queen of Calvary—” (Fr347), “Royal, all but the Crown—” (Fr194), “Purple—The Color of a Queen, is this—” (Fr875), “Empress of Calvary—” (Fr194), “Title divine, is mine.” (Fr194), “A half unconscious Queen—” (Fr353) and many more poems referencing the singular, unrecognized queen.

Nicholas Ruddick, professor of English at the University of Regina, regaled banqueters with the topic, “We perish—tho’ We reign—” (Fr693). Giving a brief biography of himself and his early encounters with the queen (Dickinson), he discussed four royalty poems, pointing out, for instance the interestingly double-meaning of “Bridalled” in “Title divine, is mine.” (Fr194) and

Choosing a theme for the 2009 annual meeting of the Emily Dickinson International Society in my hometown, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, initially presented me with a considerable challenge. With absolutely no Dickinsonian connections to draw on, I decided that Regina’s nickname, the “Queen City,” would foreground the pervasive theme of royalty in the poet’s letters and poems. By selecting the line, “Royal, all but the Crown—” (Fr194) for the poster, I wanted to emphasize the poet’s jubilant tone but also the high regard in which we, the members of the Society, hold this brilliant poet. In addition, imbuing the poster with deep purple and violet tones decorated with images of a white crown creates a strong allusion to many of the iconic symbols in her work. Meeting and dining in the elegant rooms of the Hotel Saskatchewan and Government House and implementing as much pomp and ceremony as possible, we celebrated Emily Dickinson’s indisputable queenly stature.

— Cindy MacKenzie

Title divine, is mine.  
 The Wife without the Sign—  
 Acute Degree conferred on me—  
 Empress of Calvary—  
 Royal, all but the Crown—  
 Betrothed, without the Swoon  
 God gives us Women—  
 When You hold Garnet to Garnet—  
 Gold—to Gold—  
 Born—Bridalled—Shrouded—  
 In a Day—  
 Tri Victory—  
 “My Husband”—Women say  
 Stroking the Melody—  
 Is this the way—

the royal color imagery in “Purple—The Color of a Queen, is this—” (Fr875), one of the few poems that Dickinson actually titled (one Ruddick had referenced in his Doctoral thesis on Dickinson’s color imagery). The third poem, “I dreaded that first Robin, so” (Fr347), reflected, said Ruddick, that nature’s indifferences teach us not to magnify our own “elevated” status. In Ruddick’s final selection, “Like Eyes that looked on Wastes—” (Fr693), he noted, Dickinson gives us a very different view of “queenship”—one that goes into

the difficult area of severe depression, when she looks into the glass of her own face and sees the abyss of infinity.

A special art exhibit entitled “For Emily” was conceived and organized by Cindy MacKenzie and Tim Long, Head Curator of the MacKenzie Art Gallery. Works from the gallery’s permanent collection were selected, and word and image were brought together, revealing how artists and poets create meaning. Cindy was asked by Tim early on how to sum up what Dickinson

# FEATURES

## *Queen Without a Crown: EDIS 2009 Annual Meeting cont., By Douglas Evans*

was all about. Her response is succinct and memorable: “Metonymy and Ellipsis.” That is what this very special exhibition was all about. A sculpture of a dress with crossed ankles evoked the poem “I cannot dance upon my Toes—” (Fr381). A dark, empty box with some cobweb filaments reminded the viewer of “One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—” (Fr407) in which the brain is a haunted house. It was interesting that this exhibition was not based on art that was created because of any particular poem, but it was based on a poem that easily conformed with an already created work of art.

Saturday’s agenda included three consecutive workshops conducted by three astute EDIS scholars on the subject of teaching Dickinson. Three exciting and unique methods were presented for consideration—utilizing “queen” poems. Emily Seelbinder, professor of English at Queens University in Charlotte, lets the students decide much of the direction of the class after reading the poems and criticism. Each class, she noted, goes in a different direction, based on the students’ interests. For example, students present montage projects, such as a Rubik’s Cube with words from the poems, a collage of photos/pictures/poems of Dickinson, and a tribute to Andy Warhol with the two “Emilies.”

Martha Nell Smith, professor of English at the University of Maryland, a recognized expert on the textual manuscripts of Emily’s poems, utilizes on-line technology in which students can analyze and compare different versions of the poems. Using the poem “Title divine—is mine!” (Fr194A), she presented two manuscript versions of the poem—one

written to Susan Dickinson and the other to Samuel Bowles. Class discussion focuses on the differences between them. In the Regina “class” David Gillies offered an astute observation: that the version to Susan was “whispered,” while the version to Bowles was “orated”—two very different tones. Smith—along with many other teachers in the room—also insists that students memorize some of the poems.

Stephanie Tingley, professor of English at Youngstown State University, asks students to pick one poem from the fascicles. After careful reading of the text, they are required to go through a series of steps including explication of the text, inspection of Dickinson’s lexicon, close study of the manuscripts, and placement of the poem in the fascicle. Tingley’s students also look beyond the text to link the poem with other literature, music or art. The final project is creating an “Electronic Poster”—making public what the student has labored on for the duration of the class. She showed examples of the “Electronic Poster” which utilizes packaged software that enable students to combine text, pictures, and artworks into an individual creation illustrating their chosen poem.

An afternoon roundtable session, chaired by Marianne Noble, associate professor of literature, at American University, consisted of discussion and sharing of “Best Assignments”—those that worked, and those that did not work so well. Several contributors had previously submitted a sample of their class assignments for all to peruse. Suzanne Juhasz requests that students pick a topic, reading through ALL of Dickinson’s poetry they find on that

topic and selecting five on which to specialize. Juhasz chooses ten additional poems and this “cluster” becomes the basis for further analysis.

Choosing two fascicles, Trisha Kannan asks students to present to the class a poem from the fascicles. The catch is that the student will not know which poem of those fascicles the instructor will ask him or her to present.

Emily Seelbinder asks students to consider two poems linked in some way, decide which one they prefer, and write down the reasons for their choice. (There is no right answer.) Possible pairings might be: “After great pain, a formal feeling comes—” (Fr372) and “Pain—has an Element of Blank—” (Fr760); or two or more variants of “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—” (Fr124).

Jane Donahue Eberwein challenges students to see what the different editors of over a century have done with Dickinson poems. After assigning a poem to each group of students and providing them a facsimile of the manuscript, they are to copy it with absolute precision, noticing punctuation, words, variants, and other marks on the page. Then they compare their findings to what the various editors chose to do.

Conferees discussed Dickinson outside of the classroom as well. Lois Kackley has had experience in establishing a chapter in Amherst, Massachusetts. As do those in other “chapters” of EDIS, she utilizes local experts in Dickinson to be guest speakers as well as other scholars who have reason to travel to Amherst.

Presenting the various teaching programs of the Dickinson Museum, Jane Wald, executive director, in-

# FEATURES

## *Queen Without a Crown: EDIS 2009 Annual Meeting cont., By Douglas Evans*



Emily Seelbinder

formed attendees of ways the Museum and its staff can educate, inform, and excite audiences about Emily Dickinson. Their overall goal is to establish a larger presence of Emily Dickinson. The Museum is dedicated to educating diverse audiences about Emily Dickinson's life, family, creative work, times, and enduring relevance, and to preserving and interpreting the Homestead and The Evergreens as historical resources for the benefit of scholars and the general public.

EDIS president Paul Crumbly, called the requisite business meeting to order. Of keen interest was that next year's international conference would be held in Oxford, England; he urged all to make the crossing. Annual meeting attendee Gordon Porterfield performed a dramatic rendition of nineteen Dickinson poems—recited from memory and received with hearty applause.

The workshops all ended—all interesting, all challenging, all thought provoking—and all business put aside—it was now time to pay respects to the queen. Would

she show up? Yes, that evening, the mortal myth was revealed in all her glory, personified by Barbara Dana, EDIS Board member and actress, in a very moving performance of the play, *The Belle of Amherst* by William Luce. She did us proud! Dana portrayed an exquisite and nuanced Emily Dickinson. Not only was she the Belle of Amherst, but she was the "Queen" as well—"The Queen Without a Crown."

Bright and early Sunday morning, the Research Circle met, with Eleanor Heginbotham filling in for long-time leader Ellen Louise Hart. Among the projects in process on which attendees reported were several fascicle studies, including one by graduate student Trisha Kannan; several cross-disciplinary studies, including that by George Gleason (who also reported on his research on a dubious photograph of Dickinson) comparing Dickinson's work to that of Georgia O'Keefe; and several studies based on letters, such as Stephanie Tingley's focus on the Holland family letters and Martha Nell Smith's continuing work on Susan Dickinson and Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Paul Crumbly and Cristanne Miller both spoke of more than one major project nearing completion. Through the years of EDIS annual meetings and conferences, this gathering has encouraged and previewed work that has been published and been useful to subsequent scholars. Especially this year, the interaction between conferees—many participating in the work of others—reflected the spirit of EDIS.

Later that day, the grand finale came in a fitting and unforgettable surprise. Boarding a carriage (bus), courtiers were conveyed to the Government House for a tour and Vic-

torian high tea and luncheon with the Lieutenant Governor, Gordon L. Barnhart (who actually stands in for and reports directly to another Queen—Elizabeth II). His Honor spoke to each guest individually after they had toured the Government House; stood in respect to the strains of "God Save the Queen" and "O, Canada," and consumed a "very proper British tea" by "very proper Victorian ladies": orange scones, Devonshire cream, trimmed and tidy sandwiches, and "Queen Elizabeth cakes" crowned with crystalized sugar tiaras.

All too soon, the meeting was over. Fired up and ready to delve into their "Johnsons" and "Franklins," the inspired attendees couldn't wait to get home to their various schools and local meetings to try out the new teaching techniques and ideas.



Martha Nell Smith, Eleanor Heginbotham, and Stephanie Tingley enjoy the annual meeting.

Emily Dickinson wrote about the "Queen Without a Crown." In spite of her lack of recognition in her lifetime, Emily was the Queen of her craft—and she knew it. She reigns forever.

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**Douglas Evans** is a founding member of EDIS. He served in Project Management at IBM Corporation for 25 years and Disaster Accounting for American Red Cross Headquarters for 11 years. He is currently working part-time in a library for an engineering firm.

## Playing Emily or “the welfare of my shoes”

By Barbara Dana

On August 1, 2009, I had the honor of playing Emily Dickinson in William Luce’s *The Belle of Amherst*, at the annual EDIS meeting in Regina, Canada. I had longed to do the play for years, but in a fantasy way, not in a “how can I make this happen?” way. My acting idol, Julie Harris, had played the “part” magnificently. I would not presume to do it. When Cindy MacKenzie, who was hosting the meeting, asked if I would consider doing the play, I thanked her for the somewhat overwhelming offer and explained why I had to decline. Thank goodness she asked me again.

Cindy knew of my long-standing career as an actor. We had recently co-edited an edition of essays on the healing power of Dickinson’s poetry (*Wider Than the Sky: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*, Kent State University Press, 2007) and knew a lot about each other’s lives having spent many long months working together.

When Cindy repeated her request, I found myself reconsidering. I had just completed ten years of work on a novel based on the young life of the poet (*A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson*, HarperCollins, 2009). I missed the day-to-day contact with “my” Emily. How many actors get to study a role for ten years before playing it, I thought. What a gift! Every actor brings something different to a role. That’s as it should be. As I write this, I think of a postcard I received from Julie, the always-generous soul. “You will be Emily in Canada next summer!” she wrote. “Wonderful! Remember You ARE Emily!”

Thank you, Julie.

But I was scared. Could I honor Emily, as I would want to? Could I hold the stage alone for nearly two hours? Could I learn the lines?? It would be a lot of work, too much work for one performance. But once I had done the play I could do it at other theaters, I reasoned. I accepted Cindy’s offer and set to work.

I began by reading the play two or three times a week, not out loud, just as a reader, no plans, no judgments, no decisions as to how I would play



Barbara Dana and Riley

it, just exploring Emily’s world within the context of the play. It was August 2008. I had a year to prepare. At the same time I decided to see if I could have Emily’s white dress reproduced for the show. I took a postcard of the dress to Broadway costumer Sarah Timberlake. I remember trudging up the long flight of stairs in the heat and humidity of the Manhattan summer to Sarah’s studio to ask if she could copy the dress. She said she could! There I stood, draped in white, becoming Emily amidst the fabrics, the lace, the buttons, the sewing machines, the women at work, and Sarah’s cats lolling in the breeze of the fans set about on top of the work tables. The dress was finished just after Labor Day and fit perfectly. The only

problem was I couldn’t gain a pound throughout the following year!

In October, I began learning the lines. I started at the beginning of the text out loud until I knew them. With a one-person show there are, of course, no cues. One has to form a mental connection between one section and another, a reason to go from one thought to the next. This takes time. Once I learned a small section I ran it every day so as not to forget it while moving on to the next. In addition to this, I recorded the play and listened to it while doing the dishes, folding the laundry, making the beds, or walking my yellow Lab, Riley. I continued to work on the lines every day, progressing slowly through the play in small sections and running the sections I already knew. By December, it was going well, but I was having trouble with the recipe. The play opens with a recipe for black cake, which was difficult to learn because it doesn’t have the emotional line of the rest of the play. (Do the raisins come before the nutmeg or after?)

My novel came out in March. I went on my first book tour, traveling to California, New Mexico, New England, and the Midwest. I continued to work on the lines between readings and signings, running sections of the play on planes and in airports, listening to my recorder on hikes in the desert near Santa Fe, walks along Main Street in Amherst, and in traffic jams on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Upon my return, photographer Mark Kwiatek came to my house in South Salem where we did a day of shooting for the poster. Mezzo-soprano Kathleen Shime-



## *Playing Emily or “the welfare of my shoes” cont., By Barbara Dana*

ta joined us for some shots for our project *I Told my Soul to Sing!* that combines musical settings of the poems with text from my novel. The Emily dress looked beautiful but the waist opened up when I sat down. I pinned it closed for the shoot, then returned to Sarah’s studio to fix the problem, climbing the seemingly endless flight of stairs, a bit easier to do in March than in the heat of summer.

The next question was my hair. When photographer Mark Kwiatek shot the photos for the poster I parted my hair in the middle and pulled it back. This looked fine for the pictures, but from the side, the bun, or what there was of it, looked skimpy. I searched several beauty supply shops in Manhattan and one in Westchester to find a bun to add to my own hair but could find nothing that matched my hair color. I decided to grow my hair for the next several months, which I figured might do it. (It didn’t.)

The good news was that actor/director/playwright Austin Pendleton agreed to direct the play. I had studied with Austin years before at HB Studio in New York where I also studied with Uta Hagen and where Austin still teaches today. Austin had brilliantly directed my play, *War in Paramus*. He was my first and perfect choice to direct! In February we began working together a couple of times a week. I was fortunate to have a deep sense of Emily from having worked on my novel. However, in the book I had concentrated on her younger years. For the play I had to study her later life in depth, the further development of her writing, her love relationships, her father’s death, her mother’s stroke and subsequent death, the death of Charles

Wadsworth, her growing reclusiveness, her deepening estrangement from Sue, Austin’s affair with Mabel Loomis Todd, Emily’s long and lasting relationship with Thomas Wentworth Higginson, etc. I returned to the letters, concentrating on the later ones. I explored her adult life in the biographies of Sewall and Habegger. I re-visited Polly Longworth’s Austin and Mabel.



Barbara Dana plays Emily

The entire play revolves around fifty-three year-old Emily talking to the audience. At fifty-three, shy and reclusive as Emily was, she would never have told her life’s innermost secrets to an audience of two hundred people. To whom would I imagine Emily was speaking—one person, two? And who were they? Years ago Julie Harris had shared her choice with me. An actor’s secret, I cannot reveal it here, but I followed her lead.

In addition to rehearsing, I began collecting props. I took Walt

Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* from my bookshelf along with Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona* and my grandfather’s Bible. I took a cup and saucer from my cupboard and my mother-in-law’s antique watch from my jewelry box. I found a stereoscope on E-Bay. I ordered an apron, a bonnet, a shawl, a pen, an inkwell, and a magnifying glass from various sources on the Internet. I scanned Emily’s family photographs from books. I bought nineteenth-century looking picture frames in which to put them. I purchased a white hanky at Target. I wrote out all the poems and letters that Emily actually reads in the course of the play. I made several fascicles, sewing the pages together to use in the scene with Higginson. A small fan acquired at our EDIS conference in Kyoto was perfect for the scene at the dance with James Francis Billings, who didn’t like rhubarb. Certain props would be too large to travel with. I sent a list of these to Nils Clausson the stage director in Regina, along with a list of the furniture we would need and a sketch I had drawn of the basic set for the set designer, Rick Harvey.

Austin was out of town in May. I found a college student to run lines with me. I spoke the text while she held the script, correcting my mistakes and giving me clues when my mind went blank. When Austin returned in June, we had six weeks before I had to leave for Regina and he had to leave to play Herbie in a production of *Gypsy*. We began rehearsing four to five days a week. I was beginning to feel crazy. I still didn’t know all the lines. I still didn’t have my hair. Pressure was building. But we got through the month. The week before I left I found a bun that matched my hair color. I knew my lines.

## *Playing Emily or “the welfare of my shoes” cont., By Barbara Dana*

I flew to Regina with Emily’s dress, her shoes and my precious nineteenth-century props in my heavy(!) carry-on bag. I thought customs might think I was planning to open an antique shop without a work permit. But nobody opened my luggage. Cindy welcomed me royally. Nils and Rick and I found the needed furniture for the set at the Regina Performing Arts Center and arranged it in a rehearsal room where I would rehearse for the week before the show. The rest of the week was spent searching for elusive props including an oil lamp, a teapot, black cake, *The Atlantic Monthly*, the *Springfield Daily Republican* and a picture frame to replace the one that had broken on the flight from New York. Hardest of all to locate was the wooden box in which Emily keeps some of her finished poems. Emily offers the box to the audience at the end of the play as her “letter to the world” so it had to be right—simple, unpretentious, not too big.

Evenings I ran lines with Liza Gilblom, a student at the University of Regina, and lover of Dickinson. She would also be my prompter for the performance. Since there would be no other actors on stage should I forget a line, or “go up” as we actors call it, I decided that having a prompter would be wise for peace of mind if for nothing else.

At the technical rehearsal in the theater the morning of the performance, Nils and I were joined by the lightning designer, Guy Michaud, whose job it was first and foremost to insure that the audience could see me. The previous week only two lights appeared to be working in a grid of four. Stage center, where I/Emily would spend the larger part

of the evening, was in total darkness. I was relieved to find that Guy had solved the problem. Not only that, he had designed a beautiful, simple lighting plan that featured the various areas of Emily’s environment. At the apron of the stage, a spot illuminated her garden.

As we began the technical rehearsal, or “cue to cue” as it is sometimes called, everything fell apart. Stop-



Barbara Dana in the white dress

ping and starting, skipping whole sections of the play, being interrupted by Nils and asked to move to the edge of the table where the light was better—these things fractured my sense of Emily’s reality. Thank goodness I was wearing her shoes. Wearing a character’s shoes is an old acting trick that helps one feel in character when rehearsing. I had chosen the shoes carefully, off-white with a strap across the instep and a low heel, comfortable, feminine, yet sturdy. The whiteness of the tips would be a gentle touch when vis-

ible beneath the floor-length hem of the dress.

The show was a success, the response, heartwarming. I must relate my favorite comment. At the reception after the performance as I stood, basking in the light of the acceptance and appreciation of my colleagues, a woman approached me from the far side of the lobby. She was smiling in a tentative sort of way, her head tipped to one side, hesitant, yet somehow bold. I readied myself for a compliment. When she reached me she stopped, her smile fading. “I liked it,” she said, “but I wish you’d had the right shoes.”

I guess you really can’t please everyone. Of course Emily never bothered about that. She did things her own way, knowing, I believe, that being true to one’s own vision is the way to go—that one’s self is truly all one has.

As far as being alone up there—it didn’t happen. Guess who was with me?

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**Barbara Dana** will perform *The Belle of Amherst* on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Kirby Memorial Theater at Amherst College as well as perform preview scenes from the play to celebrate Emily’s birthday on December 10, 2009—both for the Emily Dickinson Museum.

### Notes

“the welfare of my shoes” (*The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, L16 Edited by Thomas H. Johnson, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.)

### Credits

Photos courtesy of Mark Kwiatek.

## Teaching and Learning at the Emily Dickinson Museum

By Jane Wald

Historic sites and museums have played an increasingly prominent role in American culture over the last century as repositories of collective memory, values, and history. They serve as centers of conversation—and sometimes controversy—about exciting new findings as well as enduring traditions. They are also centers of reflection and reverie, places where solitude and silence can rejuvenate the imagination and inspire creativity. Above all, historic sites and museums are physical environments for learning. Their structures and collections evoke authority and authenticity in telling important stories and encouraging new insights.

As a learning environment, the Emily Dickinson Museum's unique educational tools are the two Dickinson family homes, the spaces the poet occupied, the landscape she inhabited, and a large collection of family objects. Our work is guided by a mission statement that places emphasis on "educating diverse audiences about Emily Dickinson's life, family, creative work, times, and enduring relevance." This mission along with a set of basic interpretive themes—Dickinson's poetic ability and output, influences on her creative sensibility, and the social context of her life—form the backbone of the museum's broad-based program of education.

Last year, more than 12,000 on-site visitors experienced our most common educational programs—a variety of guided tours, public events, and interpretive exhibits. In spring 2009, the museum experimented with new program formats and partnerships under the auspices of "The Big Read: The Poetry of Emily Dickinson," part of a pilot ini-

tiative created by the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. The Big Read's emphasis on community-based programming coincided perfectly with the sense of place vital to Dickinson's work and this year's community-wide celebration of the 250th anniversary of the town's establishment. Strong collaborations with local partners undergirded new offerings for young and old, expert and novice, and for those inspired by literature, music, dance, art, history, and nature. One of our hopes for these programs was that



The Homestead as it appears today following restoration of the hemlock hedge and spindle fence. The young hemlocks will be maintained at a height of about six feet. Photo courtesy of the Emily Dickinson Museum.

readers new to or uncomfortable with poetry could test the waters with the work of one of the world's most celebrated poets hailing from their own community.

Two among the dozen programs organized for the Big Read deserve special mention. The premiere of *Emily of Amherst*, an original four-act ballet of interpretive biography, created in collaboration with Amherst Ballet, is described elsewhere in this issue. "Emily Dickinson's Poetry 101," offered in partnership with the local public library, provided a starting place for curious potential Dickinson readers. Two sessions explored the basic facts of

the poet's life, persistent mythology about her, Dickinson's writing practices, and how her poetry came to be published. Two other sessions treated participants to readings and interpretations of Dickinson's poetry with working poets April Bernard, John Hennessey, Marilyn Nelson, Susan Snively, and Richard Wilbur. A workshop originally designed for informal discussion among about 40 participants ended with a standing-room only audience of 100. We encourage you to consider organizing an Emily Dickinson Big Read in your community; see [www.neabigread.org](http://www.neabigread.org) for details.

School field trips have long been a staple of the museum's educational presence, but newer initiatives seek ways to have a multiplying impact year after year on what school-aged learners know about Emily Dickinson and her poetry by supporting the teachers who teach them. This past summer, we offered a professional development workshop, "Emily Dickinson: Person, Poetry, and Place," funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, for 80 teachers from around the country at kindergarten to twelfth grade levels (see [www.nehworkshopemilydickinson.org](http://www.nehworkshopemilydickinson.org)). Our goal was to help teachers gain a deeper understanding of Emily Dickinson's poetry, the environment in which she lived, the forces that shaped her development as a poet, the multi-dimensional presence she exerted at home and among her friends and community, and, now, throughout the world. Each day, teachers heard a lecture on the major topic—biography, material culture, poetry, letters—then broke into smaller group activities related to that theme. Participants met throughout the week

## Teaching and Learning at the Emily Dickinson Museum, cont., By Jane Wald

with mentor teachers who helped them explore their personal interests in Dickinson and work toward a curriculum project to implement in the coming academic year. The success and relevance of this program, which will be offered again in summer 2011, is expressed in the representative comment of one teacher participant: "This experience was an amazing opportunity to immerse myself in Emily Dickinson and gather with like-minded people. While I always appreciated Dickinson's poetry, I had no concept at all of the pivotal role her family, friends, and home played in her life. The poet is an enigma, but many mysteries have been unraveled for



Dancers from Amherst Ballet teamed up with the Emily Dickinson Museum to march in the Town of Amherst's 250th Anniversary Parade in September 2009.

me. I created a lesson plan that I'm enormously proud of, and I look forward to sharing my newly-gained knowledge with my students."

The museum's freshest educational project is a newly refurbished web site at [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org). The upgraded web site is intended to provide authoritative information about Emily Dickinson, her "life, family, creative work, times, and enduring relevance" to a worldwide audience. A series of over fifty short essays cover biographical information about the poet, her family and friends, as well as topics such as Dickinson and cooking, her writing practices, and what the town of Amherst was like in the nineteenth century. There is also information about the museum's collections, its current restoration projects, future plans for furnishing the historic spaces, as well as room for expansion on a host of subjects. The new web site aims to satisfy the interests of a range of off-site visitors—from student learners seeking information for a school assignment, to casual browsers increasingly intrigued by an enigmatic poet, to researchers looking for direction in their inves-

tigations of Emily Dickinson and her milieu.

The Emily Dickinson Museum offers a growing range and depth of teaching and learning experiences, and it's an honor to pursue with the Emily Dickinson International Society the common goal of instilling intellectual curiosity and excitement about Dickinson's poetry with learners of all ages.

**Jane Wald** is executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens. She has worked in the field of public history for most of her career. Prior to joining the staff of the newly organized Emily Dickinson Museum in 2003, she was director of The Evergreens, owned and operated at that time by the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust, and was on the staff of Old Sturbridge Village. She contributed an essay, "Pretty much all real life': The Material World of the Dickinson Family," to the *Blackwell Companion to Emily Dickinson*, edited by Martha Nell Smith and Mary Loeffelholz, published in 2008.

On the afternoon of October 25, 2009, the plaster ceiling in the front parlor of the Emily Dickinson Museum's Homestead fell into the room. Although the building was open for tours, no one was in the immediate space at the time of the incident and there were no injuries to staff or visitors. In order to complete a thorough inspection of the facility and assess the extent of the damages, the Emily Dickinson Museum closed temporarily.

The Museum re-opened to the public on Saturday, October 31, 2009,



**Emily**  
DICKINSON  
**Museum**  
THE HOMESTEAD &  
THE EVERGREENS

with a revised tour telling the story of Emily Dickinson's legacy from the perspective of her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi. After the Homestead passed out of Dickinson family hands, Bianchi maintained an "Emily Room" at The Evergreens to satisfy growing public curiosity about her aunt's extraordinary poetry. The tour is offered during the Museum's regular public schedule. The Homestead will be closed until investigations and repairs are complete. For more about the incident, visit [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org).

# FEATURES

## *Teaching and Learning at the Emily Dickinson Museum, cont., By Jane Wald*

### **AMHERST'S MOST FAMOUS RESIDENT PRESENTED IN *EMILY OF AMHERST*, A BALLET ABOUT THE LIFE AND WORKS OF POET EMILY DICKINSON**

*Emily of Amherst* was an incredible accomplishment. The dancing, choreography, music, sets and costumes all told important pieces of an unforgettable story. The talent that blazed on the stage made us feel like we were at Lincoln Center, but how appropriate that after the final curtain we stepped outside into the town that inspired this magical production.

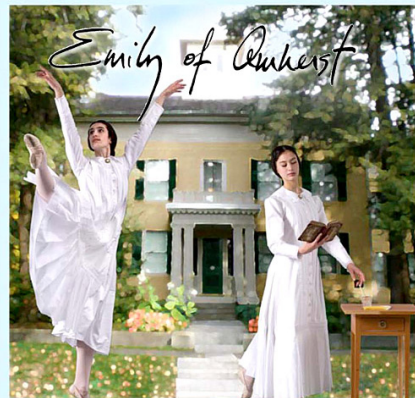
*Emily of Amherst* was absolutely breath-taking! The application of beautiful ballet to retell anecdotes from Emily's life was ingenious, and blended with the powerful narration through her poetry and related letters and the original musical score, it was entirely a magnificent work of art. I can hardly believe this incredible work and performance took place in our small town, but on the other hand...where other than Amherst could Emily Dickinson be so tangibly brought to life?

*Quotes from letters sent by audience members who attended Emily of Amherst, May 2009*

*Emily of Amherst*, an original ballet in four acts, was premiered in May, 2009, at The Kirby Theater on the campus of Amherst College in Amherst, MA as part of the Town of Amherst's 250th anniversary celebration. More than 1,000 people attended the five performances along with students from seven local schools who attended the day-time performances as part of a field-trip.

A collaboration of Amherst Ballet and the Emily Dickinson Museum the ballet was intended to navigate uncharted territory by creating a biographical "story ballet" of Amherst's most famous resident.

Created and written by Catherine Fair, Amherst Ballet's Executive Director, and Jane Wald, the Executive Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum, the ballet drew upon biographical information that seemed particularly suited for stage adaptation and was significant to the poet's evolution as an artist. The resulting work, rich in human emotion and experience, provided audiences with all the traditional elements of story ballet along with



*A Collaboration of Amherst Ballet & the Emily Dickinson Museum*

**KIRBY THEATER, Amherst College**  
FRIDAY MAY 15TH 7:00PM  
SATURDAY MAY 16TH 2:00PM & 7:00PM  
SUNDAY MAY 17TH 2:00PM & 7:00PM

Tickets Available through Amherst Ballet (413)549-1555

Created & Written by Catherine Fair & Jane Wald    Music composed by Ted Trobaugh    Produced & Directed by Catherine Fair

Poster advertising the ballet, *Emily of Amherst*.  
Photographs on this flier are by Janine Norton.  
Design by Catherine Fair and Anne Beresford-Banker.  
Photo courtesy of Amherst Ballet.

non-traditional elements of literature and poetry as part of the score. Narration excerpted from Dickinson's letters and poems was woven into an original musical score by Amherst composer Ted Trobaugh, who was inspired by selections from the poet's own portfolio of music.

*Emily of Amherst* was underwritten, in part, by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and was part of the Emily Dickinson Museum's programming for "The Big Read: The Poetry of Emily Dickinson," a pilot initiative created by the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.

*Emily of Amherst* represented a venture into creating performing art inspired by not only the literary works of a great poet, but by her life itself. Embarking upon the creation of this ballet represented a leap of faith that was well rewarded by the outcome. By all measures, the ballet was an astounding success! The sentiment echoed by audience members that the "this show needs to go on" is shared by the ballet's creators who plan to tour the ballet in the future. For more information, or to purchase a DVD or CD, please contact Amherst Ballet. (413) 549-1555 info@amherstballet.org.

— Catherine Fair

## Q&A: *White Heat*

By Brenda Wineapple

Edited by Martha Ackmann and Kathleen Welton

### Q. Why did the story of Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Emily Dickinson appeal to you?

A. The story of Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Emily Dickinson's friendship interested me precisely because it had been overlooked or disparaged both by biographers and by literary scholars. And Dickinson and Higginson had had a friendship for almost twenty-five years. Why not examine it? The friendship was evidently something important to her, or she wouldn't have persisted in it, and I wanted to see what Emily Dickinson herself might have seen in Higginson that we have been missing.

### Q. Why does Emily Dickinson appeal to a 21st century reader?

One of the things that I discovered, no matter whether I was speaking at a high school, book store, or literary festival, is that Emily Dickinson fascinates a hugely wide audience. There is no generation gap. There is no racial gap. Audiences also have lots of questions about her. Why was she a recluse? Was she agoraphobic? Who was the love of her life? But far more importantly, readers of her poetry feel that she is speaking directly to them. She is able to articulate feelings that we do not know we even have.

### Q. How long did it take you to research and write the book and what was the research process like?

The entire project took five years to complete. Higginson was a voluminous letter writer and his letters are scattered around the country. My main sources were the Houghton Library at Harvard, the Boston Public Library, the Yale Library, the Jones Library, Amherst Library, and the Massachusetts Historical Society (to name a few) in addition to photocop-

ies of materials that were sent to me. However, I found Emily Dickinson's letters and poems to be the most crucial material.

### Q. How did you come up with the title, *White Heat*?

I wanted something that was simple, direct, and powerful as well as something that would express the passionate friendship these two shared and, more to the point, would express the commitment that both of them had to daring and doing. The title is from the line "Dare you see a Soul at the 'White Heat'?" (Fr401), and one way of reading that poem is that it's about the way your passions (for poetry, to write poetry, or in the case of Higginson to bring justice to the world) takes you out of yourself.

### Q. What was the most difficult part of writing this book?

There was both a narrative challenge and an analytic challenge. First, the analytic challenge. I had to crack my head on the poems. Then, when writing about them, I did not want to overburden the reader with analysis and stop the narrative, but of course I had to analyze them. Secondly, the narrative challenge. Higginson brings the story forward; he gives it forward motion. But, as I wrote, "Emily Dickinson stops my narrative." Then, there was the learning curve. For the Civil War chapter, I had to learn all about battle strategy to make sure that I got the guns all pointing in the right direction.

### Q. Can you select one letter or poem that gets at Emily Dickinson's essence?

Emily Dickinson's poems and letters provide so much hospitality to the reader. They are like kaleidoscopic

images that change with each reading. If I had to choose a favorite, and of course I am biased, it would be the letter to Higginson, with that wonderful opening: "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?"

### Q. What other projects are in the works?

The paperback edition of *White Heat* comes out in December 2009. In addition, my anthology, *Nineteenth-Century American Writers on Writing*, a volume in *The Writers' World*, is scheduled for fall 2010. Another project in process is "American History: 1848-1877" (HarperCollins.)

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Brenda Wineapple's books include the recently published *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (Knopf 2008), winner of the Washington Arts Club National Award for writing about the arts; it was also a *New York Times* "Notable Book" (2008), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle award, and named best nonfiction of 2008 in *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Economist*, among other publications. She is also the author of *Genêt: A Biography of Janet Flanner*; *Sister Brother Gertrude and Leo Stein*; and *Hawthorne: A Life*, which received the Ambassador Award of the English-speaking Union for the Best Biography of 2003 and the Julia Ward Howe Prize from the Boston Book Club. Wineapple is the Director of the Leon Levy Center for Biography at The Graduate School, CUNY, and teaches in the MFA programs at The New School and Columbia University's School of the Arts.

## Reflection: “We perish—tho’ We reign—”

By Nicholas Ruddick

The speaker in Dickinson’s poetry frequently refers to herself as a queen or empress. Sometimes she does so self-mockingly, as if to say: “I am a drama queen to think this way”; sometimes she seems in deadly earnest: “As Christ suffered beyond all men, so I beyond all women.” One of her greatest poems, (Fr693) “Like Eyes that looked on Wastes —” draws widely from her oeuvre’s explorations of queenship, following the thread deep into the labyrinth of female, and human, ego-psychology.

Like Eyes that looked on Wastes—  
Incredulous of Ought  
But Blank—and steady Wilderness—  
Diversified by Night—

Just Infinities of Nought—  
As far as it could see—  
So looked the face I looked upon—  
So looked itself—on Me—

I offered it no Help—  
Because the Cause was Mine—  
The Misery a Compact  
As hopeless—as divine—

Neither—would be absolved—  
Neither would be a Queen  
Without the Other—Therefore—  
We perish—tho’ We reign—

The most significant literary analogy Dickinson draws on in (Fr693) is Shakespearean, suggesting the scale of the poet’s queenly ambition. In *Hamlet*, the Prince (who is a king-in-waiting) contemplates death as an adversary who, though often embodied as Other, actually dwells in himself, and can be invoked by the self-application of nothing more weighty than a “bare bodkin.” The play’s most iconic moment is one in which Hamlet holds before his own face Yorick’s skull and addresses it as though the court jester were alive and present. In contrast, the profound negotiations between the poet of (Fr693) and death take place, not in an open grave, but in front of that most domestic of objects, the looking-glass, a location to which the female poet is daily drawn to minister to Self as though it were Other. (Fr693) is both about an internal state (depression) and external reality (the cosmic void). This thematic duality is suggested by the double meaning of the verb “to look”: (1) to seem from an external perspective, as in the phrase, “she looked heavenly”; and (2) to behold, or direct the eyes outwards, as in “she looked heavenwards”. The poet, looking at herself in the mirror, is struck by the expression on the face of the Other (her reflection). The eyes of this Other look as if

they are haunted by hopelessness at having beheld terrestrial nature as a localized reflection of the cosmic infinities of nothingness revealed by a telescope. But Self can offer Other no alleviation of her despair: the pair are, after all, not merely conjoined but identical. For them, to look and to see constitute two perspectives on the same act.

However, Self and Other together are queenly. The relationship between them is a “Compact” in which Self acknowledges the apparent Other as Self. It would be probably less stressful for Self to project her alienation externally onto exalted or vilified others (as is the case with most religions). Yet while the agreement between Self and Other may intensify despair, it is also a sovereign act of accepting a hard existential truth, and as such it is “divine” because true sacredness, power, and immortality can only be achieved via the aspiration to self-sovereignty. The poet is a “Queen”—a reigning woman, a great female poet—because of the sovereignty implicit in her recognition of Other as Self, of otherness in herself. There is no eternal life: Self and Other will perish equally and simultaneously. But after death, the poet, who uses the “royal we” to signify that she is both Self and Other, will continue to reign, because of the poetry that she has made of her insight into the difficult truth of existence.

What fascinates me today about Dickinson is her philosophical position as a poet working in the immediate aftermath of the Darwinian revolution. Most of her American contemporaries resisted the new naturalistic worldview or tempered it with some sort of Emersonian transcendentalism. But Dickinson didn’t. She accepted Darwinism’s hard insights into the unimportance of human life in the cosmic order. It seems to me that she also accepted one of its major consequences: that God, angels, and demons were human creations, Others born of the Self then factitiously granted an independent existence to give our lives a so-called spiritual meaning. Dickinson looked the abyss in the face every time she looked in the mirror. She was able to endure because she knew how good she was. Her flesh would perish, but as queen among the poets, her word would reign forever.

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**Nicholas Ruddick** completed his PhD dissertation on Emily Dickinson thirty years ago. Though he subsequently specialized in science fiction and related fantastic literature, Dickinson remains his favorite poet. His latest books are *The Fire in the Stone: Prehistoric Fiction from Charles Darwin to Jean M. Auel* (Wesleyan University Press, 2009), and a new scholarly edition of Jack London’s 1903 classic novella *The Call of the Wild* in the Broadview Editions series (2009). He has taught at the University of Regina since 1982.

## Poet to Poet

### Girl Sleuths and Early Influences: Mary Ann Samyn Responds to Emily Dickinson

By Mary Ann Samyn

Edited By Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor

I am pleased to present Mary Ann Samyn as this issue's featured poet. Samyn won the Emily Dickinson Prize from the Poetry Society of America in 2002, the James Wright Prize from *Mid-American Review* in 2003, and a Pushcart Prize in 2006. She is the author of four poetry collections—*Captivity Narrative* (winner of the 1999 Ohio State UP/The Journal Prize), *Inside the Yellow Dress* (a 2001 *New Issues Press/Green Rose Selection*), *Purr* (*New Issues*, 2005), and *Beauty Breaks In* (*New Issues*, 2009)—as well as the chapbook, *Rooms by the Sea* (winner of the 1994 Kent State UP/Wick Chapbook Prize). Her poems have appeared in many literary journals and in the anthologies, *American Poetry: The Next Generation* and *Poetry 30: Thirtysomething American Thirtysomething Poets*. A special thanks to Jane Donahue Eberwein for recommending Samyn for inclusion in the *Poet to Poet Series*.

—Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor

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I can't write about Emily Dickinson without mentioning my oldest sister, Ellen, who first read me Dickinson's poems when I was five, six, seven, eight.

And I can't mention Ellen and those impressionable years without also mentioning Nancy Drew—how much I loved those books!—and Karen Carpenter, whose songs Ellen and I listened to in her bedroom.

Emily Dickinson, Nancy Drew, and Karen Carpenter: girl sleuths and early influences.

And I had no idea, then, that lots of people don't like or get poetry. I didn't know it was hard. Only, special. Also, ordinary. Much-loved by my much-loved sister. No other recommendation was required.



My favorite Dickinson poem? "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" (Fr372). *Of course*, I say, as though you can't help but know. As though it is, unquestionably, the best.



The cover of a new book of poetry proclaims the work is "searing." Um, I don't think so. Painful, yes, I get that. For the writer. Searing, though, involves the reader as well. To write of intensity is one thing; to communicate intensity—to scorch—is another. Dickinson, as we well know, excels in this transfer of energy. Reading her, I am made different—



Say what you will about Nancy Drew—and yes, there are complaints to be made—I like her. Always have, always will. She knew the value of a good question. She poked around. She made a mental note. She showed up, mostly on time, in her roadster.



Having just reread *The Haunted Bridge*, I can say for certain that any bad rap Nancy may have gotten is not her fault. She does something helpful or kind, something impulsive or potentially dangerous, and—no matter—the narrator assures that Nancy was the best, the nicest, the most polite, the most well-intentioned, even in her occasional foolhardiness. Nancy herself makes no such claims.

Likewise, the myth around Dickinson is not of her making. "Wasn't she crazy?" my students ask me. "She never left her room, right?" they say.

"Maybe you've never left your room," I reply. They are confused. Resistant. "How haven't you left your room?" I continue. Thus, metaphor arrives, right on schedule.



Now I am not leaving my room. Or, rather, I don't have to if I don't want to.

I am the lucky recipient of an artist's residency in Glen Arbor, Michigan. It's not that I don't need time and space to write, but, well, the idea of no obligations is perhaps too much time and space. Day One is a little



*Girl Sleuths and Early Influences: Mary Ann Samyn Responds to Emily Dickinson, cont., By Mary Ann Samyn, Edited By Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor*

odd. Lyric poetry, as I understand it, comes from the fullness of life, not from isolation.

Though many people assume Dickinson's life proves just the opposite, I'd argue that that's not the case. Beyond the evidence of her letter-writing and baking and the like, the poems of course are testament to deep engagement. I go to her work, as I tell my students, the way some people go to the Bible or to an encyclopedia or, now, to Google: to look stuff up, to find things out.

Just because her engagement doesn't fit some narrow idea about "being in the world" doesn't mean she wasn't. Poetry, after all, broadens our sense of what is possible, telling us what we don't already know or, sometimes, what we didn't know we knew, what we had been reluctant to admit to ourselves.



The problem with being a lyric poet, according to an old joke, is figuring what to do during the other 23 hours of the day.

If you're not a poet, if you're a little suspicious of poets, the joke has a dark edge: *what's up with these poets anyway?*

If you are a poet, the joke is no joke, really, and also dark. And it's not about having a lot of time but, rather, about paying a lot of attention, gathering the bits and pieces that will, in that magic hour, make a poem.



There's simply no way, as far as I can tell, to write poetry and not be oneself in the world.



That Dickinson made good use of her time is no joke, either.



I suppose some people might be alarmed to hear mention of Karen Carpenter alongside Emily Dickinson. *Oh*

**Under It**

—But not in a bad way. More like an agreement —

More like a contract: *sign here, and here, and here.*

Or like the bat we escorted outside.

(under the wastebasket  
but above the cardboard)

In transit.

*You don't like it now, but later — .*

Assuming, of course, the universe is vertical, like Dickinson.

Even her face, narrow and inward,

as though she had a better idea . . .

The point is you can go up,

as in one of those elevators with the gate and the girl:

*Floor?, please.*

It won't not happen, if it's supposed to, they say.

(something / anything)

Yet, this isn't limpid space, no problem space,

but what the bat understands:

you have to squeeze the air out (its high pitch),

no matter how small, you have to want it.

Reprinted with permission of the poet from her book, *Purr: (New Issues)*, 2005

*well.* Poetry comes from and touches on the totality of life. It is not a rarified thing. It is not special. Or, not any more special than any other activity undertaken in a day. Dickinson couldn't have written the number of poems she wrote if she reserved poetry for only certain moments. What is compelling, for me, about her work is how it arises from and encompasses many moods, all the seasons, both so-called mundane and so-called lofty considerations.

*Girl Sleuths and Early Influences: Mary Ann Samyn Responds to Emily Dickinson, cont., By Mary Ann Samyn, Edited By Jonnie Guerra, Series Editor*

If poetry were otherwise, I wouldn't like it.



A friend and trusted reader tells me I have a very practical notion of poetry. She is right; I do. Poetry is, above all, useful. I go there with my questions.



The thing that made me sing Carpenters' songs in my basement when I was 10 is the same thing that draws me to Dickinson and that makes me a poet. The desire to feel better.

Not *get over* so much as *go deeper*.



Solitude, says Thomas Merton, famous hermit and would-be hermit, is not simply aloneness. Certainly not loneliness. Rather, solitude is about more fully paying attention.

Back home, I think about solitude and attention and get ready for the new semester.



"Listen," I tell my students, "you know how you feel about football or music or your boyfriend or just being away from home? That jumble of feelings? Well, that's how I feel about poetry, and that's also what poetry lets me bring to it. That's what it's good for. Yes. Really. Take a moment; let that thought sink in."



Poetry is not just a *what* but also a *how*. The content of a given poem will not likely differ that much from that of other poems. What distinguishes one poem from another—indeed, one poet from another—is the *how*. As Charles Wright says, you have to do it differently and with a deeper disregard.

Dickinson's *how* is what draws me back and back. "After great pain" doesn't just tell the news; it delivers it. Hesitation is not merely an idea; it is a physical sensation. Dickinson's poem replicates that moment that we have all known: "First—Chill—then Stupor—then the letting go—."

The line is an investigation; the dash, Dickinson's tool of choice; the hesitation, hers first but then, finally, all ours.

This is the intensity I mentioned. The feeling I remember from all those years ago in my sister's bedroom when I liked the poems just because of how they sounded when Ellen read them aloud. And this is the moment that makes me different, and differently alert, each time I encounter this poem. Searing? Yes, I *feel* so.



Mary Ann Samyn  
Photo courtesy of Brian Ballentine.

**Mary Ann Samyn** received her MA from Ohio University and her MFA from The University of Virginia where she was a Hoyns Fellow. Currently, she is an associate professor in the MFA creative writing program at West Virginia University where, in 2008, she was named Bolton Professor for Teaching and Mentoring. Samyn has a chapbook, *The Boom of a Small Cannon*, forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press in 2010.

**Dickinson and the Visual Arts**  
**Emily and Isabelle: Beyond Time**

By Maryanne Garbowsky

Although Emily Dickinson's and Isabelle Arsenault's lives are worlds apart, each born in dramatically different centuries and pursuing different lifestyles, Ms. Arsenault was able to bridge the time gap between them in her sensitive and evocative illustrations for *My Letter to the World and Other Poems*, a 2008 publication of Kids Can Press.

"I wanted to actualize her vision to show that these poems from the past were still accurate." To achieve that end, Ms. Arsenault read *The World of Emily Dickinson* by Polly Longworth to gain some background on the poet and was inspired by it. "I read the book that was more of a visual biography which I found even more appropriate for me. I used it as a reference all through the creative process." One striking example was "the black cut-out silhouettes" which "inspired" her for "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." These black figures become the images of the "Mourners" in the poem "treading" "to and fro."

Challenged by the words of Dickinson, Ms. Arsenault, French Canadian by birth, "read them over and over again to get a glimpse of their possible meaning. Poetry even in my own language can be hard to understand. But I love the wide range of interpretation it can suggest."

When she had steeped herself in the poetry, she and her editor, Tara Walker, began to select the poems to be used in the book. "She sent me a dozen of the poems" . . . but not one of them touched her. Thus she was able to go through the poems herself and "choose the ones I preferred, that inspired me the most."

Seven were chosen for the collection: these were the ones "that made

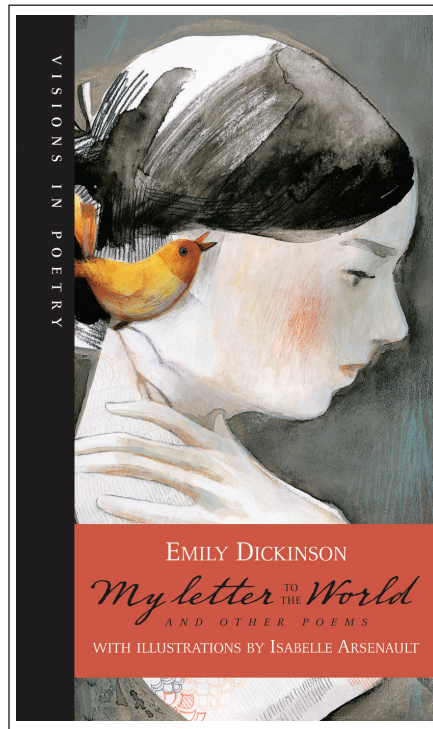
sense" to her. "At first, they provoked pictures/scenes in my head . . . I wanted to give a modern tone to the book so the poems selected had to inspire me in that way." One of the seven, "I cannot live with You—," the artist discovered on her own and was "immediately . . . attracted to" it. Of all the illustrations, this one is a popular favorite. The teacup mentioned in the poem ("Our Life—His Porcelain / Like a Cup—") is used as the bottom half of Dickinson's white

of the dress is reflected right side up against a gray background. The colorful pattern at the dress' hem connects the two cups creating an ovoid form. The pattern, a delicate leaf motif, provides the only color in this otherwise black and white portrait of "Despair." Arsenault deliberately chose the "black, austere" palette because "the poems inspired" it. But she also adds color or what she calls "sparks of light" to suggest the poet's "creativity amid a world of dark dresses."

Reversal is a technique the artist uses in her illustrations for this book. For instance, one striking example is in the poem "Because I could not stop for Death—." In this adroit illustration, we see an upside down house next to an upside down tree. Here the house is black, a void, an emptiness like a grave dug into the ground, but on the following page facing the last quatrain the house reappears, this time right side up and in white. Next to it is a tree, not bare branches, but a right side up budding and blossoming tree. In the house is a door, and a woman dressed in white emerges into eternity upright and composed, a fitting conclusion to a trip to immortality.

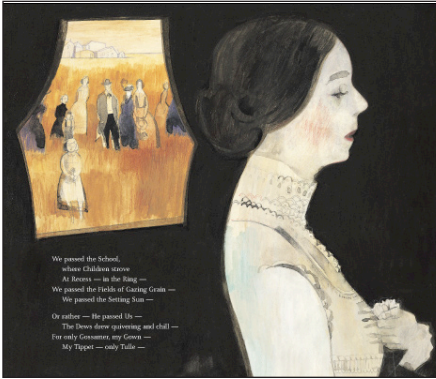
These reversals and upside down images were carefully designed by the poet to reflect "the double meaning" in the poems. "Sometimes you think you get an idea, but at the end, you're surprised to see it is the exact opposite."

The delicate beauty of the illustrations begins immediately upon opening the book. In the frontispiece behind a translucent parchment paper bearing the words to Dickinson's "Letter to the World," a latticed scroll of vines divides the page in half. When we follow these



dress. The illustration opposite the poem's beginning lines shows a woman—Emily—in her familiar white dress, the bottom half of which is an upside down cup with cracks starting at the hem. On the next page, Dickinson tumbles backwards with the cup turning right side up so that red tea spills from it. The last illustration accompanying this poem depicts a profile of Dickinson. The upside down cup that is the bottom

## Emily and Isabelle: Beyond Time, cont. *By Maryanne Garbowsky*



lines, they lead us to the left side of the page to the poet shown in profile in her second story bedroom. She is writing, holding a pen from which this design grows. As she writes, the pen transforms into a living vine that scrolls down the right-hand side of the page, continues on the entire next page, and even extends onto the title page. These plantlike designs reflect the poet's lifelong interest in botany. The artist, aware of the poet's fascination with the subject, admits her own "taste for organic patterns, . . . a recurrent element in my work."

Ms. Arsenault chose her medium for the book carefully, using "black ink . . . to echo Emily's own medium as a writer." She likes its "austere feel" which the artist found "appropriate." She also experimented with "collage" using "old handwritten notes on paper" which she found in an antique store to refer to Dickinson's "pieced together manuscript books."

Although the publisher's target audience is young people—10 years and up—it is a book for all ages. Not only are the seven poems favorites of all Dickinson readers, but they are interpreted so unforgettably and inventively that lovers of Dickinson's poetry will want to have this

book as part of their own personal library.

The last poem, "'Hope' is the thing with feathers—", was deliberately chosen to be the final poem in the collection. Since the "selection was a bit dark...I thought a nice ending to finish with was 'Hope'. The editor agreed with the order I suggested and was also convinced that 'Hope' had to be the last one." It is a triumphant ending, the illustrations being the most colorful in the book. So lovely, in fact, is the poem's first illustration that it was chosen for the cover and back of the book. This image portrays the poet with a bird red in color perched on the poet's shoulder. The red of the bird's plumage is repeated in the red flush high on the poet's cheek. As the poem continues "And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—" the bird is shown in full flight, its wings extended and in full color—red, yellow and white against a black and stormy sky. Carrying a flower in its beak, the bird brings hope to those in need. Below, a frieze of swirling letters excitedly erupts, echoing the hope that Dickinson's words bring to those caught "in the Gale."



Dickinson's "letters" have left a legacy, which Ms. Arsenault remarkably reinterprets in her unique visual imagery. Like the poet, the artist has sought and achieved a common goal—to bring to a new generation a world where word and image working together stir and provoke readers' imaginations beyond time and ordinary life.



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

### Credits

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# REVIEWS

## New Publications

By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

**Bleakney, Elaine, ed. *Poem in Your Pocket: 200 Poems to Read and Carry*.** New York: Abrams Image, 2009. 436 pp. 7.25 x 5.25 x 1 inches. Cloth, ISBN 0-8109-0636-5, \$14.95.

United States Poet Laureate Kay Ryan introduces this collection by discussing “the personal significance and benefits from carrying a poem in one’s pocket.” Inside the hard cover is a tablet of 200 poems designed so that each poem can be easily torn out and carried in a pocket or purse to savor privately or share with others. From Catullus, Shakespeare, John Donne, and Emily Dickinson to Theodore Roethke, Sylvia Plath, Robert Pinsky, and Rita Dove, more than 150 poets are represented. Poems, both known and less well known, including several translated from Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Latin, and Polish, are presented thematically: “Love & Rockets,” “Dwellings,” “Eating & Drinking,” “Friends & Ghosts,” “Myself I Speak & Spell,” “Sonic Youth,” “City, My City,” and “Spring & After.” The poems range from Ron Padgett’s two-line “December” to a 30-line excerpt from Walt Whitman’s “Mannahatta.” Some poets are represented by two or three poems; Emily Dickinson is represented by eight poems from the Franklin edition: “The Heart has narrow Banks,” “You cannot put a Fire out --,” “Are Friends Delight or Pain?” “These Strangers in a foreign World,” “The Brain within its Groove,” “There are two Ripenings—,” “A Little Mad-

ness in the Spring,” and “Like Rain it sounded till it curved.” Abrams and the Academy of American Poets published this unique book to celebrate the second national Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 30.

**Buescu, Helena Carvalhão, and João Ferreira Duarte, eds. *Stories and Portraits of the Self*.** Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. 332 pp. Paper, ISBN 90-420-2328-4, \$97.00; €67,00.

Twenty-three international scholars examine what it means to represent the self in biography, autobiography, and other forms such as painting, sculpture, film, photography, and performance. Their essays offer a variety of historical, social, and intellectual perspectives, focusing on Emily Dickinson, Alberto Giacometti, Henry James, Marie Kessels, Gerrit Kouwenaar, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Marianne Moore, Caryl Phillips, Mary Pickford, Marcel Proust, W. G. Sebald, George Steiner, August Strindberg, William Carlos Williams, and others. In Marinela Freitas’s “Unshaded Shadows: Performances of Gender in Emily Dickinson and Luza Neto Jorge” (133-46), the author, drawing from Judith Butler, explains, “To be masculine or feminine does not involve giving expression to a naturally developing inner truth: it means performing and representing yourself in sanctioned and expected ways.” Describing nineteenth-century Dickinson and twentieth-century Portuguese poet Jorge, Freitas says,

“they destabilize . . . conventional attitudes towards femininity, disrupting feminine stereotypes and the repressive social conventions of their time.” She supports her argument with a reading of Dickinson’s “I tie my Hat—I crease my Shawl—” and two of Jorge’s poems, concluding, “I do not believe Dickinson and Neto Jorge had a feminist agenda, but I do believe that their work accounts for the contingencies of being a woman and a writer. . . .” Intended for academic or informed general readers, these essays developed from an international seminar in Cascais, Portugal, in June 2005.

**Cass, Jeffrey, ed., introd., and Larry Peer, ed. *Romantic Border Crossings*.** Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008. xii, 225 pp. ISBN 0-7546-6051-4, \$99.95.

Seventeen scholars, focusing on the Romantic era, explore “eclectic border crossings . . . into history, literature, languages, genre, and pedagogy,” demonstrating cross-disciplinary approaches. Celebrating the Romantic literary community, the editors envisage a “global Romanticism” inviting “writers marginalized by class, gender, race, or geography into the canon at the same time that fresh readings of traditional text emerge.” Authors and topics discussed include Elizabeth Inchbald, Lord Byron, Gerard de Nerval, English Jacobinism, Goethe, the Gothic, Orientalism, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Anglo-American conflicts, manifest destiny, and

The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books, including those published outside the U.S.  
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New Publications, cont., By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

teaching romanticism. In “Learning from Excess: Emily Dickinson and Bettine von Arnim’s *Die Gunderode*” (159-67), Kari Lokke persuasively argues that two German Romantic women writers, Karoline von Gunderode and Bettine von Arnim, “might have served as muses” for Emily Dickinson. Lokke “traces the cultural echoes of Karoline’s performance of *Liebested*, both in her life and in her art, and suggests that they made their way into Emily Dickinson’s poetry” through Arnim’s work, known to both Dickinson and her sister-in-law Susan Dickinson. In “‘Ample make this Bed—’: Dickinson’s Dying in Drama and Arnim’s *Liebested*.” (191-99), Lilach Lachman, responding to Lokke’s essay, examines “how Dickinson transforms the Romantic eroticization of death into a subjective interiority, how she appropriates Arnim’s shaping of death, extends and modifies it, thus infusing it with new values.” She supports her thesis with a close reading of Dickinson’s “Ample make this Bed—” (Fr804).



**Dana, Barbara.** *A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson.* New York: HarperCollins, 2009. 346 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-06-028704-7, \$16.99.

First-person narrator Emily Dickinson provides personal immediacy in Dana’s fictionalized account of Dickinson’s life with her family on North Pleasant Street, 1840 to 1855, encompassing the year she attended Mt. Holyoke and later visited Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. Dickinson’s story begins when she is nine years old, upset about moving from the Homestead to North Pleasant Street, and ends when she is twenty-four years old, similarly upset about moving back to the Homestead. Home for Dickinson meant “safety and belonging”; she did not like change. We meet Dickinson’s dog Carlo and Vinnie’s cats: Tiger Boy, Tom-Tom, Noopsie Possum, Pussy, Roughnaps, Snugglepooops, Tender Boy, Tootsie, and Drummydoodles. Dana weaves words and phrases from Dickinson’s poems and letters throughout the novel, capturing the vocabulary, syntax, and cadence of Dickinson’s voice, melding fact and fiction into a recreated nineteenth-century world that feels true. She provides concrete details to illustrate Dickinson’s important but vexed relationship with her father, her dreaded panic attacks, the deep feelings and intellectual kinship she felt with her friend Ben Newton and her soon-to-be sister-in-law Sue Gilbert, her doubts about conventional concepts of religion and marriage, and finally her conscious commitment to poetry: “The writing of my verses had become nourishment larger than food or sleep or friend or any.” Intended for young adults, this well written, insightful novel can be enjoyed by anyone interested in Dickinson.

**Kopley, Richard, and Barbara Cantalupo, eds.** *Prospects for the Study of American Literature (II).* New York: AMS Press, 2009. 355 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-404-61598-7, \$122.50.

Intended for upper-division undergraduates, graduate students, and others looking for research ideas, this is the second volume in an ongoing series that reviews past and present scholarship on American writers and suggests areas for new research. Volume II contains review essays on Louisa May Alcott, James Baldwin, James Fenimore Cooper, Emily Dickinson, Theodore Dreiser, Ralph Ellison, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Dean Howells, Jack London, Marianne Moore, Frank Norris, Eugene O’Neill, and Eudora Welty. In her essay on Emily Dickinson (72-96), Mary Loeffelholz reviews decades of work done by more than 80 Dickinson scholars, deftly places them in context with each other, and examines scholarship trends and ongoing debates—notably juxtaposing the editing theories of Ralph Franklin and Domhnall Mitchell with those of Martha Nell Smith, Ellen Hart, Marta Werner and others interested in the “unediting” of Dickinson. Loeffelholz’s suggestions for new research develop from her discussion of work that has been done on Dickinson and intentionality, materiality, education, humor, religion, class, race, gender, the Civil War, sexuality, feminist readings, Bahktian readings, and Dickinson’s relationship to her contemporaries, to the literary marketplace, and to other art forms. Loeffelholz credits Martha Ackmann, suggesting that “neither

# REVIEWS

New Publications, cont., By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

the archival resources of the Amherst area nor the recollections of the extended Dickinson family can be assumed to be exhausted." Recommended for university libraries, this indexed volume is a valuable resource for both academic and independent scholars.



**Lundin, Roger.** *Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009. 292 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-8028-3077-7, \$26.00.

Opening with a personal story that initiated his long journey to belief, Lundin traces the evolution of belief to unbelief from 1789 to 1914, a period that "opened in a spirit of boundless hope and closed in a mood of impending doom." He explores the historical, cultural, and theological developments during this period as a context for discussing key intellectual and literary figures such as Auden, Coleridge, Dickinson, Dostoevsky, Emerson, Kant, Kazin, Melville, Milosz, Nietzsche, Thoreau, and Wordsworth, drawing also from other voices of the ancient past, Middle Ages, and modern era. He applies his scholarly research and erudition with clarity and grace in chapters entitled "History," "Science," "Belief," "Interpre-

tation," "Reading," "Beauty," "Story," and "Memory." In his examination of the American religious experience, Lundin quotes throughout the book from Dickinson, discussing her "shuttling uncertainty" and "internal contradictions" as she struggled between doubt and faith; her concern about the silence of God; her skepticism about Christianity; her views on science, beauty, poetry, memory and belief; her discovery of interiority, about which Lundin says, she is "one of the surest guides"; and her views of Jesus Christ, whom she called, the "Largest Lover," the "Tender Pioneer," and the "Man that knew the News." Demonstrating his optimism and faith, Lundin concludes with a meditation on the sacrament of communion: "For this sacrament brings together love, memory, and the possibility of believing again in extraordinary ways." Index included.

**McGill, Meredith, ed., introd.** *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2008. ix, 264 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8135-4229-4, \$70.00; paper, ISBN 0-8135-4230-0, \$24.95.

A growing interest in transatlantic literary study has produced this collection of eleven essays that explore the work of Emily Brontë Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, William Cullen Bryant, Lord Byron, Emily Dickinson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, George Meredith, Maria del Occidente, Mary Webb, William Wordsworth, and others. The editor highlights

"three major insights that thread through this volume: the centrality of women poets . . . ; the generative force of asymmetries between British and American poetic cultures; and the unusual temporalities—the deferrals, reversals, interruptions, anticipations, prolongations, and unexpected returns—that are introduced into literary history when one attends to the circulation of poetry in transnational context."

In "No Coward Souls: Poetic Engagements between Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson" (231-49), Michael Moon considers Brontë's "No coward soul is mine" (the poem read at Dickinson's funeral), warns that it should not be read only "as a declaration of spiritual independence," and traces the poem's origins to the stoic discourse of Epictetus. Dickinson quoted the poem's penultimate stanza several times in her letters where "the possible meaning changes." Discussing Brontë's and Dickinson's shared interests, including "the meaning and potential value of suffering," he compares other Brontë verses to Dickinson's "No Rack can torture me—" (Fr649). This volume includes essays from two other Dickinson scholars: Mary Loeffelholz's "Mapping the Cultural Field: Aurora Leigh in America" (139-59) and Virginia Jackson's "Bryant; or, American Romanticism" (185-204). Index included.

**Mitchell, Domhnall, and Maria Stuart, eds., introd.** *The International Reception of Emily Dickinson.* New York: Continuum, 2009. xii, 320 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8264-9715-4, \$150.00.

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## New Publications, cont., *By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor*

Read and translated worldwide, Dickinson's poetry is also discussed by international scholars at the Emily Dickinson International Society conferences. This unique collection of essays is a gathering of a dozen international scholars focusing on the wide variety of ways, past and present, that Dickinson has been received outside of the United States. Contributors and the nations they represent are Ana Luisa Amaral (Portugal), Anna Chesnokova (Russia), Carlos Daghljan (Brazil), Marinela Freitas (Portugal), Joan Kirkby (Australia), Lilach Lachman (Israel), Domhnall Mitchell (Norway), Lennart Nyberg (Sweden), David Palmieri (France and Canada), Sabine Sielke (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), Maria Stuart (England and Ireland), Masako Takeda (Japan), and Marian de Vooght (the Low Countries). The editors are interested not only in charting international interest in Dickinson and her influence but also in "the interaction between her language and the languages into which she was translated." They conclude, "The range and quality of the responses in languages other than in English and in places outside North America—reviews and articles, translations, theses, monographs, dance, theatrical and musical performances, visual installations, paintings, and sculptures—reflect the complexities and obliquities of Dickinson's writings, and their ability constantly to generate new readings. In that sense, they represent something more than postcards from abroad: they perform some of the work that Dickinson herself defined as 'Bulletins . . . from Immortality' (Fr820). This significant volume with useful

notes, bibliographies and an index, underscores the universal appeal of Dickinson's poetry.

**Morgan, Victoria, ed., introd., and Clare Williams, ed., introd. *Shaping Belief: Culture, Politics, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Writing*.** Liverpool, England: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2008. xxx, 226 pp. ISBN 1-84631-136-9, \$85.00.

Twelve essays explore how culture, politics, and religion intersected during an increasingly secular era to challenge and reshape established religious beliefs. Contributors focus on various individuals and topics: Carlyle; Dickens; Dickinson; Emerson; Christian theologian F. D. Maurice and his influence on social reformers Octavia Hill and Josephine Butler; George Mac Donald's novel *Wilfred Cumberland* and William James's philosophy of pragmatism; Victorian conversion narratives; Christianity, commerce, and the female bodily economy in seamstress narratives; the Gothic double; church architecture and religious poetry; mass literacy and social change; and education. In "'Repairing Everywhere without Design?' Industry, Revery and Relation in Emily Dickinson's Bee Imagery" (73-93), Victoria Morgan reads Fr205, 610, 979, 1547, 1630, 1779, and 1788 to "demonstrate how Dickinson's bee imagery conveys her engagement with religious orthodoxy through a reworking of the Protestant notion of salvation through work . . . her position as poet, and the connection between writing and spirituality are evaluated." Morgan focuses on "Dickinson's use of and allusions to the industry/idleness diptych of

Protestant theology," and "shows that whilst a defiant rejection of religious orthodoxy feeds much of Dickinson's parodies of the Puritan, the connection between industry and revery . . . enables a relational space in which the divine is endlessly re-imagined." She concludes, "'tracing everywhere without design' becomes an affirmative action, as to let go of all certainties is perhaps the ultimate sacrifice which re-inscribes itself, paradoxically, as faith." Index included.

**Showalter, Elaine, ed. *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*.** New York: Knopf, 2009. xvii + 586 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-4000-4123-7, \$30.00.

Showalter defines her book as "the first literary history of American women writers ever written." Her ambitious undertaking, dedicated to Diane Middlebrook, traces 350 years of literature from 1650 to 2000, including more than 250 women, both well known (Emily Dickinson, Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, and Nobel Prize winners Pearl Buck and Toni Morrison, among others) and many neglected authors such as Lydia Maria Child, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Susan Glaspell. The title of the book comes from Glaspell's short story about a woman accused of murdering her husband; she is acquitted after two neighbor women, "constituting themselves as a jury of her peers," conspire to protect her from "the patriarchal legal system." Showalter, one of the founders of feminist literary criticism, is a lively, frank, and intelligent guide through this chronologically arranged liter-



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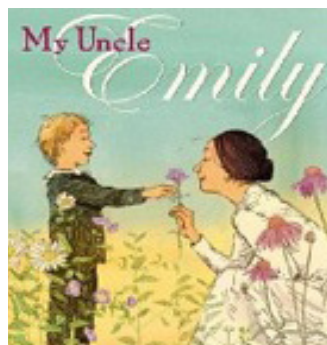
New Publications, cont., *By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor*

ary history, interspersed by brief biographical essays on selected poets and writers of fiction and non-fiction. Because of the encyclopedic scope of her project, the writing is concise. Writing about Dickinson (150-03), Showalter says, “to compare any other American poet of the period to Dickinson . . . is to understate her exceptional originality and uniqueness.” More valuable is finding Dickinson throughout the book connected with Elizabeth Bishop, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Willa Cather, Susan Gaskell, Helen Hunt Jackson, Amy Lowell, Carson McCullers, Susan Sontag, Harriet Prescott Spoford, and Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard. This indexed volume is a well researched, important contribution to literary studies.

**Smith, Martha Nell, and Laura Vetter, eds.; Ellen Louise Hart, consulting ed. *Emily Dickinson’s Correspondences: A Born-Digital Textual Inquiry.*** Charlottesville, VA: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8139-2378-9, Institutions: \$221.00 to \$295.00; individuals \$148.00. For information or a free trial, visit [www.rotunda.upress.virginia.edu](http://www.rotunda.upress.virginia.edu) or contact Jason Coleman: [jcoleman@virginia.edu](mailto:jcoleman@virginia.edu).

*Emily Dickinson’s Correspondences* is a new online searchable archive offering access to documents not otherwise easily available to view. It provides high quality digital images of seventy-four documents: poems and letters based on thirty selected texts sent to Susan Dickinson by the poet, alternate versions of the original texts, and related documents. A “light box” allows documents to be viewed and compared side-by-side,

and users can magnify documents for exciting up-close manuscript study. Also provided is a transcription of each document for legibility, meticulously detailed information on the material qualities of the manuscript, its history, previous printings, correct citation, and additional editorial notes. The well designed table of contents offers multiple approaches to a document: by first line, by alternative versions, by library catalog number, or by poem and letter numbers assigned by various editors. An introduction describes the project’s history and the editors’ plans to update materials and offer an interactive wiki or blog. The editors favor editorial transparency and welcome “feedback and suggestions about editing Emily Dickinson’s writings.” This project is designed “not only to show how Emily Dickinson’s literary works have been made for public consumption but [also] to enable readers to become producers, not simply consumers, of literature and scholarship.” Available to anyone with access to a computer and the World Wide Web, this digital enterprise is a significant twenty-first century contribution to Dickinson scholarship.



**Yolen, Jane. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter. *My Uncle Emily.*** New York: Philomel/Penguin Young Readers, 2009. 32 pp. 10.25 x 9.25 x .25 inches. Cloth, ISBN 0-399-24005-8, \$17.99.

In lyrical prose, Jane Yolen tells the story of Emily Dickinson’s warm relationship with her young nephew Gilbert, and Nancy Carpenter provides historically accurate, warmly tinted pen and ink drawings of life in nineteenth-century Amherst. Gilbert says that his Uncle Emily “wears “long, white dresses and never smokes cigars . . . ‘uncle’ is a joke in our family.” But her gift of “one small [dead] bee and one small poem. . . . For Gilbert to carry to his Teacher” is not a joke. Fearing ridicule, he reluctantly takes the gift to his teacher who reads the poem aloud in class. The children do not laugh—nor do they understand the poem—but unkind words from a playground bully during recess force Gilbert to defend his beloved Uncle Emily. The punch he gives Jonathan manifests itself as “a big red rose blossoming on his nose.” Gilbert’s rhyming words delight his poetic sensibility as he limps home, where he does not mention his schoolyard fight. Only Uncle Emily notices his limp and senses that Gilbert has not told the truth. She gives him another poem: “Tell all the truth but tell it slant—” (Fr1263) and encourages him to share the few things he “forgot to say” within a warm family circle. The last page contains biographical information and a copy of the final poem. Intended for children, this book will charm both children and adults and provides rich opportunities for further discussion.

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## Deppman, Jed. *Trying to Think with Emily Dickinson*,

Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 2008. 278 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-55849-683-5, \$80.00; Paper, ISBN 1-55849-684-2, \$26.95.

Reviewed by Marianne Noble

"Strong draughts of refreshing minds" is the phrase Jed Deppman uses to characterize what he calls Dickinson's conversational poetics. However, it is also a good way to describe Deppman's own book. His is a "refreshing mind," both in its dazzling intelligence and in its style. The following lively sentence is typical for this book: "[I]f Dickinson's connection to postmodern thought deserves to be explored further, it cannot be in order to put on a pyrotechnical theory display, retrofit an argument to guess what she might say about today's news, or turn out a *Dickinson Soup for the Postmodern Soul*" (8). Throughout, Deppman features this blend of delightful wit, deeply informed thinking, and subtle attunements to the challenges of reading Dickinson as a thinker.

Deppman is a very funny writer, which is no small feat in a book this heady. He not only makes some very complex theories accessible to Dickinson scholars, but he does so with jovial bonhomie. The picture on the cover sums up the spirit of this extraordinary book: a marble sculpture of a girl poring over a book, with a purple high-top on one foot. There is a twinkle in the eye of both of these important thinkers.

Deppman's central claim is that the best way to approach Emily Dickinson is as a thinker. Such an approach seemed obvious enough to her family. After her death, her sister Lavinia said that her sister "was not withdrawn or exclusive really. She was always watching for the rewarding person to come but she was a very busy person herself. She had to think—she was the only one of us who had that to do." (Bingham qtd. 213). However, recent scholarship has paid less attention to her thoughts than to her intense feelings and to the materiality of the techniques she invented to communicate them. Never turning his back on those essential techniques, Deppman nonetheless insists that her "poetry is a whole lot more about mind and thought than about body and feeling" (51). His elaboration of this claim is utterly convincing and highly rewarding, meticulously unveiling before our eyes the exceptional relevance of Dickinson's thought.

Why is that? What is it about Dickinson's thought that jibes so insistently with our own? Well, according to Deppman, the dominant spirit of our day is post-metaphysical, and so is Dickinson's. Today's dominant intellectual trends search for ways to find meaning and degrees of truth in the absence of foundations. Deppman believes that Dickinson can help us in that search. Like today's post-moderns, Dickinson voices "incredulity toward metanarratives," and she models ways of thinking deeply and seriously in an anti-metaphysical framework (8). Such thought is not easy, which is why the title of Deppman's book is a modest *Trying to Think with Emily Dickinson*. Often, rather than establish a truth, a Dickinson poem is conversational. It will engage in dialogue with a thinker regarding "a central meaning-giving practice of her culture" and re-describe that practice in other ways (10). Simultaneously, it will provide a meta-commentary on its own poetics of conversation. It is in modeling a conversational response to an anti-metaphysical outlook that Dickinson is most relevant to our own intellectual culture.

Deppman's overall method is to classify some of the ways Dickinson converses with other thinkers. One dazzling chapter (3) demonstrates Dickinson's extensive exposure to the dominant philosophies of her day, conclusively silencing any readers who might find philosophy an inappropriate lens for Dickinson. By reading her "brain" poems in light of the philosophies of mind of the Scottish Common Sense philosophers, Deppman reveals just how illuminating such an approach is. Some of the other important philosophical attitudes Deppman suggests Dickinson adopts are:

- **Accomplished Nietzschean Nihilist.** Deppman describes Dickinson as "a member of the nineteenth-century avant-garde of 'accomplished' nihilists . . . thinkers who understand, first, that when God dies . . . the possibility of foundational truth dies too, and second, that the resulting nihilistic possibilities can be more than just passive or reactive. They can be positive, creative, and poetic in the widest sense" (21).

- **Liberal Ironist.** Deppman compares Dickinson to Richard Rorty's ideal of a thoughtful, tolerant person who has continuing doubts about her "final vocabulary"—the words she uses to justify how she lives—and has been influenced though unpersuaded by others' final vocabularies. Like Rorty's liberal ironist, Dickinson values conversations that expose her to other points of view, considering without accepting their truths nor diminishing their value for her interlocutor. She reads extensively in order to imbibe "strong draughts of refreshing minds," which carry her through intellectual deserts as water does a camel.

- **Weak Thinker.** Deppman says that Dickinson likes what Gianni Vattimo calls "weak" thought. This phrase may startle Dickinson lovers, who do not want anything about Dickinson to be called "weak." However, Deppman means it to be high praise. "Weak thought" is elastic, opposing "strong" beliefs in "clear and distinct ideas as the model for truth" and instead appreciating the interpretive character of every experience of truth (Vattimo qtd. 23). Thus, in "Strong Draughts of Their Refreshing Minds," Dickinson muses that "camel" may not be the right word for her relationship to her reading. Perhaps a better way to describe the effects of conversational thought is "elastic," not committed to rigid truths but rather open to many new ideas. "Camel" and "elastic" are both key terms for Deppman's assessment of her poetics.

- **Try to Think Poems.** While some poems are conversations, others are more self-contained. Some of these, Deppman calls "try to think poems." In them, Dickinson poses herself challenging thought experiments, and then observes and records the workings of her mind as it encounters its own limits.

This book is learned, original, meticulous, playful, and illuminating for all readers who say "What?" to Dickinson. How gratifying.

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**Marianne Noble**, associate professor of literature at American University, is the author of *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (2000) and is working on a book entitled "Sympathy and the Quest for Genuine Human Contact in American Romantic Literature."

# REVIEWS

## Oakes, Elizabeth. *The Luminescence of All Things Emily*

Nicholasville, Kentucky: Wind Publications, 2009. 77 pp. Paper, ISBN 1-893239-89-0, \$15.00.

Reviewed by Janet McCann

We poets all want a piece of Emily. I don't know how many poems or even books of poems have been written about her; we take her dress off, put it on us, diagnose her, suggest medications for her, steal her lines and her recipes, invent lovers for her, follow her into her room and allow her to shut the door only behind us. We reach for her avidly but cannot touch her. But this latest book of Emily poems is unusual and striking for its sense of the real. It is like a novel in that it creates real people; it is like a biography in that its assumptions are documented. And, on top of that, it is fine poetry.

This collection is unusual too in that it is not simply about Emily, but about her family and times as well. Family members we tend to see only vaguely take on life and individuality as they speak and act out their lives in the poems. The collection is divided into six sections of poems entitled "Emily," "Austin and Mabel," "Sue," "Emily's Household," "In Amherst, Summer 2005, 2007," and "West Cemetery, Amherst, Massachusetts." In the last two sections the poet more or less joins Emily by experiencing her places. Notes at the end provide solid documentation for her presentation and interpretation of Emily's family; she also includes a useful bibliography and sources for Dickinson lines she has referred to.

These poems are indeed luminous. Within her closed world, which Oakes compares to a snow globe, we see her glimmer, surrounded by those dear to her, the rest of the world held at bay. In the spaces between lines we get a glimpse of her at work and at ease. Passion thunders around her. She is

still. Her people mill around her in vignettes and snapshots. She reacts, retreats. The mystery of her private soul is revealed by these poems—which do not attempt to unveil the hidden Emily, but treat her with compassion.

An intimate look at Emily's brother Austin's affair with Mabel Loomis Todd gives another original dimension to the story. The passionate, daring affair is carried on almost in Emily's presence (she and Vinnie flee upstairs) and contrasts with her outward quiet. The reasons for and roots of the affair are explored, not clinically but poetically and with sympathy, using facts from the principals' journals, including their personal codes for a night of love.

The poems leap from one perspective to another, as the characters speak and are spoken of and impinge on the lives of the others in this narrow, closed world. Sue becomes a tragic figure, betrayed by her husband and loving—not necessarily in love with—his mysterious sister. Sue is shut out of her own life, observing it. In this feeling of exclusion, she identifies with Emily.

Perhaps the most intriguing figure of the household is Emily's sister Vinnie, so often overlooked, who emerges as a complex and intelligent woman who escapes nothing and whom nothing escapes. In "Vinnie Outlives Them All" Vinnie thinks about her role in the house, as Martha to Emily's Mary, and how she kept the household going:

She was writing...  
while I was reading to mother,  
helping Maggie churn butter,  
on my way to Cutler's with a  
request for coconut, graham  
flour, sweet potatoes, sugar...

She muses that her job was the household, as Austin's was making the money; she concludes that "it wasn't just duty. She is still/ in the front parlor of my heart." In other poems Vinnie remembers their father's death, recounts events from childhood, and considers the effect Emily's presence had on the home. Other characters too look at Vinnie, at her photographs, at her public and private self. She becomes more than just the other sister, the one taken for granted, and becomes a positive influence on the wellbeing of the family.

This collection is a fine achievement for its melding of historical and poetic truth without diminishing either. I can think of only one book similar in this way—Enid Shomer's *Stars at Noon* (2001), which consists of a series of poems about woman pilot Jacqueline Cochran. To make a historical person real without falsification and without cluttering the poems with information is a challenge that Oakes has met, and this collection will have wide appeal. She has captured her piece of Emily in a collection for both Dickinson scholars and casual poetry readers.

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**Janet McCann**, professor of English at Texas A&M University, is author of *Emily's Dress*, a collection of poems reviewed in the fall 2005 *EDIS Bulletin*.

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Barbara Kelly

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Dickinson include Lebanon Opera House Improvement Corporation, New York Botanical Garden, and Lower Eastside Girls Club of New York.]

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## Awards

*Submitted by Martha Nell Smith on behalf of the Committees  
(Special thanks to Paul Crumbley and Eleanor Heginbotham)*

### 2008 EDIS Graduate Student Fellowship

Jessica Beard of the University of California at Santa Cruz is the recipient of our 2008 EDIS Graduate Student Fellowship Award in order to develop her dissertation, "Bound—a trouble—': Emily Dickinson, the Archive, the Canon and the Classroom." She will use the funds for archival research in both the collections at the Houghton at Harvard University as well as at Amherst College. Beard is interested in an editorial theory and practice that allows Dickinson's work to be both graphical and lyrical without necessarily following a biographical narrative. Besides attending to visual aspects of Dickinson's work, Beard will be analyzing Dickinson's innovations in design apparent in the later "scraps" and fragments as well as in Dickinson's "bookmaking." At present her stated goals are two-fold: "a careful analysis of Dickinson's visual poetics as well as an editorial methodology and an edition that help uphold them on a mass-produced page." Co-directed by Carla Freccero and Jody Greene, Beard's committee includes Kirsten Gruesz, who did extensive work on *The Classroom Electric* (<http://classroomelectric.org>) in the late 1990s-early 2000s.

### 2009 EDIS Scholar in Amherst Award

Yanbin Kang of Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin, Guangxi, P.R. China is the recipient of the 2009 EDIS Scholar in Amherst Award. In our letter congratulating

her, the committee noted that her project—"Rereading Dickinson's Poetry in China"—"is especially timely and important as the global reach of Emily Dickinson extends and as our transnational contacts are more and more easily facilitated by technological advancements. We applaud your ambition to use 'research questions inspired by Chinese readers' cultural imagination and Chinese readers' actual experience of re-reading Dickinson' in order to 'explore Dickinson through a Chinese perspective which enters into the dialogue with Western Dickinson scholarship and highlights elements about Dickinson's work which Western Dickinson scholars may have failed to give a sufficient recognition.'"

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### 2010 EDIS Scholar in Amherst Award

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

The award is a \$2,000 fellowship to be used for expenses related to that research, such as travel, accommodations, or a rental car. Upon completion of their research in Amherst, recipients will write a letter to the EDIS Board outlining what they achieved as a result of EDIS

support. A minimum stay of one week in Amherst is required. Recipients also may use the fellowship to initiate a lengthier stay in the area. Preference will be given to persons with completed PhDs who are in the early stages of their careers.

The Scholar in Amherst Program was inaugurated in 2002 by a generous donation from Sylvia F. Rogosa, made in honor of her daughter, Vivian Pollak, second president of the EDIS. The 2003 award was named in honor of Myra Fraser Fallon, mother of EDIS Treasurer Dr. James Fraser. The 2004 award was named in honor of renowned Dickinson scholar Brita Lindberg-Seyersted and those in 2005 and 2006 for Professor Everett Emerson to recognize his contributions to Dickinson studies as well as early American literature. The 2007 Scholar in Amherst Award honored Suzanne Juhasz and Jane Donahue Eberwein, Dickinson scholars and founding members of the EDIS. The 2008 Scholar in Amherst Award honored Roland Hagenbüchle, an influential international Dickinson scholar and avid supporter of EDIS. The 2009 award honored Everett Emerson.

To apply for the 2010 Scholar in Amherst Award, please submit a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction (written by the applicant), a two-page project proposal, and a brief bibliography, by May 15, 2010, to Paul Crumbley at [paul.crumbley@usu.edu](mailto:paul.crumbley@usu.edu); inquiries may also be directed to Martha Nell Smith at [mnsmith@umd.edu](mailto:mnsmith@umd.edu) and Eleanor Heginbotham at [heginbotham@csp.edu](mailto:heginbotham@csp.edu). Letters of recommendation are not accepted as part of the application packet.

## Chapter News

### Emily Dickinson Chapter Groups on the Rise

By Nancy List Pridgen

The Emily Dickinson International Society is experiencing a revival of chapter groups—local Emily Dickinson interest groups potentially affiliated with EDIS. At the EDIS annual meeting held July 31–August 2, 2009, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, Lois Kackley presented a report describing her successes with an Emily Dickinson group in Amherst, MA.

During the annual EDIS board meeting, two board members (Cynthia MacKenzie and Nancy Pridgen) shared their successes with Dickinson events they had held in their respective neighborhoods. As a result, a discussion about local chapter groups ensued, and an ad hoc committee on chapter groups was set up. Nancy Pridgen was chosen to be co-chair of this committee, with another co-chair to be chosen from the membership at large.

The board discussed possible requirements and benefits to groups who affiliate with EDIS. A registration fee, possibly \$250, would be charged for each group. In return, a group would receive a set number of copies of the Emily Dickinson *Journals* and *Bulletins*. EDIS would also provide several forums for reporting chapter activities and discussions among groups—the *Bulletin*, the EDIS web site, and the EDIS Facebook page. Separate chapter activities could be scheduled within an annual EDIS meeting. A list of potential speakers, or speakers bureau, from various geographical areas could also be provided.

Several board members expressed the hope that the chapter groups would encourage individual members to join EDIS. It was suggest-

ed that a meeting be held Sunday morning for any EDIS members interested in setting up local groups.

August 2 at 8:30, this meeting was held. Ten EDIS members were in attendance, including several board members. Some of the items discussed included those mentioned above that had been discussed at the board meeting. Also, it was suggested that EDIS provide to the chapters regular news from the Emily Dickinson Museum. EDIS might help chapters present a marathon reading of Dickinson's poems.

Jane Wald suggested that chapters might coordinate membership with the Museum, as well as EDIS. It was pointed out that this would have to be worked out with Johns Hopkins University Press, who manages EDIS membership and publishes the *Journal*.

Several attendees at the Sunday morning meeting expressed interest in starting groups in their areas. Those attendees who have held Dickinson meetings felt the most effective outcomes have been in bringing together readers of Dickinson's poetry and offering community and conversation. Affiliation with EDIS would provide connection with the bigger picture. It was suggested that lists of faculty and students from various local colleges might provide contacts for potential membership of chapters.

Three tasks remain: Choosing a co-chair for the ad hoc committee on chapter groups; revising the guidelines for chapter groups to affiliate with EDIS; and receiving the approval of the EDIS board for these new guidelines. Kathleen Welton, editor of the *Bulletin*, expressed an interest in helping to prepare guidelines for chapter formation. Guidelines prepared several years ago are now in need of revision and updat-

ing. Although some local chapter groups formed earlier still remain, concern was expressed that EDIS has no list of these existing chapter groups.

If you are sponsoring an EDIS chapter group or an Emily Dickinson interest group; or if you are interested in sponsoring a group in the future, please contact me at [possibility@satx.rr.com](mailto:possibility@satx.rr.com). I would also like to hear from you if you have any comments or suggestions about groups affiliating with EDIS.

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**Nancy List Pridgen** is a board member of EDIS.

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### Who Are We? Where Are We Going?

By Ellen Beinhorn

In 2008, I attended the EDIS 20th anniversary conference and celebration in Amherst, MA. The conference meetings were accomplished, the attending scholars lettered, and the atmosphere—academic.

I came to the meeting as an instructor in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) program at the University of South Carolina where I have been teaching courses on Emily Dickinson. It was a very different experience from that of typical college teaching. The participants were self motivated—ages 50 to 70, who were sincerely seeking programs which would nurture and enrich their lives.

The older generations tend to withdraw from an active society to find themselves becoming more and more isolated. Communication is a necessary passage for mental stimulation and further interest in life. The poems of Dickinson provide a commonality that fulfill these



## Chapter News, cont.

needs. Besides teasing the mind, her verses reverberate with compassion and love.

The idea of continuing education is an ancient and revered one. The present day finds a huge assemblage waiting for opportunities to be exposed to poetry and the arts in an informal environment and this is where EDIS is needed. The emphasis on establishing new chapters to fulfill this need is important.

An article, "First Experiences of a New Member" in the *EDIS Bulletin*, November-December 2008, by Greg Mattingly tells of his finding EDIS on the Web. I was struck by his words that he had been "besieging Emily Dickinson on my own." He describes himself as a "wayfarer." My belief is that there are many, many more pilgrims out there and that EDIS needs to hold her beacon higher to guide them in.

The importance of forming new chapters is critical. There are "kindred spirits" and "wayfarers" in great plenty to assure the continuity of Dickinson's rare genius.

My classes at USC, Hilton Head, S.C. were initially based on my recent book, *Emily and Me*, a small volume of Emily's poems and my portraits of her words. The "faces" characterized what I mused to be the mood and image depicting Emily's poetry. The art work provided a startling consequence. The students, piqued by the faces, asked for

second readings and more profound examination of Dickinson's poems.

At the completion of six, ninety minute sessions, there was an enthusiastic agreement that more was needed beyond a lecture series. What resulted was the establishment of the Beaufort County EDIS Chapter, the first in South Carolina! The success of this effort can be accomplished in more areas serving countless lovers of Dickinson poetry.

It would take another essay to put into words my experience in forming this new chapter. The energy and imagination, verve and spirit of the participants was astounding. One of our members elected to perform *The Belle of Amherst*, and did so shortly thereafter.

Another sought detailed research about Thomas Wentworth Higginson and his relationship with our Beaufort, S.C. area. From a signed book of letters, she learned that Higginson lived in Beaufort during the Civil War where he commanded his own troops and a town was subsequently named after him—Higginsonville. Yet another member started to create poems based on his reaction to chosen Emily poems.

This was no small success for Dickinson. A new band of enthusiasts came into the fold. What we need to strive for at this point is to hold the group together, in part, by direct contact with the Mother Chapter and other chapters throughout the country.

So how do we proceed? The organization has a unique opportunity to use its prestige to extend outward from academic circles. Simply by recognizing that vast audiences are available and are waiting. How can EDIS start initial programs to make overtures for the elder population?

Meanwhile a pilot program could be initiated by a special board set

up to lay the groundwork for EDIS charter groups. It is essential for neophyte groups to have guidelines. This is a problem for chapters trying to establish themselves. When our new members gathered for the first time, it was apparent that most of them were tentative about the 'scholar' aspect of Emily Dickinson. They kept searching for "anchors" to throw out and rules to follow.

Our culture is so oriented toward printed, directional matter that it can't be overcome. So, in retrospect, I should have had a printed format available to ease anxieties. Then we could have moved forward comfortably and ease into our own approach to the meetings.

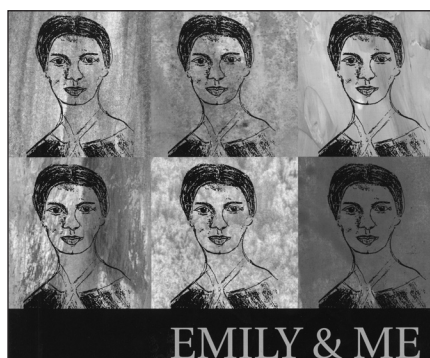
As it developed they surprised themselves with their own abilities to knit together and enjoy not only Emily, but each other. Today this initial group is bringing a friend or acquaintance to the meetings and we are getting bolder and better at attacking poems not easily understood. The word 'scholar' has faded into the background in favor of what they perceive to be Emily's poems on their own terms.

We hear a great deal about "America's declining social capital" and every few years or so somebody announces that 'poetry is dead'. Organizations such as EDIS are critical in reaching out to our elder communities. It is a stewardship that has great potential. We need a healthy, new audience for America's greatest poet.

I have repeated my plea several times, as Cicero often did. It is not only allowed, but it was and is sometimes necessary.

Emily belongs to all. We need to take her from between the pages and put her into our lives.

**Ellen Beinhorn** is an artist, sculptor, educator, and poet.



## Notes and Queries

### President's Note on New EDIS Committees

By Paul Crumbley

During this summer's annual meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, the EDIS Board of Directors voted to establish two new ad hoc committees: the Committee for Chapter Development and the Dickinson and the Arts Committee. These committees exist for the purpose of formalizing EDIS dedication to two important areas that have long been of interest to members. From the time of its founding, EDIS has encouraged the establishment of chapters, but efforts to clarify procedures for creating chapters and articulate the benefits of chapter membership have waxed and waned. This new committee exists to ensure that chapter concerns receive continuous attention and that the discussion of chapter business is a formal component of our annual meetings. Nancy List Pridgen, one of three EDIS members-at-large, has generously consented to serve a co-chair for this committee. Nancy will identify the other co-chair as she becomes acquainted with members similarly dedicated to chapter formation and support. The Dickinson and the Arts Committee reflects the growing interest many members have expressed in Dickinson's role in the arts. Barbara Dana, who performed *The Belle of Amherst* at the 2009 annual meeting, has consented to be chair of this committee, along with Georgiana Strickland, who organized the 2002 annual meeting around the theme of "Dickinson and Song," Maryanne Garbowsky, and Jonnie Guerra, the current membership chair, past EDIS president, and editor of the "Poet to Poet" series for the *Bulletin*. This committee will help establish procedures for including the arts in annual meetings and conferences while also seeing to it that news of artistic events related to Dickinson reach members in a timely fashion. As with the committee on chapters, this committee seeks input from all members.

### What's Your Story?

By Georgie Strickland

Have you ever had an encounter with Emily Dickinson's life and work that changed your own life? If so, the EDIS membership committee would love to hear about it, and we believe *Bulletin* readers would too. For the "What's Your Story" series column, edited by Georgiana Strickland, we seek personal stories that demonstrate the power and attraction of Dickinson for today's readers. (See the past three issues for examples.) If you'd like to submit your story, please contact Georgiana at [georgiestr@aol.com](mailto:georgiestr@aol.com).

### Dickinson and the Arts

By Barbara Dana

EDIS has now established a committee to promote interest in connections between Emily Dickinson and the arts. We welcome information about new works pertaining to Dickinson in music, drama, literary fiction, dance, the visual arts, etc. Committee members are Barbara Dana, chair, Georgiana Strickland, Maryanne Garbowsky, and Jonnie Guerra. We look forward to arranging panels, performances, exhibitions, and articles in connection with EDIS meetings and publications. Contact Barbara Dana, [wolfkoda@mac.com](mailto:wolfkoda@mac.com) or Georgiana Strickland, [Georgiestr@aol.com](mailto:Georgiestr@aol.com)

### EDIS Bulletin Subcommittee

The *EDIS Bulletin*, the Society's semi-annual newsletter goes to all members of EDIS, as part of membership, and is aimed at a broad array of readers, both scholarly and non-scholarly, with an interest in Dickinson. It covers the work of contemporary poets and artists influenced by Dickinson; profiles of outstanding Dickinson scholars, past and present; news of the Emily Dickinson Museum; reviews of publications and performances of works dealing with the poet; news of the Society and its activities; and other feature articles of interest to the mem-

bership. To achieve these goals as well as to preserve the legacy of Emily Dickinson for further generations, we have established a subcommittee for the *EDIS Bulletin* that includes: Martha Ackmann, Barbara Dana, Barbara Kelly, Georgie Strickland, and Kathleen Welton. Please let us know if you have ideas that can increase the appreciation of Emily Dickinson.

### EDIS Bulletin Goes Electronic

In May 2009, EDIS signed an agreement with EBSCO to digitize the *EDIS Bulletin* and provide subscriptions to libraries around the world. In addition, all issues from the past 20 years have been converted to electronic files and will be available to EDIS members at [www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org](http://www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org) in 2010. Thanks to the following for their support and assistance with these projects: Paul Crumbley, James Fraser, Michael Kearns, Barbara Leukart, Martha Nell Smith, and Kathleen Welton.

### Note from the Editor

We hope that you enjoy the redesign of the *EDIS Bulletin*. Much gratitude to the following for their assistance in creating this new look for the *EDIS Bulletin*: Martha Ackmann, Barbara Dana, Paul Crumbley, Jonnie Guerra, Eleanor Heginbotham, Michael Kearns, Barbara Kelly, Martha Nell Smith, and Georgie Strickland. Thanks to those of you who contributed content to this issue as well as to Michael Kearns, former editor of the *EDIS Bulletin* for his expertise and assistance with transitioning of the necessary procedures to publish a high-quality *Bulletin*. Please feel free to contact me with articles for future issues, comments, and questions: [kathy@kathywelton.com](mailto:kathy@kathywelton.com).

# MEMBERS' NEWS

## Oxford 2010 International Conference

The EDIS 2010 International Conference will take place August 6-8 at the Rothermere American Institute, Oxford University, England. The conference theme is "‘were I Britain born’: Dickinson’s Transatlantic Connections." Registration for the conference will begin on Thursday afternoon. The conference will begin Friday, August 6 with a full day of meetings followed by a reception and banquet at the Oriel College main dining hall. Oriel College was founded in 1436 and its dining hall manifests the best characteristics of architecture and college dining during the late Medieval period. On Saturday, August 7, there will be a reception at Blackwell Bookshop, across from the Bodleian Library. Attendees are also invited to attend a premier exhibition of art work by contemporary British artists Suzie Hanna and Stella Vine, responding to Dickinson’s poetry and life as well as the theater production *Emily Dickinson & I: The Journey of a Portrayal*, a widely acclaimed one-woman play about writing, acting, and getting into Emily Dickinson’s dress, devised by Jack Lynch and Edie Campbell, directed by Jack Lynch, performed by Edie Campbell, LynchPin Productions Theatre Company.

### Plenary speakers and panels:

- Lyndall Gordon, St. Hilda’s College, Oxford University  
“‘The World Within’: Emily Dickinson and the Brontës”
- Paul Giles, Oxford University/University of Sydney
- Domhnall Mitchell, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Paraic Finnerty, University of Portsmouth
- Maria Stuart, University College, Dublin
- Sally Bushell, Lancaster University
- Vivian Pollak, Washington University
- Jed Deppman, Oberlin College



*Emily Dickinson International Society Conference*  
*“‘Were I Britain born”:*  
*Dickinson’s Transatlantic Connections*  
*The Rothermere American Institute of Oxford*  
*August 6-8, 2010*

*Plenary Speakers:*  
*Lyndall Gordon - St. Hilda’s College, Oxford University*  
*Paul Giles - University of Oxford/University of Sydney*

[www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org/oxford.html](http://www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org/oxford.html)

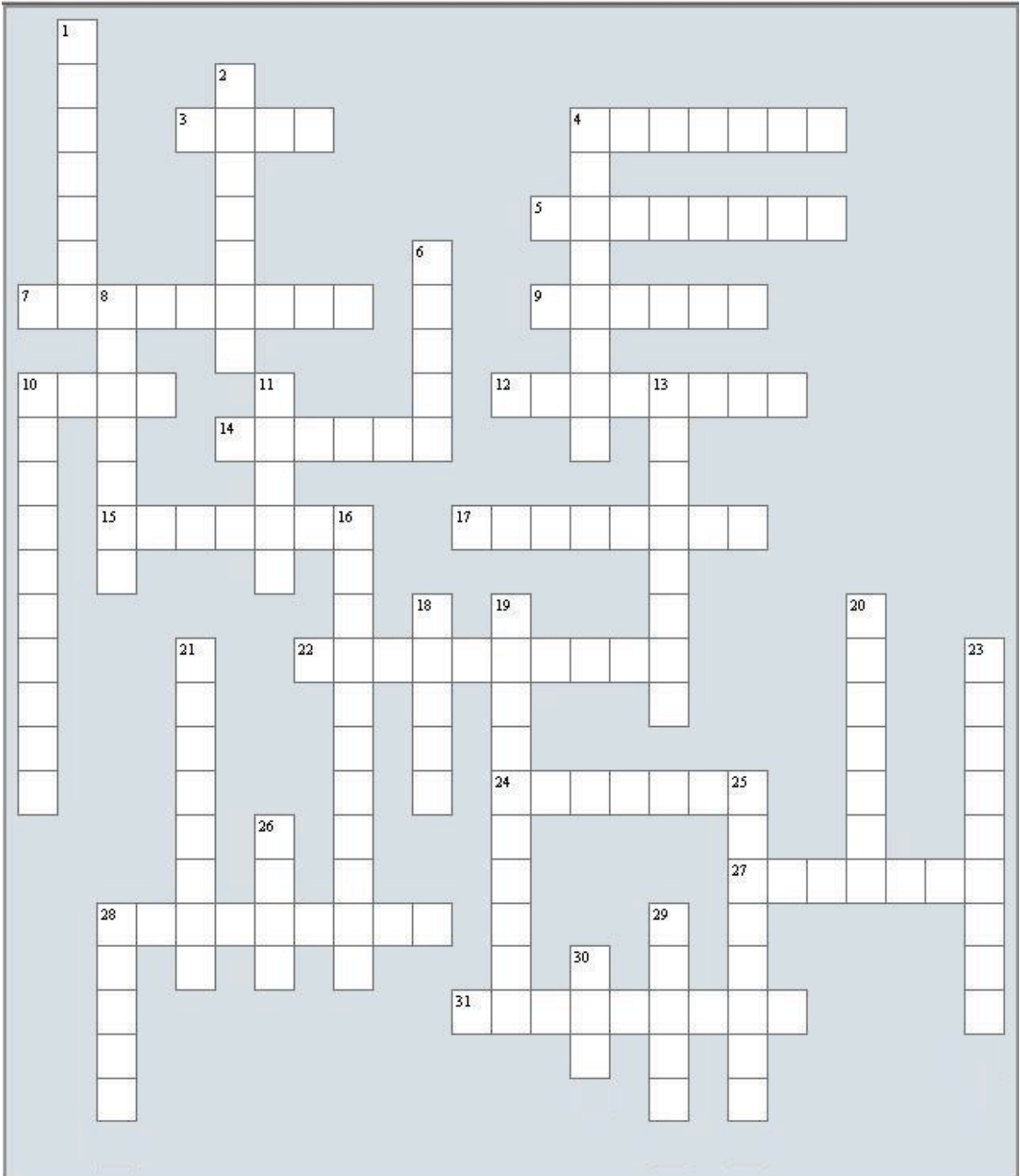
Emily Dickinson daguerreotype copyright: Amherst College Archives and Special Collections

See page 36 of the *Bulletin* for a registration form. Further information and registration forms are also available on the EDIS web site, or you can register online at: [https://associations.press.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/edis/2010\\_edis\\_conference\\_registration.cgi](https://associations.press.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/edis/2010_edis_conference_registration.cgi). For all conference-related inquiries, please contact Paul Crumbley at [paul.crumbley@usu.edu](mailto:paul.crumbley@usu.edu) or Cristanne Miller at [ccmiller@buffalo.edu](mailto:ccmiller@buffalo.edu).

# DEPARTMENTS

## Crossword Puzzle: More Words To Lift Your Hat To

By Greg Mattingly



# DEPARTMENTS

## Across

3. Appearance; look; manner  
4. 1. The wings of a bird, or specifically the distal or terminal segments thereof. 2. Feathers  
5. Gray or tawny with darker streaks or spots  
7. A person addicted to excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures  
9. 1. Any member of the open star cluster sometimes known as "The Seven Sisters." 2. A group of seven French poets of the latter half of the 16th century. 3 (usually lowercase) any group of eminent or brilliant persons or things, esp. when seven in number  
10. Dry; withered  
12. Light made of thick wicks covered with wax, used in the streets at night; lamp; illumination  
14. Pertaining to or befitting a holiday celebration, or other gala occasion  
15. 1. Also called corselet. defensive armor for the torso comprising a breastplate and backplate, originally made of leather. 2. Zoology. a hard shell or other covering forming an indurated defensive shield  
17. Rascal; rogue; scoundrel; coward; spiritless craven; timid creature; frightened thing  
22. The point in the orbit of a planet or comet at which it is nearest to the sun.  
24. 1. That which nourishes; nutriment; food. 2. That which sustains; means of support  
27. A dark blue color (ED's spelling).  
28. A red dye prepared from the dried bodies of the females of an insect, *Dactylopius coccus*, which lives on cactuses of Mexico, Central America, and other warm regions  
31. The act of placing in a tomb; burial.

## Down

1. In botany, a type of simple, dry fruit produced by many species of flowering plants. A dehiscent structure composed of two or more carpels, that, at maturity, split apart (dehisce) to release the seeds within  
2. A hot, dry, dust-laden wind blowing from Northern Africa and affecting parts of Europe  
4. Apparent displacement of an observed object due to a change in the position of the observer  
6. Botany: One of the individual leaves, typically green, that lie under the more conspicuous petals of flower. Collectively, when the flower is in bud, these leaves enclose and protect the more delicate floral parts within. (The collective name answers 28 DOWN)  
8. A coarse broad-leaved weed bearing prickly heads of burs that stick to the clothing  
10. In Aramaic, a cry of despair; expression of incomprehensible agony; question that Christ asked when he was suffering on the cross  
11. City in Switzerland; a luxurious resort  
13. A common North American songbird (winters in South America), member of the blackbird family, preferring meadow and grassland habitats, and whose song strikes many listeners as joyous or ecstatic  
16. 1. the surface, outer face, or outside of a thing. 2. the outward appearance, esp. as distinguished from the inner nature  
18. 1. Anthropology: a member of a small-statured people native to equatorial Africa. (ED's spelling) 2. (lowercase) anything very small of its kind  
19. Silent; reverent; quiet; saintly; holy; nun-like; according to a certain order of monks who wore white robes  
20. Botany: The petals of a flower considered collectively  
21. To pledge by promise of marriage; betroth.  
23. A beltlike fastening for a garment, esp. a cassock. Perhaps a bee could be said to wear one?  
25. Musical instrument; small one-sided drum with loose metallic jingles on the sides (ED's spelling)  
26. A curtain, especially either of the the inner two, of the three curtains of the Biblical (Exodus) tabernacle, representing passage through stages of spiritual progression in Christian faith  
28. Botany: the outermost group of floral parts. (The name of the an individual part answers 6 DOWN)  
29. A perfume or essential oil obtained from flowers or petals  
30. A rough, prickly case around the seeds of certain plants, such as the chestnut

## Answers to Last Puzzle

### Across

1. Badinage - J1466  
3. Apennine - J534  
5. Adamant - J398  
10. Tuscarora - J3  
11. Potosi - J119  
13. Cerement - J984  
20. Eclat - J1307  
22. Pippin - J3  
23. Ransomed - J215  
25. Let - J283  
26. Atropos - J11

28. Thill - J647  
31. Curricle - J647  
33. Whiffletree - J1636  
34. Gimlet - J244  
35. Chrysolite - J24

### Down

2. Amethyst - J318  
4. Capuchin - J15  
6. Domine - J318  
7. Dun - J1575  
8. Dower - J505

9. Resurgam - J70  
12. Puke - J283  
14. Tippet - J712  
15. Orleans - J283  
16. Cenotaph - J1192  
17. Cordillera - J534  
18. Seraph - J214  
19. Teneriffe - J300  
21. Goblin - J430  
24. Surplice - J324  
27. Mechlin - J374  
29. Doges - J216

30. Dimity - 401  
32. Tulle - J712

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**Greg Mattingly** is a former corporate trainer soon to move from the Boston area to Orange, MA.

## Oxford 2010 International Conference Registration Form

This page may be photocopied for multiple use

### Conference Registration Form

Complete this form and make your check or money order payable, in U.S. funds to EDIS, Inc.  
Please print or type your name and affiliation as you wish them to appear on your conference badge.

Name, title & affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (office) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Conference fee  EDIS member registering by June 15, 2010 \$115.00

Non-member registering by June 15, 2010 \$145.00

Non-member/registering after June 15, 2010 \$145.00

Banquet at Oriol Dining Hall  \$30 per person

Theater Tickets: *Emily Dickinson & I*  \$20 per person

Send to: EDIS; c/o Johns Hopkins University Press; P.O. Box 19966; Baltimore, MD 21211-0966

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### EDIS Membership Form

Membership in the Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS) enables you to participate in the Society's meetings and conferences, to receive both of the Society's publications (the *Bulletin* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*), and to help foster the goals of the Society.

Name, title & affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (office) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_

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Please check if this is:  new address  membership renewal

Annual Membership Category:

Sustaining Member  \$200.00

Institutional Member  \$113.00

Contributing Member  \$100.00

Regular Member  \$50.00

Student Member  \$30.00

(All of the above Members receive both the *Emily Dickinson Journal* and the *Bulletin*)

Associate Member  \$20.00 (*Bulletin* only)

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

Name, title & affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

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EDIS 2010 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

*“were I Britain born”*

Oxford International Conference

August 6-8, 2010



Oxford University

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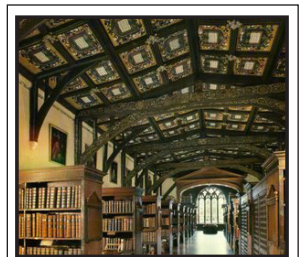
*Emily of Amherst*

A Collaboration of Amherst Ballet & the Emily Dickinson Museum

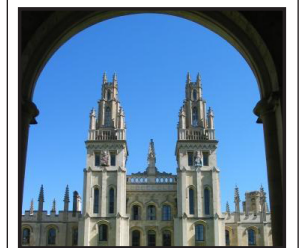
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 SATURDAY MAY 16TH 2:00PM & 7:00PM  
 SUNDAY MAY 17TH 2:00PM & 7:00PM

Tickets Available through Amherst Ballet (413) 549-1555

Created & Written by Catherine Pair & Jane Wald    Music composed by Ted Trobach    Produced & Directed by Catherine Pair



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