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# Poems. Emily Dickinson.



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## About the author

Emily Dickinson (December 10, 1830 - May 15, 1886), nineteenth century United States poet was born in Amherst, Massachusetts to a prominent family known for support of the local educational institutions. Emily's grandfather, Samuel Fowler Dickinson, was one of the founders of Amherst College, and her father served as lawyer and treasurer for the institution. Emily's father also served in powerful positions on the General Court of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts State Senate, and the United States House of Representatives.



During a religious revival that swept Western Massachusetts during the decades of 1840-50, Dickinson found her vocation as a poet. One of her biographers has suggested that Dickinson thought of becoming a poet in the Biblical terms of Jacob wrestling with the angel.

Dickinson lived most of her life in the house in which she was born, made a few trips to visit relatives in Boston, Cambridge, and Connecticut. Most of her work is not only reflective of the small moments of what happens around her, but also of the larger battles and themes of what was happening in the larger society. For example, over half of her poems were written during the years of the American Civil War. In the words of one of her most memorable lines, Dickinson's poems tell all the truth but tell it slant:

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or everyman be blind—

By the time of her death, no more than seven Dickinson poems had been published, but her legacy of 1776 poems eventually brought the full extent of her work to the world. Today, Dickinson is not only considered one of the most accessible poets of all time but one of the most representative. Features of her work that were considered oddities have become signature aspects of her style and form. Dramatic asides, odd capitalization, telegraphic dash punctuation, hymnbook rhythms, off-rhymes, multiple voices, and elaborate metaphors have become recognizable to readers across time and translations of her work.

She died, as she was born, in Amherst, Massachusetts.



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# *Poems of Emily Dickinson.*

~ 1.

## *A Book*

There is no frigate like a book  
To take us lands away,  
Nor any coursers like a page  
Of prancing poetry.  
This traverse may the poorest take  
Without oppress of toll;  
How frugal is the chariot  
That bears a human soul!

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~2.

*A Charm Invests A Face*

A charm invests a face  
 Imperfectly beheld.  
 The lady dare not lift her veil  
 For fear it be dispelled.

But peers beyond her mesh,  
 And wishes, and denies,  
 'Lest interview annul a want  
 That image satisfies.

~3.

*A Narrow Fellow in the Grass*

A narrow fellow in the grass  
 Occasionally rides;  
 You may have met him,—did you not,  
 His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,  
 A spotted shaft is seen;  
 And then it closes at your feet  
 And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,  
 A floor too cool for corn.  
 Yet when a child, and barefoot,  
 I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash  
 Unbraiding in the sun,—  
 When, stooping to secure it,  
 It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people  
 I know, and they know me;  
 I feel for them a transport  
 Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,  
 Attended or alone,  
 Without a tighter breathing,  
 And zero at the bone.



~A.

### *A Thunderstorm*

The wind begun to rock the grass  
 With threatening tunes and low, -  
 He flung a menace at the earth,  
 A menace at the sky.

The leaves unhooked themselves from trees  
 And started all abroad;  
 The dust did scoop itself like hands  
 And throw away the road.

The wagons quickened on the streets,  
 The thunder hurried slow;  
 The lightning showed a yellow beak,  
 And then a livid claw.

The birds put up the bars to nests,  
 The cattle fled to barns;  
 There came one drop of giant rain,  
 And then, as if the hands

That held the dams had parted hold,  
 The waters wrecked the sky,  
 But overlooked my father's house,  
 Just quartering a tree.



~5.

*A wounded deer leaps highest.*

A wounded deer leaps highest,  
 I've heard the hunter tell;  
 'Tis but the ecstasy of death,  
 And then the brake is still.

The smitten rock that gushes,  
 The trampled steel that springs:  
 A cheek is always redder  
 Just where the hectic stings!

Mirth is mail of anguish,  
 In which its cautious arm  
 Lest anybody spy the blood  
 And, "you're hurt" exclaim



~6.

*Because I Could Not Stop for Death*

Because I could not stop for Death,  
 He kindly stopped for me;  
 The carriage held but just ourselves  
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,  
 And I had put away  
 My labour, and my leisure too,  
 For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,  
 Their lessons scarcely done;  
 We passed the fields of gazing grain,  
 We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed  
 A swelling of the ground;  
 The roof was scarcely visible,  
 The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each  
 Feels shorter than the day  
 I first surmised the horses' heads  
 Were toward eternity.





~7.

*Come slowly, Eden!*

Come slowly, Eden!  
 lips unused to thee,  
 Bashful, sip thy jasmines,  
 As the fainting bee,

Reaching late his flower,  
 Round her chamber hums,  
 Counts his nectars —enters,  
 And is lost in balms!

~8.

*Death Sets A Thing*

Death sets a thing significant  
 The eye had hurried by,  
 Except a perished creature  
 Entreat us tenderly

To ponder little workmanships  
 In crayon or in wool,  
 With “This was last her fingers did,”  
 Industrious until

The thimble weighed too heavy,  
 The stitches stopped themselves,  
 And then ‘t was put among the dust  
 Upon the closet shelves.  
 A book I have, a friend gave,  
 Whose pencil, here and there,  
 Had notched the place that pleased him,—  
 At rest his fingers are.

Now, when I read, I read not,

For interrupting tears  
 Obliterate the etchings  
 Too costly for repairs.



~9.

*Did The Harebell Loose Her Girdle*

Did the harebell loose her girdle  
 To the lover bee,  
 Would the bee the harebell hallow  
 Much as formerly?

Did the paradise, persuaded,  
 Yield her moat of pearl,  
 Would the Eden be Eden,  
 Or the earl an earl?



~ 10.

*Heart, we will forget him!*

Heart, we will forget him!  
 You an I, tonight!  
 You may forget the warmth he gave,  
 I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me  
 That I my thoughts may dim;  
 Haste! lest while you're lagging,  
 I may remember him!

~ 11.

*Hope is the Thing with Feathers*

Hope is the thing with feathers  
 That perches in the soul,  
 And sings the tune without the words,  
 And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
 And sore must be the storm  
 That could abash the little bird  
 That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land  
 And on the strangest sea;  
 Yet, never, in extremity,  
 It asked a crumb of me.



~ 12.

*I Died for Beauty, but was Scarce*

I died for beauty, but was scarce  
 Adjusted in the tomb,  
 When one who died for truth was lain  
 In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?  
 "For beauty," I replied.  
 "And I for truth, -the two are one;  
 We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,  
 We talked between the rooms,  
 Until the moss had reached our lips,  
 And covered up our names.

~ 13.

*I Felt a Funeral in My Brain*

I felt a funeral in my brain,  
 And mourners, to and fro,  
 Kept treading, treading, till it seemed  
 That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,  
 A service like a drum  
 Kept beating, beating, till I thought  
 My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,  
 And creak across my soul  
 With those same boots of lead, again.  
 Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,  
 And Being but an ear,  
 And I and silence some strange race,  
 Wrecked, solitary, here.



~ 14.

## I Went to Heaven

I went to heaven, -  
 'Twas a small town,  
 Lit with a ruby,  
 Lathed with down.  
 Stiller than the fields  
 At the full dew,  
 Beautiful as pictures  
 No man drew.  
 People like the moth,  
 Of mecllin, frames,  
 Duties of gossamer,  
 And eider names.  
 Almost contented  
 I could be  
 'Mong such unique  
 Society.

~ 15.

*I'm Nobody! Who are You?*

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
 Are you nobody, too?  
 Then there's a pair of us -don't tell!  
 They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!  
 How public, like a frog  
 To tell your name the livelong day  
 To an admiring bog!



~ 16.

*I've Known a Heaven Like a Tent*

I've known a Heaven like a tent  
 To wrap its shining yards,  
 Pluck up its stakes and disappear  
 Without the sound of boards  
 Or rip of nail, or carpenter,  
 But just the miles of stare  
 That signalize a show's retreat  
 In North America.  
 No trace, no figment of the thing  
 That dazzled yesterday,  
 No ring, no marvel;  
 Men and feats  
 Dissolved as utterly  
 As birds' far navigation  
 Discloses just a hue;  
 A plash of oars -a gaiety,  
 Then swallowed up to view.

~ 17.

*My Life Closed Twice Before it Closed*

My life closed twice before its close;  
 It yet remains to see  
 If Immortality unveil  
 A third event to me,  
  
 So huge, so hopeless to conceive,  
 As these that twice befell.  
 Parting is all we know of heaven,  
 And all we need of hell.



~ 18.

### *She Sweeps With Many-Colored Brooms*

She sweeps with many-colored brooms,  
 And leaves the shreds behind;  
 Oh, housewife in the evening west,  
 Come back, and dust the pond!

You dropped a purple ravelling in,  
 You dropped an amber thread;  
 And now you've littered all the East  
 With duds of emerald!

And still she plies her spotted brooms,  
 And still the aprons fly,  
 Till brooms fade softly into stars -  
 And then I come away.

~ 19.

### *Snake*

A narrow fellow in the grass  
 Occasionally rides;  
 You may have met him, -did you not?  
 His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,  
 A spotted shaft is seen;  
 And then it closes at your feet  
 And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,  
 A floor too cool for corn.  
 Yet when a child, and barefoot,  
 I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash  
 Unbraiding in the sun, -  
 When, stooping to secure it,  
 It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people  
 I know, and they know me;  
 I feel for them a transport  
 Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,  
 Attended or alone,  
 Without a tighter breathing,  
 And zero at the bone.



~20.

*Success is Counted Sweetest*

Success is counted sweetest  
 By those who ne'er succeed.  
 To comprehend a nectar  
 Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host  
 Who took the flag today  
 Can tell the definition,  
 So clear, of victory

As he, defeated, dying,  
 On whose forbidden ear  
 The distant strains of triumph  
 Break agonized and clear!





~21.

*Summer Shower*

A drop fell on the apple tree,  
 Another on the roof;  
 A half a dozen kissed the eaves,  
 And made the gables laugh.

A few went out to help the brook,  
 That went to help the sea.  
 Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,  
 What necklaces could be!

The dust replaced in hoisted roads,  
 The birds jocosely sung;  
 The sunshine threw his hat away,  
 The orchards spangles hung.

The breezes brought dejected lutes,  
 And bathed them in the glee;  
 The East put out a single flag,  
 And signed the fete away.

~22.

## The Bustle in a House

The bustle in a house  
 The morning after death  
 Is solemnest of industries  
 Enacted upon earth, -

The sweeping up the heart,  
 And putting love away  
 We shall not want to use again  
 Until eternity.



~23.

*The Mystery of Pain*

Pain has an element of blank;  
It cannot recollect  
When it began, or if there were  
A day when it was not.

It has no future but itself,  
Its infinite realms contain  
Its past, enlightened to perceive  
New periods of pain.

~24.

*The Only News I Know*

The only news I know  
Is bulletins all day  
From Immortality.

The only shows I see,  
Tomorrow and Today,  
Perchance Eternity.

The only One I meet  
Is God, -the only street,  
Existance; this traversed

If other news there be,  
Or admirabler show -  
I'll tell it you.



~25.

*The Pedigree of Honey*

The pedigree of honey  
 Does not concern the bee;  
 A clover, any time, to him  
 Is aristocracy.

~26.

*There Came a Wind Like a Bugle*

There came a wind like a bugle;  
 It quivered through the grass,  
 And a green chill upon the heat  
 So ominous did pass  
 We barred the windows and the doors  
 As from an emerald ghost;  
 The doom's electric moccasin  
 That very instant passed.  
 On a strange mob of panting trees,  
 And fences fled away,  
 And rivers where the houses ran  
 The living looked that day.  
 The bell within the steeple wild  
 The flying tidings whirled.  
 How much can come  
 And much can go,  
 And yet abide the world!



~27.

## There Is A Word

There is a word  
 Which bears a sword  
 can pierce an armed man.

It hurls its barbed syllables, —  
 At once is mute again.  
 But where it fell  
 The saved will tell  
 On patriotic day,  
 Some epauletted brother  
 Gave his breath away.

Wherever runs the breathless sun,  
 Wherever roams the day,  
 There is its victory!  
 Behold the keenest marksman!  
 Time's sublimest target  
 Is a soul "forgot"!

~28.

*There's a certain slant of light,*

There's a certain slant of light,  
 On winter afternoons,  
 That oppresses, like the weight  
 Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;  
 We can find no scar,  
 But internal difference  
 Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything,  
 'Tis the seal, despair,-  
 An imperial affliction  
 Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,  
 Shadows hold their breath;  
 When it goes, 't is like the distance  
 On the look of death.

~29.

*There's Been a Death in the Opposite House*

There's been a death in the opposite house  
 As lately as today.  
 I know it by the numb look  
 Such houses have always.

The neighbours rustle in and out,  
 The doctor drives away.  
 A window opens like a pod,  
 Abrupt, mechanically;

Somebody flings a mattress out, -  
 The children hurry by;  
 They wonder if It died on that, -  
 I used to when a boy.

The minister goes stiffly in  
 As if the house were his,  
 And he owned all the mourners now,  
 And little boys besides;



And then the milliner, and the man  
 Of the appalling trade,  
 To take the measure of the house.  
 There'll be that dark parade

Of tassels and of coaches soon;  
 It's easy as a sign, -  
 The intuition of the news  
 In just a country town.



~30.

*This Is My Letter To The World.*

Letter to the world,  
 That never wrote to me,—  
 The simple news that Nature told,  
 With tender majesty.  
 Her message is committed  
 To hands I cannot see;  
 For love of her, sweet countrymen,  
 Judge tenderly of me!

~31.

*This Quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies*

This quiet dust was gentlemen and ladies  
 And lads and girls;  
 Was laughter and ability and sighing,  
 And frocks and curls;

This passive place a summer's nimble mansion,  
 Where bloom and bees  
 Fulfilled their oriental circuit,  
 Then ceased like these.



~32.

*We Like March*

We like March, his shoes are purple,  
 He is new and high;  
 Makes he mud for dog and peddler,  
 Makes he forest dry;  
 Knows the adder's tongue his coming,  
 And begets her spot.  
 Stands the sun so close and mighty  
 That our minds are hot  
 . News is he of all the others;  
 Bold it were to die  
 With the blue-birds buccaneering  
 On his British sky.

~33.

*When Roses Cease To Bloom, Dear*

When roses cease to bloom, dear  
 and violets are done,  
 When bumblebees in solemn flight  
 Have passed beyond the sun,  
  
 The hand that paused to gather  
 Upon this summer's day  
 Will idle lie, in Auburn.—  
 Then take my flower, pray!



~34.

*Wild Nights! Wild Nights!*

Wild Nights! Wild Nights!  
Were I with thee,  
Wild Nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile the winds  
To a heart in port, —  
Done with the compass,  
Done with the chart!

Rowing in Eden!  
Ah! the sea!

























































