

ЭМИЛИ ДИКИНСОН

POEMS BY EMILY
DICKINSON, THIRD
SERIES

Эмили Дикинсон
Poems by Emily
Dickinson, Third Series

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Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 53

Emily Dickinson

Poems by Emily Dickinson, Third Series

MABEL LOOMIS TODD

It's all I have to bring to-day,
This, and my heart beside,
This, and my heart, and all the fields,
And all the meadows wide.
Be sure you count, should I forget, —
Some one the sum could tell, —
This, and my heart, and all the bees
Which in the clover dwell.

PREFACE

The intellectual activity of Emily Dickinson was so great that a large and characteristic choice is still possible among her literary material, and this third volume of her verses is put forth in response to the repeated wish of the admirers of her peculiar genius. Much of Emily Dickinson's prose was rhythmic, —even rhymed, though frequently not set apart in lines.

Also many verses, written as such, were sent to friends in letters; these were published in 1894, in the volumes of her *Letters*. It has not been necessary, however, to include them in this Series, and all have been omitted, except three or four exceptionally strong ones, as "A Book," and "With Flowers."

There is internal evidence that many of the poems were simply spontaneous flashes of insight, apparently unrelated to outward circumstance. Others, however, had an obvious personal origin; for example, the verses "I had a Guinea golden," which seem to have been sent to some friend travelling in Europe, as a dainty reminder of letter-writing delinquencies. The surroundings in which any of Emily Dickinson's verses are known to have been written usually serve to explain them clearly; but in general the present volume is full of thoughts needing no interpretation to those who apprehend this scintillating spirit.

M. L. T.

AMHERST, *October*, 1896.

I. LIFE

POEMS

I.

REAL RICHES

'T is little I could care for pearls
Who own the ample sea;
Or brooches, when the Emperor
With rubies pelteth me;

Or gold, who am the Prince of Mines;
Or diamonds, when I see
A diadem to fit a dome
Continual crowning me.

II. SUPERIORITY TO FATE

Superiority to fate
Is difficult to learn.
'T is not conferred by any,
But possible to earn

A pittance at a time,
Until, to her surprise,
The soul with strict economy
Subsists till Paradise.

III.

HOPE

Hope is a subtle glutton;
He feeds upon the fair;
And yet, inspected closely,
What abstinence is there!

His is the halcyon table
That never seats but one,
And whatsoever is consumed
The same amounts remain.

IV. FORBIDDEN FRUIT

I

Forbidden fruit a flavor has
That lawful orchards mocks;
How luscious lies the pea within
The pod that Duty locks!

V.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

II

Heaven is what I cannot reach!

 The apple on the tree,
Provided it do hopeless hang,
 That 'heaven' is, to me.

The color on the cruising cloud,
 The interdicted ground
Behind the hill, the house behind, —
 There Paradise is found!

VI. A WORD

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

VII

To venerate the simple days
Which lead the seasons by,
Needs but to remember
That from you or me
They may take the trifle
Termed mortality!

To invest existence with a stately air,
Needs but to remember
That the acorn there
Is the egg of forests
For the upper air!

VIII.

LIFE'S TRADES

It's such a little thing to weep,
So short a thing to sigh;
And yet by trades the size of these
We men and women die!

IX

Drowning is not so pitiful
As the attempt to rise.
Three times, 't is said, a sinking man
Comes up to face the skies,
And then declines forever
To that abhorred abode
Where hope and he part company, —
For he is grasped of God.
The Maker's cordial visage,
However good to see,
Is shunned, we must admit it,
Like an adversity.

X

How still the bells in steeples stand,
Till, swollen with the sky,
They leap upon their silver feet
In frantic melody!

XI

If the foolish call them 'flowers,'
 Need the wiser tell?
If the savans 'classify' them,
 It is just as well!

Those who read the Revelations
 Must not criticise
Those who read the same edition
 With beclouded eyes!

Could we stand with that old Moses
 Canaan denied, —
Scan, like him, the stately landscape
 On the other side, —

Doubtless we should deem superfluous
 Many sciences
Not pursued by learnèd angels
 In scholastic skies!

Low amid that glad *Belles lettres*
 Grant that we may stand,
Stars, amid profound Galaxies,
 At that grand 'Right hand'!

XII.

A SYLLABLE

Could mortal lip divine
The undeveloped freight
Of a delivered syllable,
'T would crumble with the weight.

XIII.

PARTING

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.

XIV.

ASPIRATION

We never know how high we are
Till we are called to rise;
And then, if we are true to plan,
Our statures touch the skies.

The heroism we recite
Would be a daily thing,
Did not ourselves the cubits warp
For fear to be a king.

XV. THE INEVITABLE

While I was fearing it, it came,
But came with less of fear,
Because that fearing it so long
Had almost made it dear.
There is a fitting a dismay,
A fitting a despair.
'Tis harder knowing it is due,
Than knowing it is here.
The trying on the utmost,
The morning it is new,
Is terribler than wearing it
A whole existence through.

XVI.

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!

XVII

Who has not found the heaven below
Will fail of it above.
God's residence is next to mine,
His furniture is love.

XVIII.

A PORTRAIT

A face devoid of love or grace,
A hateful, hard, successful face,
A face with which a stone
Would feel as thoroughly at ease
As were they old acquaintances, —
First time together thrown.

XIX.

I HAD A GUINEA GOLDEN

I had a guinea golden;
I lost it in the sand,
And though the sum was simple,
And pounds were in the land,
Still had it such a value
Unto my frugal eye,
That when I could not find it
I sat me down to sigh.

I had a crimson robin
Who sang full many a day,
But when the woods were painted
He, too, did fly away.
Time brought me other robins, —
Their ballads were the same, —
Still for my missing troubadour
I kept the 'house at hame.'

I had a star in heaven;
One Pleiad was its name,
And when I was not heeding
It wandered from the same.
And though the skies are crowded,

And all the night ashine,
I do not care about it,
Since none of them are mine.

My story has a moral:
I have a missing friend, —
Pleiad its name, and robin,
And guinea in the sand, —
And when this mournful ditty,
Accompanied with tear,
Shall meet the eye of traitor
In country far from here,
Grant that repentance solemn
May seize upon his mind,
And he no consolation
Beneath the sun may find.

NOTE. — This poem may have had, like many others, a personal origin. It is more than probable that it was sent to some friend travelling in Europe, a dainty reminder of letter-writing delinquencies.

XX.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

From all the jails the boys and girls
Ecstatically leap, —
Beloved, only afternoon
That prison doesn't keep.

They storm the earth and stun the air,
A mob of solid bliss.
Alas! that frowns could lie in wait
For such a foe as this!

XXI

Few get enough, – enough is one;
To that ethereal throng
Have not each one of us the right
To stealthily belong?

XXII

Upon the gallows hung a wretch,
Too sullied for the hell
To which the law entitled him.
As nature's curtain fell
The one who bore him tottered in,
For this was woman's son.
"T was all I had,' she stricken gasped;
Oh, what a livid boon!

XXIII.

THE LOST THOUGHT

I felt a clearing in my mind
As if my brain had split;
I tried to match it, seam by seam,
But could not make them fit.

The thought behind I strove to join
Unto the thought before,
But sequence unravelled out of reach
Like balls upon a floor.

XXIV. RETICENCE

The reticent volcano keeps
His never slumbering plan;
Confided are his projects pink
To no precarious man.

If nature will not tell the tale
Jehovah told to her,
Can human nature not survive
Without a listener?

Admonished by her buckled lips
Let every babbler be.
The only secret people keep
Is Immortality.

XXV.
WITH FLOWERS

If recollecting were forgetting,
 Then I remember not;
And if forgetting, recollecting,
 How near I had forgot!
And if to miss were merry,
 And if to mourn were gay,
How very blithe the fingers
 That gathered these to-day!

XXVI

The farthest thunder that I heard
Was nearer than the sky,
And rumbles still, though torrid noons
Have lain their missiles by.
The lightning that preceded it
Struck no one but myself,
But I would not exchange the bolt
For all the rest of life.
Indebtedness to oxygen
The chemist may repay,
But not the obligation
To electricity.
It founds the homes and decks the days,
And every clamor bright
Is but the gleam concomitant
Of that waylaying light.
The thought is quiet as a flake, —
A crash without a sound;
How life's reverberation
Its explanation found!

XXVII

On the bleakness of my lot
 Bloom I strove to raise.
Late, my acre of a rock
 Yielded grape and maize.

Soil of flint if steadfast tilled
 Will reward the hand;
Seed of palm by Lybian sun
 Fructified in sand.

XXVIII. CONTRAST

A door just opened on a street —
I, lost, was passing by —
An instant's width of warmth disclosed,
And wealth, and company.

The door as sudden shut, and I,
I, lost, was passing by, —
Lost doubly, but by contrast most,
Enlightening misery.

XXIX. FRIENDS

Are friends delight or pain?
 Could bounty but remain
Riches were good.

But if they only stay
Bolder to fly away,
 Riches are sad.

XXX.

FIRE

Ashes denote that fire was;
Respect the grayest pile
For the departed creature's sake
That hovered there awhile.

Fire exists the first in light,
And then consolidates, —
Only the chemist can disclose
Into what carbonates.

XXXI.
A MAN

Fate slew him, but he did not drop;
She felled – he did not fall —
Impaled him on her fiercest stakes —
He neutralized them all.

She stung him, sapped his firm advance,
But, when her worst was done,
And he, unmoved, regarded her,
Acknowledged him a man.

XXXII.
VENTURES

Finite to fail, but infinite to venture.

For the one ship that struts the shore
Many's the gallant, overwhelmed creature
Nodding in navies nevermore.

XXXIII. GRIEFS

I measure every grief I meet
With analytic eyes;
I wonder if it weighs like mine,
Or has an easier size.

I wonder if they bore it long,
Or did it just begin?
I could not tell the date of mine,
It feels so old a pain.

I wonder if it hurts to live,
And if they have to try,
And whether, could they choose between,
They would not rather die.

I wonder if when years have piled —
Some thousands — on the cause
Of early hurt, if such a lapse
Could give them any pause;

Or would they go on aching still
Through centuries above,
Enlightened to a larger pain

By contrast with the love.

The grieved are many, I am told;
The reason deeper lies, —
Death is but one and comes but once,
And only nails the eyes.

There's grief of want, and grief of cold, —
A sort they call 'despair;'
There's banishment from native eyes,
In sight of native air.

And though I may not guess the kind
Correctly, yet to me
A piercing comfort it affords
In passing Calvary,

To note the fashions of the cross,
Of those that stand alone,
Still fascinated to presume
That some are like my own.

XXXIV

I have a king who does not speak;
So, wondering, thro' the hours meek
 I trudge the day away,—
Half glad when it is night and sleep,
If, haply, thro' a dream to peep
 In parlors shut by day.

And if I do, when morning comes,
It is as if a hundred drums
 Did round my pillow roll,
And shouts fill all my childish sky,
And bells keep saying 'victory'
 From steeples in my soul!

And if I don't, the little Bird
Within the Orchard is not heard,
 And I omit to pray,
'Father, thy will be done' to-day,
For my will goes the other way,
 And it were perjury!

XXXV.
DISENCHANTMENT

It dropped so low in my regard
I heard it hit the ground,
And go to pieces on the stones
At bottom of my mind;

Yet blamed the fate that fractured, less
Than I reviled myself
For entertaining plated wares
Upon my silver shelf.

XXXVI. LOST FAITH

To lose one's faith surpasses
The loss of an estate,
Because estates can be
Replenished, – faith cannot.

Inherited with life,
Belief but once can be;
Annihilate a single clause,
And Being's beggary.

XXXVII.

LOST JOY

I had a daily bliss
I half indifferent viewed,
Till sudden I perceived it stir, —
It grew as I pursued,

Till when, around a crag,
It wasted from my sight,
Enlarged beyond my utmost scope,
I learned its sweetness right.

XXXVIII

I worked for chaff, and earning wheat
Was haughty and betrayed.
What right had fields to arbitrate
In matters ratified?

I tasted wheat, – and hated chaff,
And thanked the ample friend;
Wisdom is more becoming viewed
At distance than at hand.

XXXIX

Life, and Death, and Giants

Such as these, are still.

Minor apparatus, hopper of the mill,

Beetle at the candle,

Or a fife's small fame,

Maintain by accident

That they proclaim.

XL.

ALPINE GLOW

Our lives are Swiss, —
So still, so cool,
Till, some odd afternoon,
The Alps neglect their curtains,
And we look farther on.

Italy stands the other side,
While, like a guard between,
The solemn Alps,
The siren Alps,
Forever intervene!

XLI.

REMEMBRANCE

Remembrance has a rear and front, —

'T is something like a house;

It has a garret also

For refuse and the mouse,

Besides, the deepest cellar

That ever mason hewed;

Look to it, by its fathoms

Ourselves be not pursued.

XLII

To hang our head ostensibly,
And subsequent to find
That such was not the posture
Of our immortal mind,

Affords the sly presumption
That, in so dense a fuzz,
You, too, take cobweb attitudes
Upon a plane of gauze!

XLIII.

THE BRAIN

The brain is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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