

Emily Dickenson
Poems

Emily Dickenson (1830-1886) was an American poet whose work continuously gained in stature throughout the twentieth century. Her first collection of poetry was not published until 1890. She is now considered a classic American poet.

“I like to see it lap the Miles”

I like to see it lap the Miles—
And lick the Valleys up—
And stop to feed itself at Tanks—
And then, prodigious, step

Around a Pile of Mountains— 5
And, supercilious, peer
In Shanties—by the sides of Roads—
And then a Quarry pare

To fit its Ribs
And crawl between 10
Complaining all the while
In horrid—hooting stanza—
Then chase itself down Hill—

And neigh like Boanerges—
Then—punctual as a Star 15
Stop—docile and omnipotent
At its own stable door.

There's a certain Slant of light

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons –
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us – 5
We can find no scar,
But internal difference –
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the seal Despair – 10
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
 Shadows – hold their breath –
 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance 15
 On the look of Death –

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 5
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove 10
 At Recess – in the Ring –
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
 We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –
 The Dews drew quivering and Chill –
 For only Gossamer, my Gown – 15
 My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed
 A Swelling of the Ground –
 The Roof was scarcely visible –
 The Cornice – in the Ground – 20

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
 Feels shorter than the Day
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads
 Were toward Eternity –

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 advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody! 5
 How public – like a Frog –
 To tell one's name – the livelong June –
 To an admiring Bog

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 every man be blind —

Much Madness is divinest Sense

Much Madness is divinest Sense -
 To a discerning Eye -
 Much Sense - the starkest Madness -
 'Tis the Majority
 In this, as all, prevail -
 Assent - and you are sane -
 Demur - you're straightway dangerous -
 And handled with a Chain -

The soul selects her own society

The soul selects her own society,
 Then shuts the door;
 On her divine majority
 Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
 At her low gate;
 Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
 Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
 Choose one;
 Then close the valves of her attention
 Like stone.