

---

# CONTENTS

<i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Chronology</i>	xii
<b>Introduction</b>	1
CHAPTER ONE	
<b>Dickinson and Knowledge</b>	9
CHAPTER TWO	
<b>Dickinson and Difference</b>	30
CHAPTER THREE	
<b>The House of the Father</b>	48
CHAPTER FOUR	
<b>The Spoken and the Written</b>	63
CHAPTER FIVE	
<b>A Woman Writing Herself</b>	92
CHAPTER SIX	
<b>The House Without the Door</b>	112
CHAPTER SEVEN	
<b>An Uncanny Container</b>	133
CHAPTER EIGHT	
<b>The Sister</b>	145
CHAPTER NINE	
<b>What Emily Knew</b>	169
<i>Notes</i>	183

---

# INDEX

- 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagist', 18–19  
Abolitionism, 77, 80, 83–4  
*Adam Bede*, 148  
'Agatha', 72–4  
Aiken, Conrad, 35  
Alcott, Bronson, 77–8  
'American Scholar, The', 82, 99  
Amherst Academy, 39, 76  
Amherst College, 52, 53, 55, 71  
'Antithetical Meaning of Primary Words, The', 109–10  
Arnold, Matthew, 46  
'As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life', 170, 171  
'Atlantis', 169  
'Auguries of Innocence', 168  
*Aurora Leigh*, 151, 153–4  
*Awakening, The*, 42 164
- 'Battle Hymn of the Republic, The', 79, 81  
Baudelaire, Charles, 155, 174  
Baym, Nina, 155  
Beauvoir, Simone de, 40–41  
Berryman, John, 12, 40  
Bible, 20, 25, 27, 67, 94, 106–7, 108, 132, 169  
Bingham, Millicent Todd, 75  
Binswanger, Ludwig, 174  
Bishop, Elizabeth, 20, 141, 167–8  
Blake, William, 26, 34, 59, 68, 95, 126, 163, 166, 168, 169  
*Blindness and Insight*, 174  
Bloom, Harold, 183, 191  
Bogan, Louise, 162  
Bonnivard, Francois de, 125  
Book of Common Prayer, 163
- Bowles, Samuel, 24, 46, 51, 60, 61–2, 87, 115, 125, 180  
Bradstreet, Anne, 149, 166  
Bronson, Orestes, 6  
Brontë, Emily, 193  
Brontë sisters, 102, 150  
Brookner, Anita, 46  
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 49, 59, 74, 96, 102, 107, 148, 150, 151–4, 155, 157–8, 160–2, 175  
Bryant, William Cullen, 146–7  
Bullard, O. A., 56  
Bunyan, John, 166  
Burney, Fanny, 149  
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 125  
'Byzantium', 178
- Casa Guidi Windows*, 152  
Celan, Paul, 35  
Chopin, Kate, 42, 164  
Civil War, U.S., 24, 52, 53, 78–9  
*Civilisation and its Discontents*, 180  
Clare, John, 166  
'Clod and the Pebble, The', 166  
Cole, Thomas, 121  
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 170  
*Collected Letters*, 1, 28, 29, 33–4, 35, 45–6, 48–9, 54, 61–2, 63, 64–5, 66–7, 68, 78, 92, 94, 99–100, 104, 105, 115, 124, 125, 133, 146, 147, 148, 153, 167, 169, 185  
*Collected Poems*, 1, 3  
'confessional' poets, 12  
*Confidence Man, The*, 100  
Congregationalist Church, 58  
Crane, Hart, 169, 170  
*Cry of the Children, The*, 152

- 'Daddy', 143  
 Darwin, Charles, 76  
 'Death & Co.', 130  
 'Death and the Maiden', 129  
 'Death of the Flowers, The', 147  
 Derrida, Jacques, 6, 16-17, 89-91, 109, 111, 188-9, 190  
 Descartes, René, 6  
 Dickens, Charles, 72  
 Dickinson, Austin (E.D.'s brother), 34, 55, 57, 58, 67-8, 70, 75, 99-100, 150-1  
 Dickinson, Edward (E.D.'s father), 49-59, 71, 77, 121  
 Dickinson, Emily:  
   and her mother, 48-9; and her father, 49-50, 53-4, 57-8, *passim* Chapter 3; and her sister, 34, 145-6; her education, 39, 50; failing eyesight, 69, 83; reading, 192, 193; reclusiveness, 69, 70-5, 78; the 'myth', 69-76; death, 5, 34; biographical readings of poems, 23-5; question of religious faith, 13, 50-1, 58, 60, 64-5, 86-7, 107-8; faith in Christ, 60-1, 66, 132; faith in God the Father, 59-60, 61, 65, 67, 89, 106, 132, 135; response to 'the Master', 44-6, 61-2, 94; attitude to the Bible, 106, 107, 168; relation to Puritanism, 9, 20-1, 50-1, 58, 133; preoccupation with loss, 19, 21-2; preoccupation with death, 127-33; view of Emerson, 99-100; view of 'the poet', 100-4; response to women writers, 147-54, 161-2; sense of literary vocation, 64-9, 104; attitude to publication, 33-8, 64-70  
   *the poetry*: use of 'I', 11, 13, 15, 173, 176-8; use of common metre, 2, 11; form of poems, 2; narrative structure, 11, 20-1; revisions, 4-5, 114, 118, 123-4, 191; punctuation and syntax, 2, 11, 64; typographical idiosyncracies, 106-7  
   *imagery*: 7, 14, 15, 16, 27-8, 35-6; of birds, 96-8, 126, 164-5; of circumference, 29, 124; of common objects, 16, 101, 121, 166-8; of death, 127-32, 142; of dreams, 65-6, 67; of gems, 25-7, 28-9, 67, 87, 158; of houses, 7, 112-13, 119, 122-3, 127-8, 142; of prison, 125-7; of needlework, 65-6, 158-60; use of the 'uncanny', 138-44  
 Dickinson, Emily Norcross (E.D.'s mother), 48-9, 60, 71  
 Dickinson, Gilbert (E.D.'s nephew), 57, 60  
 Dickinson, Lavinia (E.D.'s sister), 34, 55, 58, 69-70, 146  
 Dickinson, Susan (E.D.'s sister-in-law), 24, 34, 54, 55, 57-8, 75, 83, 85, 87, 99-100, 124, 145, 147, 150  
 Doolittle, Hilda ('H.D.'), 40, 46, 119, 162  
 Domeniarino, 122  
 dualism, 6, 170  
 Eliot, George (Mary Ann Evans), 59, 72-4, 148, 149, 150, 173, 175  
 Eliot, Thomas Stearns, 17, 32-3, 109, 155  
 Emancipation Proclamation, 53  
 Emerson, Ellen Tucker, 55  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 6, 26, 32, 50, 55, 63, 77, 82-3, 85, 99-100, 101, 118, 134-6, 138, 155, 156, 170  
*Essays and Lectures*, 134  
 Evergreens, The, 57, 69, 99  
 'Fall of the House of Usher, The', 141  
*Female Poets of America*, 156, 166  
 Finch, Anne, Countess Winchelsea, 149  
 Flaubert, Gustave, 174  
 'For the Union Dead', 143  
 Freud, Sigmund, 6, 19-20, 90, 109, 111, 121, 139-41, 156, 180, 190, 192



- 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', 90,  
111  
Fugitive Slave Law, 52  
Fuller, Margaret, 6, 49, 77-80, 81,  
84  
Garrison, William Lloyd, 84  
Gettysburg Address, 79-80  
Gilbert, Sandra, 72, 149  
Ginsberg, Allen, 84, 169  
*Good Morning, Midnight*, 46  
*Grace Abounding*, 166  
*Great Expectations*, 72  
Griswold, Rufus, 156, 166  
Gubar, Susan, 72, 149  
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 20, 51  
Heine, Heinrich, 155  
Hemans, Felicia, 163-4  
Herbert, George, 86, 166, 167-8  
Herschel, William, 37  
Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 29,  
33-5, 48, 69, 70, 84, 104-5, 117  
124, 134, 148, 167, 180  
Hitchcock, Edward, 39  
Hoffman, E. T. A., 139  
Holland, Mrs J. G., 147  
Homestead, the, 53-8, 71, 111-12,  
116, 128  
'House for the Rainy Season', 141  
'House of Death, The', 123-4  
*House of the Seven Gables, The*, 51  
'How Sweet I Roamed from Field to  
Field', 126, 163  
Howe, Julia Ward, 79, 81  
Humphreys, Jane, 64-5  
'Huswifery', 117  
Ibsen, Hendrik, 174  
*Imitation of Christ, The*, 20  
'Incident, An', 164  
'Instincts and their Vicissitudes,  
The', 121  
Irving, Washington, 82  
Jackson, Andrew, 52  
Jackson, Helen Hunt, 33, 81, 83  
Jason, 19, 137  
Johnson, Thomas H., 35  
Joyce, James, 174  
Jung, C. G., 113  
Keats, John, 160, 161-2, 163  
'Kindness', 96  
Lacan, Jacques, 58  
*Leaves of Grass*, 2, 101  
Lewes, G. H., 73, 193  
Leyda, Jay, 35  
Lincoln, Abraham, 53, 78, 79-80  
'Literary Ethics', 82, 85  
Lord, Audre, 41  
Lord, Otis P., 49, 54, 60  
'Löve Unknown', 167-8  
Lowell, Robert, 12, 143  
Lyman, Joseph, 28, 70-1  
*Lyrical Ballads*, 77  
*Madwoman in the Attic, The*, 72  
Man, Paul de, 174, 178, 180  
Mann, Thomas, 174  
'Mariana', 116  
Martin, John, 58  
Marx, Karl, 86  
Marvel, Ik, 82  
McCarthy, Desmond, 40  
Medea, 136-7  
Melville, Herman, 36, 77, 100  
Merriam, George S., 51-2  
Metaphysical poets, 10, 17, 33  
'Method of Nature, The', 134  
Mexican War, 121  
Millay, Edna St. Vincent, 162-3  
Miller, Joaquin, 148  
Millett, Kate, 46  
Missouri Compromise, 52  
Moers, Ellen, 148, 150, 153  
Moi, Toril, 184  
'Monument, The', 141  
Moore, Marianne, 162  
Moulton, Louise Chandler, 123-4,  
166  
Mount Holyoke Female Seminary,  
39, 78  
Mystic Writing Pad, 110-11  
Napoleon, 124  
New Criticism, 22  
Newton, Benjamin, 23

- Nicolson, Ben, 40  
*Nightingale's Burden, The*, 163  
 Niles, Thomas, 117  
 'Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction', 172-3
- 'O Captain! My Captain!', 79  
 Oakes-Smith, Elizabeth, 164  
 'Ode to a Grecian Urn', 161-2  
 'Ode to a Nightingale', 163  
*Of Grammatology*, 89  
 'Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances', 170  
*Of Woman Born*, 45  
 Olsen, Tillie, 42  
 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer', 160  
 'Oread', 119  
*Origin of Species, The*, 76  
 Orpheus, 134  
 Orphic tradition, 6, 134-5, 155, 169-70, 171-2, 178  
 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking', 165
- Park, Rev. Edward Amasa, 78  
 'Philosophy of Composition, The', 129-30  
 'Planetarium', 12  
 Plante, David, 47  
 Plath, Sylvia, 12, 35, 46, 49, 96-7, 130, 143  
 Poe, Edgar Allan, 129-30, 141  
 'Poet, The', 85, 118  
 Porter, Ebenezer, 76  
 Pound, Ezra, 18-19, 109, 173  
 Praz, Mario, 17  
 'Prisoner of Chillon, The', 125  
 Proust, Marcel, 174  
 Puritan poetry, 117, 149, 165-6  
 Puritan tradition, 9, 20-1, 50-2, 58, 117-18  
 Puttenham, George, 136-7
- Quintillian, 66
- Ramona*, 81  
 'Raven, The', 130  
 Reni, Guido, 122
- Reveries of a Bachelor*, 82  
 rhetoric, public, 75-83, 86-7  
 'Rhodora, The', 118-19  
 Rhys, Jean, 46  
 Rich, Adrienne, 12, 45  
 Ricoeur, Paul, 184  
 Roethke, Theodore, 35  
 Romanticism, 33, 50, 68, 76-7, 129, 134, 155, 170, 174, 175  
 Root, Abiah, 66-7  
 Rossetti, Christina, 154, 155, 175
- Sand, George (Armandine Aurore Dupin), 152-3, 175, 193  
 'Sand-Man, The', 139  
 'Sandpiper', 167-8  
 Sappho, 149  
*Scarlet Letter, The*, 51  
 Schubert, Franz, 129  
 Scott, Kate, 23  
*Seasons, The*, 147  
*Second Sex, The*, 40-1  
 Sewall, Richard B., 35, 49-50, 65, 70  
 Shakespeare, William, 16, 20, 25, 27-8, 81, 107, 146, 147  
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 163, 169  
*Silences*, 42  
*Sister Outsider*, 41  
 Smart, Christopher, 169  
 Smart, Elizabeth, 46  
 'Snow-Storm, The', 118  
 'Song of the Answer, The', 170  
*Sonnets to the Portuguese*, 158, 160-1  
 'Soul's Expression, The', 154  
 Spenser, Edmund, 134  
 Spofford, Harriet Prescott, 148  
*Springfield Republican, The*, 51  
 Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 49  
 Stearns, Frazer, 53  
 Stedman, Edward Clarence, 79, 156-7  
 Stevens, Wallace, 18, 138, 172-3  
 Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 53, 81  
 'Sublimation of the Self, The', 174, 180  
 Swift, Jonathan, 98
- Tate, Allen, 35, 185-6

- Taylor, Edward, 7, 117, 166  
 Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 116  
 Thomas à Kempis, 20  
 Thomson, James, 146-7  
 Thoreau, Henry David, 6, 82, 121  
*Three Guineas*, 39  
 Titian, 122  
 'To George Sand: A Desire', 152  
 'To George Sand: A Recognition', 152  
 'To a Skylark', 163  
 Todd, Mabel Loomis, 34, 56, 57, 70, 71, 74-5, 187  
 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 155  
 Transcendentalism, 6, 77-8  
 Truth, Sojourner, 83  
 Tuckerman, Frederick Goddard, 161  
*Twice-told Tales*, 20  
 'Ulalume', 130  
 ' "Uncanny", The', 139  
*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 53, 81  
 Unitarian Church, 58, 186-7  
 Vendler, Helen, 138  
 'Vision of Poets, A', 61-2  
 Wadsworth, Rev. Charles, 23, 60, 62, 75  
 Wagner, Richard, 174  
 Walker, Cheryl, 163  
 Ward, Theodora, 35  
 Webster, Daniel, 52, 77, 186  
 'Weed, A', 166  
 Whig Party (U.S.), 52, 77, 186  
 Whitman, Walt, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 17, 32, 36, 79, 101, 133, 165, 166, 169, 170, 171, 174, 178  
 'Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand', 170  
 Williams, William Carlos, 29  
 Wollstonecraft, Mary, 149  
 Wolosky, Shira, 53  
 'Woman and a Poet, A', 151  
*Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 81  
*Women's Fiction*, 155  
 Woolf, Virginia, 39, 40, 49  
 Wordsworth, William, 22, 76, 126, 147, 178  
*Writing and Difference*, 89  
 Wylie, Elinor, 162-3  
 Yale University, 49  
 Yeats, William Butler, 173  
 Zoroaster, 134



---

# FIRST LINES OF POEMS CITED IN TEXT

A Coffin — is a small Domain, 29  
A little bread — a crust — a crumb —,  
193

A loss of something ever felt I, 12,  
21–2

A Man may make a Remark, 84

A Plated Life — diversified, 44

A Precious — mouldering — pleasure  
— 'tis —, 98–9

A Prison gets to be a friend —, 125

A Word made Flesh is seldom, 61

After great pain, a formal feeling  
comes —, 180

Ah, Teneriffe!, 28

All Circumstances are the Frame, 60  
And with what body do they come?,  
107

At Half past Three, a single Bird, 33

Because I could not stop for Death —,  
129, 131

Before I got my eye put out, 104–5

Behind Me — dips Eternity —, 58

Besides the Autumn poets sing, 146

Better — than Music. For I — who  
heard it —, 106

By my Window have I for Scenery,  
119–20, 137

Circumference thou Bride of Awe, 29

Civilization — spurns — the Leopard!,  
42, 171

Come slowly — Eden!, 59

Crisis is a Hair, 135

Death is a Dialogue between, 88

Declaiming Waters none may  
dread —, 94

Delight — becomes pictorial —,  
120–1

Don't put up my Thread and  
Needle —, 158–60

Doom is the House without the  
Door —, 113

Dropped into the Ether Acre —, 135

“Faith” is a fine invention, 107

Finding is the first Act, 19–20

For every Bird a Nest, 164–5

God is a distant — stately Lover —, 61

Going to Him! Happy letter!, 24, 92

Going — to — Her!, 24

He ate and drank the precious  
Words —, 98

He preached upon “Breadth” till it  
argued him narrow —, 86

“Heaven” — is what I cannot reach!,  
59, 107, 172

“Heaven” has different Signs — to  
me —, 107

“Heavenly Father” — take to thee,  
107, 108

Her Losses make our Gains  
ashamed —, 150

Her Sweet turn to leave the  
Homestead, 129

“Hope” is the thing with feathers, 108

“Houses” — so the Wise Men tell  
me —, 107, 112

I cannot dance upon my Toes, 105

- I could die – to know –, 116  
 I died for Beauty – but was scarce,  
     88, 102, 161–2  
 I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, 10, 154,  
     180  
 I felt my life with both my hands –,  
     10, 154  
 I know some lonely Houses off the  
     Road, 116  
 I know that He exists, 13  
 I like a look of Agony, 95  
 I like to see it lap the Miles,  
     101–2  
 I never lost as much but twice, 59  
 I reckon – when I count at all –,  
     171  
 I saw no Way – The Heavens were  
     stitched –, 59  
 I shall know why – when Time is  
     over –, 61, 173  
 I think to Live – may be a Bliss, 12,  
     17–18  
 I think I was enchanted, 74, 151  
 “I want” – it pleaded – All its  
     life –, 179  
 I was the slightest in the House –, 94  
 I went to Heaven –, 60  
 I would not paint – a picture –,  
     102  
 If What we could – were what we  
     would, 84  
 I’m ceded – I’ve stopped being  
     Theirs –, 29  
 I’m Nobody! Who are you?, 42  
 In Winter in my Room, 113  
 It was given to me by the Gods, 68  
 It was not Death, for I stood up, 4,  
     173  
 I’ve known a Heaven, like a Tent –,  
     59  
 I’ve seen a Dying Eye, 60  
  
 Jesus! thy Crucifix, 61  
  
 Let Us play Yesterday –, 97  
 Life, and Death, and Giants –, 9  
  
 Mine – by the Right of the White  
     Election –, 103, 135  
  
 More than the Grave is closed to  
     me –, 11  
 “Morning” means “Milking” – to  
     the Farmer –, 107  
 Much Madness is divinest Sense, 16  
 My life closed twice before its  
     close –, 23  
 My Life had stood – a Loaded  
     Gun –, 104, 175–8  
  
 Nature and God – I neither knew, 37  
 No Rack can torture me –, 30  
  
 Of Course – I prayed –, 59  
 Of God we ask one favor, 60, 171  
 Of nearness to her sundered Things,  
     142  
 One Life of so much Consequence!,  
     28  
 One need not be a Chamber – to be  
     Haunted –, 142  
 One Sister have I in our house, 57,  
     147  
 Over the fence –, 30  
  
 Pain – has an Element of Blank,  
     9–10  
 Perhaps I asked too large, 15–16  
 Poets light but Lamps, 100  
 Publication – is the Auction, 38, 56,  
     68, 111  
  
 “Red Sea”, indeed! Talk not to me,  
     107  
  
 Safe in their Alabaster Chambers, 51,  
     122–5, 135, 167  
 Shall I take thee, the Poet said, 94  
 Shame is the shawl of Pink, 62  
 She dealt her pretty words like  
     Blades –, 85  
 Some keep the Sabbath going to  
     Church –, 33, 78  
 Some we see no more, Tenements of  
     Wonder, 92  
 Speech is one symptom of Affection,  
     93–4  
 Split the Lark – and you’ll find the  
     Music, 1, 96, 104–5, 135, 164



Strong Draughts of Their Refreshing  
Minds, 98  
Success is counted sweetest, 33  
Sweet – Safe – Houses –, 131

Tell all the Truth but tell it Slant –,  
11, 92  
The Bible is an antique Volume –,  
20, 106  
The Bird her punctual music brings,  
165  
The Birds begun at Four o'clock –,  
165  
The Fact that Earth is Heaven, 11  
The grave my little cottage is, 131  
The Hearts asks Pleasure – first –,  
172  
The leaves like Women interchange,  
171  
The Martyr Poets – did not tell –,  
100, 161  
The Moon was but a Chin of Gold,  
11  
The overtakelessness of those, 95  
The Robin's my Criterion for  
Tune –, 2  
The Soul has Bandaged moments –,  
10  
The Tint I cannot take – is best –,  
11  
The Trees like Tassels – hit – and  
swung –, 122  
The Wind begun to knead the Grass,  
117–18  
There is a pain – so utter –, 179  
There is a Shame of Nobleness, 62  
There is no Frigate like a Book, 98  
There's a certain Slant of Light, 30  
There's been a Death, in the  
Opposite House, 127

They shut me up in Prose, 125–6,  
164, 177  
They talk as slow as Legends grow,  
63, 85–6  
This is my letter to the World, 37,  
105  
This was a Poet – It is That, 101–2  
This World is not Conclusion, 86,  
137  
Those – dying then, 59  
Title divine – is mine!, 24, 55, 87  
To fill a Gap, 169, 179–80  
To hear an Oriole sing, 165  
To her derided Home, 9, 131–2  
To the bright east she flies, 49

Unto my Books – so good to turn –,  
172

Volcanoes be in Sicily, 28

We don't cry – Tim and I, 193  
We play at Paste –, 25–7, 136  
Wert Thou but ill – that I might  
show thee, 131  
What is "Paradise" –, 107  
What Soft – Cherubic Creatures –,  
85  
Who is it seeks my Pillow Nights –,  
60  
Why – do they shut Me out of  
Heaven?, 43  
Why make it doubt – it hurts it so,  
44–5  
Wild Nights – Wild Nights!, 15  
Witchcraft has not a Pedigree, 74  
Witchcraft was hung, in History, 74

Your Riches – taught me – Poverty,  
27, 102  
You're right – "the way is narrow",  
107