

EMILY DICKINSON'S SELECTED POEMS

Life

VII

WITHIN my reach!
I could have touched!
I might have chanced that way!
Soft sauntered through the village,
Sauntered as soft away! 5
So unsuspected violets
Within the fields lie low,
Too late for striving fingers
That passed, an hour ago.

XI

MUCH madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'T is the majority
In this, as all, prevails. 5
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur,—you 're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

CXXVIII

THE PAST is such a curious creature,
To look her in the face
A transport may reward us,
Or a disgrace.

Unarmed if any meet her, 5
I charge him, fly!
Her rusty ammunition
Might yet reply!

CXXIV

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 5
That ever mason hewed;
Look to it, by its fathoms
Ourselves be not pursued.

LXXXVI

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

His is the halcyon table 5
That never seats but one,
And whatsoever is consumed
The same amounts remain.

XXXVI

I NEVER hear the word “escape”
Without a quicker blood,
A sudden expectation,
A flying attitude.

I never hear of prisons broad 5
By soldiers battered down,
But I tug childish at my bars,—
Only to fail again!

LXXXIX

A WORD is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live 5
That day.

XCVI

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, 5
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Nature

XXXI

NATURE rarer uses yellow
Than another hue;
Saves she all of that for sunsets,—
Prodigal of blue,

Spending scarlet like a woman, 5
Yellow she affords
Only scanty and selectly,
Like a lover's words.

XCIII

A SEPAL, petal, and a thorn
Upon a common summer's morn,
A flash of dew, a bee or two,
A breeze
A caper in the trees,— 5
And I'm a rose!

XCVII

TO make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,—
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.

Time and Eternity

CIII

IMMORTAL is an ample word
When what we need is by,
But when it leaves us for a time,
'T is a necessity.

Of heaven above the firmest proof 5
We fundamental know,
Except for its marauding hand,
It had been heaven below.

XVII

I NEVER saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.
I never spoke with God, 5
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.