

Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson

LIT 214

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I felt a Funeral, in my Brain (280)

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 –

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down –
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing – then –

Because I could not stop for Death (712)

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 labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
 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 –
 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 –

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

There is no frigate like a book (1263)

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.

"Faith" is a fine invention (185)

"Faith" is a fine invention
When Gentlemen can see—
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency.

A Man may make a Remark (952)

A Man may make a Remark—
In itself—a quiet thing
That may furnish the Fuse unto a Spark
In dormant nature—lain—

Let us deport—with skill—
Let us discourse—with care—
Powder exists in Charcoal—
Before it exists in Fire.

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.

WAR POETRY

They dropped like Flakes (409)

They dropped like Flakes --
They dropped like Stars --
Like Petals from a Rose --
When suddenly across the June
A wind with fingers -- goes --
They perished in the Seamless Grass --
No eye could find the place --
But God can summon every face
Of his Repealless -- List.

It seems a shame to be Alive (444)

It feels a shame to be Alive --
 When Men so brave -- are dead --
 One envies the Distinguished Dust --
 Permitted -- such a Head --

The Stone -- that tells defending Whom
 This Spartan put away
 What little of Him we -- possessed
 In Pawn for Liberty --

The price is great -- Sublimely paid --
 Do we deserve -- a Thing --
 That lives -- like Dollars -- must be piled
 Before we may obtain?

Are we that wait -- sufficient worth --
 That such Enormous Pearl
 As life -- dissolved be -- for Us --
 In Battle's -- horrid Bowl?

It may be -- a Renown to live --
 I think the Man who die --
 Those unsustained -- Saviors
 Present Divinity --