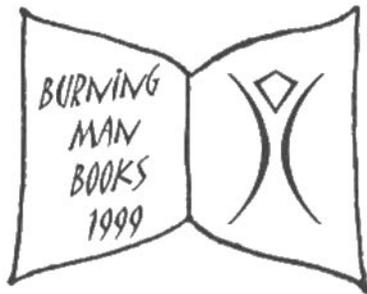


*BEAUTY CROWDS ME  
TILL I DIE:*



Selections from  
the Poems of  
Emily Dickinson

Edited by  
Ray Soulard, Jr. & Mio Cohen

*BEAUTY CROWDS ME  
TILL I DIE:*

Selections from  
the Poems of  
Emily Dickinson

Edited by  
Ray Soulard, Jr. & Mio Cohen



number three

*You may find your answer among the following pages.*

BEAUTY CROWDS ME TILL I DIE:  
Selections from the Poems of Emily Dickinson

Burning Man Books is a Special Projects Division imprint of  
Scriptor Press, 32 Newman Rd. #2, Malden, Massachusetts 02148  
[cenacle@theglobe.com](mailto:cenacle@theglobe.com)

These are the days when Birds come back —  
A very few — a Bird or two —  
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies resume  
The old — old sophistries of June —  
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh fraud that cannot cheat the Bee —  
Almost thy plausibility  
Induces my belief.

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear —  
And softly thro' the altered air  
Hurries a timid leaf.

Oh Sacrament of summer days,  
Oh Last Communion in the Haze —  
Permit a child to join.

Thy sacred emblems to partake —  
They consecrated bread to take  
And thine immortal wine!

“Hope” is the thing with feathers —  
 That perches in the soul —  
 And sings the tune without the words —  
 And never stops — at all —

And sweetest — in the Gale — is heard —  
 And sore must be the storm —  
 That could abash the little Bird  
 That kept so many warm —

I've heard it in the chilliest land —  
 And on the strangest Sea —  
 Yet, never, in Extremity,  
 It asked a crumb — of me.

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

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

None may teach it — Any —  
 'Tis the Seal Despair —  
 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  
 On the look of Death —

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 —

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church —  
 I keep it, staying at Home —  
 With a Bobolink for a Chorister —  
 And an Orchard, for a Dome —

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice —  
 I just wear my Wings —  
 And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,  
 Our little Sexton — sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman —  
 And the sermon is never long,  
 So instead of getting to Heaven, at least —  
 I'm going, all along.

Why make it doubt — it hurts it so —  
 So sick — to guess —  
 So strong — to know —  
 So brave — upon its little Bed  
 To tell the very last They said  
 Unto Itself — and smile — And shake —  
 For that dear — distant — dangerous — Sake —  
 But — the Instead — the Pinching fear  
 That Something — it did do — or dare —  
 Offend the Vision — and it flee —  
 And They no more remember me —  
 Nor ever turn to tell me why —  
 Oh, Master, This is Misery —

I heard a Fly buzz — when I died —  
 The Stillness in the Room  
 Was like the Stillness in the Air —  
 Between the Heaves of Storm —

The Eyes around — had wrung them dry —  
 And Breaths were gathering firm  
 For that last Onset — when the King  
 Be witnessed — in the Room —

I willed my Keepsakes — Signed away  
 What portion of me be  
 Assignable — and then it was  
 There interposed a Fly —

With Blue — uncertain stumbling Buzz —  
 Between the light — and me —  
 And then the Windows failed — and then  
 I could not see to see —

This World is not Conclusion.  
 A Species stands beyond —  
 Invisible, as Music —  
 But positive, as Sound —  
 It beckons, and it baffles —  
 Philosophy — don't know —  
 And through a Riddle, at the last —  
 Sagacity, must go —  
 To guess it, puzzles scholars —  
 To gain it, Men have borne  
 Contempt of Generations  
 And Crucifixion, shown —  
 Faith slips — and laughs, and rallies —  
 Blushes, if any see —  
 Plucks at a twig of Evidence —  
 And asks a Vane, the way —  
 Much Gesture, from the Pulpit —  
 Strong Hallelujahs roll —  
 Narcotics cannot still the Tooth  
 That nibbles at the soul —

We learned the Whole of Love —  
 The Alphabet — the Words —  
 A Chapter — then the mighty Book —  
 Then — Revelation closed —

But in Each Other's eyes  
 An Ignorance beheld —  
 Diviner than the Childhood's —  
 And each to each, a Child —

Attempted to expound  
 What Neither — understood —  
 Alas, that Wisdom is so large —  
 And Truth — so manifold!

Forever — is composed of Nows —  
 'Tis not a different time —  
 Except for Infiniteness —  
 And Latitude of Home —

From this — experienced Here —  
 Remove the Dates — to These —  
 Let Months dissolve in further Months —  
 And Years — exhale in Years —

Without Debate — or Pause —  
 Or Celebrated Days —  
 No different Our Years would be  
 From Anno Domini's —

The Brain — is wider than the Sky —  
 For — put them side by side —  
 The one the other will contain  
 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 — Heft them — Pound for Pound —  
 And they will differ — if they do —  
 As Syllable from Sound —

A Thought went up my mind today —  
 That I have had before —  
 But did not finish — some way back —  
 I could not fix the Year —

Nor where it went — nor why it came  
 The second time to me —  
 Nor definitely, what it was —  
 Have I the Art to say —

But somewhere in my Soul — I know —  
 I've met the Thing before —  
 It just reminded me — 'twas all —  
 And came my way no more —

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 —

Presentiment — is that long Shadow — on the Lawn —  
 Indicative that Suns go down —

The Notice to the startled Grass  
 That Darkness — is about to pass —

Ample make this Bed —  
 Make this Bed with Awe —  
 In it wait till Judgment break  
 Excellent and Fair.

Be its Mattress straight —  
 Be its Pillow round —  
 Let no Sunrise' yellow noise  
 Interrupt this Ground —

I stepped from Plank to Plank  
A slow and cautious way  
The Stars about my Head I felt  
About my Feet the Sea.

I knew not but the next  
Would be my final inch —  
This gave me that precarious Gait  
Some call Experience.

I felt a Cleaving 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 ravelled out of Sound  
Like Balls — upon a Floor.

1287

In this short Life  
That only lasts an hour  
How much — how little — is  
Within our power

1354

The Heart is the Capital of the Mind —  
The Mind is a single State —  
The Heart and the Mind together make  
A single Continent —

One — is the Population —  
Numerous enough —  
This ecstatic Nation  
Seek — it is Yourself.

1456

So gay a Flower  
Bereaves the Mind  
As if it were a Woe —  
Is Beauty an Affliction — then?  
Tradition ought to know —

1521

The Butterfly upon the Sky,  
That doesn't know its Name  
And hasn't any tax to pay  
And hasn't any Home  
Is just as high as you and I,  
And higher, I believe,  
So soar away and never sigh  
And that's the way to grieve —

To see her is a Picture —  
To hear her is a Tune —  
To know her an Intemperance  
As innocent as June —  
To know her not — Affliction —  
To own her for a Friend  
A warmth as near as if the Sun  
Were shining in your Hand.

Beauty crowds me till I die  
Beauty mercy have on me  
But if I expire today  
Let it be in sight of thee —

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.