

*BEAUTY CROWDS ME
TILL I DIE:*



Selections from
the Poems of
Emily Dickinson

Edited by
Ray Soulard, Jr. & Mio Cohen

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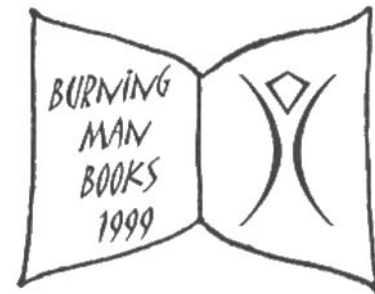


S C R I P T O R P R E S S

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number three

You may find your answer among the following pages.

BEAUTY CROWDS ME TILL I DIE:
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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.