

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

*Set by Aaron Copland (1900-1990) 1949-50.
Texts by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

1. Nature, the gentlest mother

And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest, -
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon, -
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

2. There came a wind like a bugle

There came a wind like a bugle,
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the window and the doors
As from an emerald ghost
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.
On a strange mob of planting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day,
The bell within the steeple wild,
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come

3. Why do they shut me out of Heaven?

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can sing a little minor,
Timid as a bird.
Wouldn't the angels try me just once more
Just see if I troubled them...
But don't shut the door, don't shut the
door...
Oh if I were the gentlemen in the white
robes
and they were the little hand that knocked,
Could I forbid, could I forbid, could I forbid?
Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?

4. The world feels dusty

The world feels dusty,
when we stop to die...
We want the dew then
Honors taste dry...
Flags vex a dying face
But the least fan
stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain
Mine be the ministry when thy thirst
comes...
Dews of thyself to fetch and holy balms.

5. Heart, we will forget him

Heart, we will forget him
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

6. Dear March, come in!

One in the red array, -
That is the break of day.

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat -
You must have walked -
How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!

I got your letter, and the bird's;
The maples never knew
That you were coming, - I declare,
How red their faces grew!
But, March, forgive me -
And all those hills
You left for me to hue,
There was no purple suitable,
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? that April?
Lock the door!
I will not be pursued!
He stayed away a year, to call
When I am occupied.
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come,
[And]* blame is just as dear as praise
And praise as mere as blame.

* Dickinson: "That"

7. Sleep is supposed to be

Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand!

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree,
The breaking of the day.

Morning has not occurred!
That shall aurora be
East of Eternity;

One with the banner gay,

8. When they come back

When they come back if blossoms do,
I always feel a doubt if blossoms can be
born

again

When once the art is out.
When they begin if robins do
I always had a fear I did not tell
it was their last Experiment last year.
When it is May, if May return.
Has nobody a pang that on a face so
beautiful
we might not look again?
If I am there, one does not know...
what party one may be tomorrow,
But if I am there, I take back all I say!

9. I felt a funeral in my brain

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.

10. I've heard an organ talk sometimes

I've heard an organ talk sometimes
In a cathedral aisle
And understood no word it said
Yet held my breath the while...
And risen up and gone away,
A more Bernardine girl
And know not what was done to me
In that old hallowed aisle.

11. Going to Heaven!

Going to Heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how, -
Indeed I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to Heaven! -
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

[Going to Heaven!]*
I'm glad I don't believe it
For it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!
I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

* added by Copland.

12. The chariot

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 labour, and my leisure too
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
[At wrestling in a ring]+
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
a swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

* Copland: "would"

+ Copland: "Their lessons scarcely done"

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## **Six Songs of Edvard Grieg Op. 48**

*Set by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)*

### **1. "Gruß" (Greetings) (1884).**

*Text by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)*

*Translated to English by Marty Lucas*

Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt  
Liebliches Geläute,  
Klinge, kleines Frühlingslied,  
Kling hinaus ins Weite.

Sweet chimes are softly  
filling my soul;  
Ring, little springtime-song  
Ring out: far and wide.

Zieh hinaus bis an das Haus,  
Wo die Veilchen sprießen,

Go forward till you reach the house,  
where the violets bloom;

Wenn du eine Rose schaust,  
Sag, ich laß sie grüßen.

And if you see a rose,  
give her my greetings.

## 2. Dereinst, Gedanken mein (One day, o my mind)

*Text by Emanuel von Geibel (1815-1884), after Cristobal de Castillejo (-1550)  
Translated to English by David K. Smythe*

Dereinst, Gedanken mein,  
Wirst ruhig sein.  
Läßt Liebesglut  
Dich still nicht werden,  
In kühler Erden,  
Da schläfst du gut,  
Dort ohne Lieb' und ohne Pein  
Wirst ruhig sein.

One day, one day, O my mind,  
You will be at peace.  
Love's ardour  
will not leave you alone,  
In the cool earth,  
There you sleep well  
and without suffering;  
You will be at peace:

Was du im Leben  
Nicht hast gefunden,  
Wenn es entschwunden,  
Wird's dir gegeben,  
Dann ohne Wunden  
Und ohne Pein  
Wirst ruhig sein.

What you have not  
found in life,  
When it has vanished,  
Will be given to you;  
Then without wounds  
and without pain  
you will be at peace.

## 3. Lauf der Welt (The way of the world) (1889)

*Text by Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), "Stilles Verständnis".  
Translated to English by John H. Campbell*

An jedem Abend geh' ich aus  
Hinauf den Wiesensteg.  
Sie schaut aus ihrem Gartenhaus,  
Es stehet hart am Weg.  
Wir haben uns noch nie bestellt,  
Es ist nur so der Lauf der Welt.

Each evening I go out,  
over the meadow-path.  
She looks out from her summerhouse,  
which stands by the pathway.  
We have never questioned this,  
it is just the way things are.

Ich weiß nicht, wie es so geschah,  
Seit lange küß' ich sie,  
Ich bitte nicht, sie sagt nicht: ja!  
Doch sagt sie: nein! auch nie.  
Wenn Lippe gern auf Lippe ruht,  
Wir hindern's nicht, uns dünkt es gut.

I don't know how it happened so,  
for a long time I kiss her,  
I don't ask, she doesn't say yes,  
however, she also never says no.  
If lips like to rest on lips,  
we forbid them not, it pleases us well.

Das Lüftchen mit der Rose spielt,  
Es fragt nicht: hast mich lieb?  
Das Röschen sich am Taue kühlt  
Es sagt nicht lange: gib!  
Ich liebe sie, sie liebet mich,  
Doch keines sagt: ich liebe dich!

The little breeze plays with the rose,  
it doesn't ask: do you love me?  
The little grasses are chilled by the dew,  
they don't often say: stop!  
I love her, she loves me,  
however neither says: I love you!

**4. Die verschwiegene Nachtigall (The discrete Nightingale) (1889)  
(Unter den Linden, an der Haide) (Under the lindens on the heath)**

*Text by Walther von der Vogelweide (1170?-1228?)  
Translation to English copyright © 2002 by Peter Low*

Unter den Linden, an der Haide,  
wo ich mit meinem Trauten saß,  
da mögt ihr finden,  
wie wir beide  
die Blumen brachen und das Gras.  
Vor dem Wald mit süßem Schall,  
Tandaradei!  
sang im Tal die Nachtigall.

Under the lindens on the heath  
at the spot where I sat with my boyfriend  
you might discover  
how he and I  
squashed the flowers and the grass.  
From the woods came a sweet sound -  
"Tandaradei!"  
- the nightingale singing in the valley.

Ich kam gegangen  
zu der Aue,  
mein Liebster kam vor mir dahin.  
Ich ward empfangen  
als hehre Fraue,  
daß ich noch immer selig bin.  
Ob er mir auch Küsse bot?  
Tandaradei!  
Seht, wie ist mein Mund so rot!

I came  
to the meadow;  
my sweetheart had arrived before me.  
He greeted me  
as a noble lady  
(I'm still very happy about that).  
Did he offer me kisses?  
"Tandaradei!"  
- See how red my lips are!

Wie ich da ruhte,  
wüßt' es einer,  
behüte Gott, ich schämte mich.  
Wie mich der Gute  
herzte, keiner  
erfahre das als er und ich -  
und ein kleines Vsgelein,  
Tandaradei!  
das wird wohl verschwiegen sein.

If anyone found out (God forbid!)  
what happened as I lay there,  
I would be deeply ashamed.  
May nobody know  
how the young man embraced me  
except him and me -  
and a little bird -  
"Tandaradei!"  
- who will certainly keep a secret.

**5. Zur Rosenzeit (To the rose time) (1889)  
(Ihr verblühet, süße Rosen) (You are wilting, sweet roses)**

*Text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)  
Translation to English by Emily Ezust*

Ihr verblühet, süße Rosen,  
Meine Liebe trug euch nicht;  
Blühtet, ach! dem Hoffnungslosen,  
Dem der Gram die Seele bricht!

You are wilting, sweet roses -  
my love could not sustain you.  
Bloom for hopelessness then,  
for he whose soul is breaking from sorrow!

Alle Blüten, alle Früchte  
Noch zu deinen Füßen trug  
Und vor deinem Angesichte  
Hoffnung in dem Herzen schlug.

Every blossom, every fruit  
I carried to your feet;  
and before your countenance,  
hope throbbed in my heart.

Der auf erste Knospchen lauernd  
früh zu seinem Garten ging,  
ach der Tage denk ich trauernd,  
als ich Engel an dir hing.

Bloom for him who waits for your first bud,  
going to his garden early;  
alas, I think mournfully of those days  
when I hung on you, my angel.



## 6. Ein Traum (A Dream)

(Mir träumte einst ein schöne Traum) (I once had a beautiful dream)

*Text by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt (1819-1892)*

*Translation to English copyright © 2002 by Peter Low*

|                                     |                                               |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Mir träumte einst ein schöne Traum: | I once had a beautiful dream:                 |
| Mich liebte eine blonde Maid;       | I was in love with a fair-haired young woman, |
| Es war am grünen Waldesraum,        | we were in a green forest glade,              |
| Es war zur warmen Frühlingszeit:    | it was warm spring weather,                   |

|                                          |                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Die Knospe sprang, der Waldbach schwoll, | the buds were sprouting, the brook was running strong, |
| Fern aus dem Dorfe scholl Geläut -       | the sounds of the distant village could be heard,      |
| Wir waren ganzer Wonne voll,             | we were full of joy,                                   |
| Versunken ganz in Seligkeit.             | immersed in bliss.                                     |

|                                      |                                        |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Und schöner noch als einst der Traum | And even more beautiful than the dream |
| Begab es sich in Wirklichkeit -      | was what occurred in reality:          |
| Es war am grünen Waldesraum,         | it was in a green forest glade         |
| Es war zur warmen Frühlingszeit:     | it was warm spring weather,            |

|                                          |                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Der Waldbach schwoll, die Knospe sprang, | the buds were sprouting, the brook was running strong, |
| Geläut erscholl vom Dorfe her -          | the sounds of the distant village reached our ears -   |
| Ich hielt dich fest, ich hielt dich lang | I held you tight, I held you long,                     |
| Und lasse dich nun nimmermehr!           | and now will never again let you go!                   |

|                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| O frühlingsgrüner Waldesraum!         | Oh the spring-green glade            |
| Du lebst in mir durch alle Zeit -     | is alive in me for all time!         |
| Dort ward die Wirklichkeit zum Traum, | That is where reality became a dream |
| Dort ward der Traum zur Wirklichkeit! | and the dream became reality!        |

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Apparition - Elegiac Songs and Vocalises of George Crumb

Set by George Crumb (1929-)

Texts from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1865)

I. The Night in Silence under Many a Star

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Vocalise 1: Summer Sounds

II. When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

...

IV. Approach Strong Deliveress!

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when you have taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

Vocalise 3: Death Carol ("Song of the Nightbird")

V. Come Lovely and Soothing Death

Come lovely and soothing death,

Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

VI. The Night in Silence under Many a Star

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

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## **Four French Songs**

*Set by Franz Liszt (1811-1886)*

### **1. S'il est un charmant gazon [S. 284] (If there be a lovely grassy plot)**

*Text by Vicomte Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1885),  
"S'il est un charmant gazon", no. 22 of Les Chants du Crépuscule (1834).  
Translation to English copyright © 2000 by Peter Low*

S'il est un charmant gazon  
Que le ciel arrose,  
Où brille en toute saison  
Quelque fleur éclore,  
Où l'on cueille à pleine main  
Lys, chèvre-feuille et jasmin,  
J'en veux faire le chemin  
Où ton pied se pose!

If there's a lovely grassy plot  
watered by the sky  
where in every season  
some flower blossoms,  
where one can freely gather  
lilies, woodbines and jasmines...  
I wish to make it the path  
on which you place your feet.

S'il est un rêve d'amour,  
Parfumé de rose,  
Où l'on trouve chaque jour  
Quelque douce chose,  
Un rêve que Dieu bénit,  
Où l'âme à l'âme s'unit,  
Oh! j'en veux faire le nid  
Où ton coeur se pose!

If there is a dream of love  
scented with roses,  
where one finds every day  
something gentle and sweet,  
a dream blessed by God  
where soul is joined to soul...  
oh, I wish to make it the nest  
in which you rest your heart.

### **2. Comment, disaient-ils [S. 276] (How then, asked he)**

*Text by Vicomte Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1885),  
no. 23 of Les Rayons et les Ombres (1838)  
Translations to English copyright © by Faith J. Cormier*

Comment, disaient-ils,  
Avec nos nacelles,  
Fuir les alguazils?  
Ramez, disaient-elles.

"How then," asked he  
"By boat and tide  
Alguazils flee?"  
"Row," she replied.

Comment, disaient-ils,  
Oublier querelles,  
Misère et périls?

"How then," asked he,  
"To set aside  
Strife, misery?"

Dormez, disaient-elles.

"Sleep," she replied.

Comment, disaient-ils,  
Enchanter les belles  
Sans philtres subtils?  
Aimez, disaient-elles.

"How then," asked he,  
"Love's philtre denied,  
Win fair beauty?"  
"Love," she replied.

Another translation

"How," asked the men, "can we flee the Spanish police in our small boats?"  
"Row," replied the women.

"How," asked the men, "can we forget strife, misery and danger?" "Sleep,"  
replied the women.

"How," asked the men, "can we enchant beautiful women without love  
potions?" "Love," replied the women.

### 3. Oh! Quand je dors [S. 282] (Oh! when I sleep)

*Text by Vicomte Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1885)  
Translation to English by Emily Ezust*

Oh! quand je dors, viens auprès de ma couche,  
comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura,  
Et qu'en passant ton haleine me touche...  
Soudain ma bouche  
S'ouvrira!

Oh, when I sleep, approach my bed,  
as Laura appeared to Petrarch;  
and as you pass, touch me with your breath...  
at once my lips  
will part!

Sur mon front morne où peut-être s'achève  
Un songe noir qui trop longtemps dura,  
Que ton regard comme un astre se lève...  
Soudain mon rêve  
Rayonnera!

On my glum face, where perhaps  
a dark dream has rested for too long a time,  
let your gaze lift it like a star...  
at once my dream  
will be radiant!

Puis sur ma lèvre où voltige une flamme,  
Éclair d'amour que Dieu même épura,  
Pose un baiser, et d'ange deviens femme...

Then on my lips, where there flits a brilliance,  
a flash of love that God has kept pure,  
place a kiss, and transform from angel into  
woman...

Soudain mon âme  
S'éveillera!

at once my soul  
will awaken!

### 4. Enfant, si j'étais roi [S. 283] (Child, if I were king)

*Text by Vicomte Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1885), "À une femme".  
Translation to English copyright © 2002 by Faith J. Cormier*

Enfant, si j'étais roi, je donnerais l'empire,  
Et mon char, et mon sceptre, et mon peuple  
à genoux,  
Et ma couronne d'or, et mes bains de porphyre,  
Et mes flottes à qui la mer ne peut suffire,

Child, if I were king I would give the empire,  
and my chariot, and my scepter, and  
my kneeling people,  
and my golden crown, and my porphyry  
baths,  
and my fleets that the sea could not hold,

Pour un regard de vous!

Si j'étais Dieu, la terre et l'air avec les ondes,

Les anges, les démons courbés devant ma loi,  
Et le profond chaos aux entrailles fécondes,  
L'éternité, l'espace et les cieux et les mondes  
Pour un baiser de toi!

for one of your glances!

If I were God, earth and heaven with the  
waves,

the angels, the demons bent before my law,  
and the chaos of the fertile deep,  
eternity, space, the heavens and the worlds  
for a kiss from you!