

Visiting Emily

Poems Inspired by
the Life & Work of
Emily Dickinson

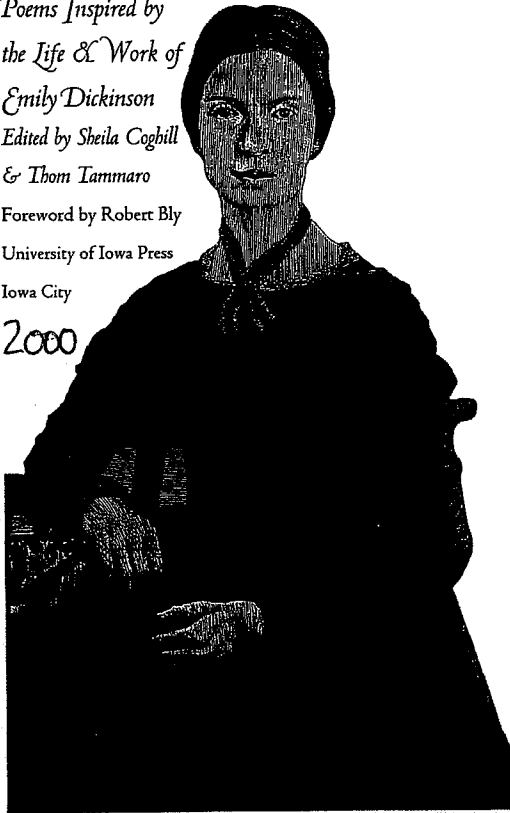
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Your Birthday in Wisconsin You Are 140

JOHN BERRYMAN

'One of the wits of the school' your chum would say —
Hot diggity! — What the *hell* went wrong for you,
Miss Emily, — besides the 'pure & terrible' Congressman
your paralyzing papa, — and Mr Humphrey's dying
& Benjamin's (the other reader)? . . .

Fantastic at 32 outpour, uproar, 'terror
since September, I could tell to none'
after your 'Master' moved his family West
and timidly to Mr Higginson:
'say if my verse is alive.'

Now you wore only white, now you did not appear,
till frantic 50 when you hurled your heart
down before Otis, who would none of it
thro' five years for 'Squire Dickinson's cracked daughter'
awful by months, by hours . . .

Well. Thursday afternoon, I'm in W——
drinking your ditties, and (dear) *they* are *alive*, —
more so than (bless her) Mrs F who teaches
farmers' red daughters & their beaux *my* ditties
and yours & yours & yours!
Hot diggity!