

*Emily Dickinson's Mirror, Amherst*

DONALD REVELL

Its flecked surface a map of disappearing islands,  
the glass imposes a narrowing, flat sense  
of time and limited space upon the room  
at all angles. Looking into it head on,  
I feel contained and ready to understand  
the short lines' skewed New England syntax mouthed  
into so strict a frame. A discipline  
of words arrayed for the bridal and no groom  
wanted. In each of us, there must be one  
oracular, strait emptiness a hand's  
breadth across that is ourselves in proud  
fear, looking into our own eyes for doctrine  
and the one audience whose accents we can  
share wholly. The purist's God. Pride's mirror and island.

*Visiting Emily*

*Poems Inspired by  
the Life & Work of  
Emily Dickinson*

*Edited by Sheila Coghill  
& Thom Tammaro*

Foreword by Robert Bly

University of Iowa Press

Iowa City

2000

