

## Dickinson Visual Materials

A list of links with commentary for JSU's Ethology <[www.jsu.edu/chimera/ethology](http://www.jsu.edu/chimera/ethology)>

Prepared by Joanne E. Gates

Current as of June 30, 2012.

## ONE: Major video resources online:

**Annenberg Learning site** is a resource for Streaming Video on Demand, or VoD, the *Voices and Visions* segments

Dickinson is 57 minutes.

<http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/vvspot/Dickinson.html>

You may need to enter the series site first

<http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/vvspot/>

The commentators include Dickinson biographer Richard Sewell, poet Anthony Hecht, feminist poet Adrienne Rich, novelist Joyce Carol Oates. (Reprinted numerous times, Adrienne Rich's influential 1976 essay on Dickinson, "Vesuvius at Home" is online at the Parnassus Review website, <http://parnassusreview.com/archives/416>.)

## TWO: Important Lectures

Pulitzer Prize winning poet of 2006, Claudia Emerson lectures on Dickinson, assisted with slides of the texts of her poems. From University of Mary Washington, the 2007 Great Lives Series on Emily Dickinson, held April 3, 2007. 65:18

<http://www.umw.edu/greatlives/2007/04/03/emily-dickinson/>

Dickinson biographer Alfred Habegger at Cambridge Forum SPONSORED BY wgbh,  
<http://dev.forum-network.org/lecture/emily-dickinson-my-wars-are-laid-away-books>

*Emily Dickinson: My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*

October 9, 2002

**Alfred Habegger writer, independent scholar**

One of America's greatest poets, Emily Dickinson remains largely an enigma. Alfred Habegger, author of *The Father: A Life of Henry James, Sr.*, sheds new light on Dickinson in his biography, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson*.

In his new book, Habegger probes provocative questions: Was she a lesbian? Why did she refuse to publish her poetry, and why was this refusal so integral to her work? Using legal archives, congregational records and previously unpublished fragments of Dickinson's own letters, Habegger provides a rare personal glimpse into Dickinson's troubled brilliance and shows how Dickinson tuned her "voice" and turned her personal life into a work of art.

**"Rendering the Life of Emily Dickinson"** from Greenfield Community College is a presentation by Doris Abramson reading from Dickinson's works in conjunction with Polly Longworth's rendering of Dickinson's life. Longworth is a biographer of Dickinson and her family; Abramson is Emeritus Prof of Theater at U Mass (now deceased). Introduction by Faythe Turner. 52:06

<http://youtu.be/5dCRZNYOxII>

<iframe width="420" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/5dCRZNYOxII" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**Our Life in Poetry: Emily Dickinson**

This poetry course features Alice Quinn, from Philoctetes Center. Consider it a graduate level symposium; this film is Interesting for Quinn's bright assessment of the documents. Notice that "Handouts" are likely public domain texts and that others in the audience may have the critical text that restores original punctuation and capitalization.

<http://youtu.be/HhwUc5BAN3E>

<iframe width="420" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/HhwUc5BAN3E" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**Christopher Benfey on A Summer of Hummingbirds**

Benfey, professor at Mt. Holyoke speaks about the concept of his book:

<http://youtu.be/YUkkz7vOru8>

<iframe width="420" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/YUkkz7vOru8?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

A download of a Benfey Lecture is here

<http://beemp3.com/download.php?file=5711515&song=benfeys+dickinson+lecture>

[ABOVE LINK IS NOT EXAMINED]

"**The Poet in Her Bedroom**," a 32-minute program, is the first volume of the television series "Angles of a Landscape: Perspectives on Emily Dickinson," 4 minutes,

<http://youtu.be/PU8XijqmnT0>

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<iframe width="420" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/PU8XijqmnT0"
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
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## THREE: Performances of Individual Poems

[Librivox.org](http://librivox.org) (Search Author, **Dickinson, Emily**) lists 20 entries.

The YouTube channel PoeticCouch2012 contains numerous audio recordings of the poems, with text part of the extended description.

Meryl Streep recordings, uploaded to YouTube by PoeticCouch2012

**Longing** (I envy seas whereon he rides), 1:17, with text displayed in the bottom pop-up (no visuals, just a sketch of ED)

<http://youtu.be/dgXJcuo7WpM>

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<iframe width="560" height="315"
src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/dgXJcuo7WpM?rel=0" frameborder="0"
allowfullscreen></iframe>
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**Because I Could Not Stop for Death** 2:01, with text displayed in the bottom pop-up (no visuals, just a sketch of ED)

<http://youtu.be/3x-6wfPk-zo>

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/3x-6wfPk-zo?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**The Goal** (Each life converges to some centre) 1:05 with text displayed in the bottom pop-up (no visuals, just a sketch of ED)

<http://youtu.be/IJUhwQ4VKnQ>

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/IJUhwQ4VKnQ?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**In Vain** (I cannot live with you) 2:11, with text displayed in the bottom pop-up (no visuals, just a sketch of ED)

<http://youtu.be/UH66pi4asBo>

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/UH66pi4asBo?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**Our Share** (Our Share Of Night To Bear) 0:41, with text displayed in the bottom pop-up (no visuals, just a sketch of ED)

<http://youtu.be/bppT2dVvKfU>

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/bppT2dVvKfU?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

**Poetic Couch** also records clips from a 2010 film,

***Becoming Emily*** - Starring Nicola Howard as Dickinson. Search the YouTube channel, PoeticCouch2012. These renderings include creative visualizations.

The film *Becoming Emily* does not seem to be released in the US. (It is not found on IMDB, and may be the adaptation of the book *A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson* by Barbara Dana (2009, Hardcover): *Becoming Emily Dickinson* : HarperTeen

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## **FOUR: *Films on Demand Streaming Database*** **Available through JSU Library**

### ***Emily Dickinson: A Certain Slant of Light (30:00)***

Julie Harris takes viewers into Emily Dickinson's everyday world in a small New England town to compare and contrast facts about the poet with her extraordinary, original insights.

Dickinson's reclusive life in her father's mansion on Main Street in Amherst, Massachusetts, meant that she wrote almost all of her surviving work in this house. From cellar to cupola, we invoke her "certain slant of light" (her real and imagined perspectives). Other locations are Amherst College, Mount Holyoke Seminary (now College), the town cemetery next door to her childhood home, and commanding views on or near the shores of the Connecticut River. The paradox of the poet at home with limitless imagination is announced early in her stunning poem "The Brain Is Wider than the Sky." As seen on PBS. (30 minutes)

Monterey Home Video

Item Number: 44813

© 1977

Gates Comment:

TITLE URL:

<http://lib-proxy.jsu.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=1860>

Poems recited:

The Brain is Wider than the Sky

There's a Certain Slant of Light

One need not be a chamber to be haunted

Safe in their alabaster Chambers

To my small heart

Describes the last of the three master letters as a "cry of despair" and reads from parts of it.

I cannot live with you (partial)

Letters to Higginson

After great pain

Because I could not stop for death

The poets light but lamps

Though not up to the highest contemporary standards of video production, this film is informative for its on-site recording. Julie Harris narrates and hosts. Of special interest is her walk between The Homestead and the Austin Dickinson – Susan Gilbert Dickinson home, The Evergreens, built just next door, but a hundred yards' walk down a wooded path. We also seen interiors of Dickinson's home, her bedroom, and the town cemetery.

The walking shot begins at 15:15 and runs to 16:40.

Directed by Bayley Silleck

Ken Burns gets credit as Camera Assistant  
Jean McClure Mudge is co-script writer with Silleck, and the producer

**Behind a Mask: Six Women Finding a Space to Write (50:00)**  
**Films on Demand (JSU Library)**

This program explores the obstacles overcome by six prominent female authors: Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, and Alice Walker. On-location footage at sites such as Alcott's Orchard House in Concord, Massachusetts, complements discussion from an array of critics and experts, including Dr. Carolyn Heilbrun, author of *Writing a Woman's Life*; Professor Elaine Showalter of Princeton University; Dr. Sarah Elbert, author of *A Hunger for Home: Louisa May Alcott's Place in American Culture*; Madeleine Stern, Alcott's biographer and editor; and Dr. Leona Rostenberg, who, together with Stern, proved that Alcott wrote many sensationalist stories under a pseudonym. Produced by the Open University. (50 minutes)

Item Number: 30325

© 1996

<http://lib-proxy.jsu.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=1860&xtid=30325>

9:28 begins the Dickinson section of this film. Transition back to Alcott is very interesting, approximately 15:00. They each had a poem published in a no name series. (Dickinson's "Success is counted Sweetest")

**Emily Dickinson: A Concise Biography (32:00)**  
**Films on Demand (JSU Library)**

This overview of the life and literature of Emily Dickinson from the Famous Authors series offers an insight into the reclusive author of 1,775 poems and a valuable collection of letters. The video depicts Dickinson's story as that of an individual in a society that smothers individuality and discusses the struggle of a female poet among male contemporaries. She did, however, know of and admire women writers like George Eliot and the Bronte sisters. She read avidly, and the video discusses the strong influence Shakespeare's work had on her. Dickinson lived next door to her closest friends—her brother Austin and his wife Susan Gilbert—in the family house, The Homestead, in Amherst, Massachusetts, a place still influenced by the puritanical tradition of practicality, work ethic, and faith at the time, and despite her reclusive reputation did have other meaningful friendships and correspondences. (32 minutes)

Item Number: 43964

© 2005

<http://lib-proxy.jsu.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=1860&xtid=43964>

Gates comment: good visuals and content. The narrator's British voice may be off printing. The Transcript on the side highlights the portion on the screen. Closed Captioning also available, and a segment breakdown.

**Emily Dickinson (21:00) A films for Humanities and Sciences  
Films on Demand (JSU Library)**

While many of her literary peers achieved notoriety, “the woman in white” remained virtually unknown—by choice. The self-imposed obscurity of Emily Dickinson is just one of many aspects of her life that this program explores. Blending daguerreotypes, paintings, manuscripts, excerpts from Dickinson’s letters, and readings from nearly a dozen of her poems, this program presents the biography of one of America’s most unique and influential voices in poetry. (20 minutes)

Item Number: 32794 © 2004

<http://lib-proxy.jsu.edu/login?url=http://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=1860&xtid=32794>

Gates: This is a later film; The Homestead is repainted the yellow color of original look. (It was red brick for much of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.)

Male narrator, female voice for poems. Some of the sketch quality of the portraits is not very accurate. There is a candle flickering effect that is almost strobe-like, and this may be irritating

A certain slant of light

The Bible is an Antique Volume

If God is Love, as he admits

I heard a fly buzz when I died

Can trouble dwell with April days

My Life closed twice before its close

One and one are one

Because I could not stop for Death

Success is counted sweetest

This is my letter to the world

## **FIVE: DVD Resource:**

*Loaded Gun: Life, Death, and Dickinson*. Jim Wolpaw and Steven Gentile. 2002. DVD.

The film *Loaded Gun: Life, Death, and Dickinson* is controversial in its blend of the phantasmagoric in a fictionalized and very private portrait of Dickinson on the one hand and some precious, targeted, and useful insights that any teacher / scholar should relish. The absurd come in the form of different dolled up or vampirish actresses "trying out" for the "part" of Dickinson. The insights come primarily from the bass-voiced Julie Harris, grayed but energized in her passion for Dickinson.

Indicative of how Dickinson inspires other poets is the emilydickinson.org list of poets who were inspired by Dickinson, Titanic Operas, at this site:

[http://www.emilydickinson.org/titanic/table\\_of\\_contents.html](http://www.emilydickinson.org/titanic/table_of_contents.html)

One can also find online Billy Collins's poem (partially recited in *Loaded Gun*), "Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes," here recited as part of the interview with Terry Gross.

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src="http://www.dailymotion.com/embed/video/xg2s4o"></iframe><br /><a
href="http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xg2s4o_billy-collins-taking-off-emily-dickinson-s-
clothes_creation" target="_blank">Billy Collins - Taking Off Emily Dickinson&#039;s...</a>
<i>by <a href="http://www.dailymotion.com/poetictouch" target="_blank">poetictouch</a></i>
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## **SIX: Other ephemera:**

The Dickinson Museum and other authentic Dickinson sites embrace the appropriation of Dickinson by creative writers.

*The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson* - Jerome Chayrn 3 min. 9 sec.:

<http://youtu.be/4l-kSEz4ECE>

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/4l-kSEz4ECE"  
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

*The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson* - Jerome Chayrn

<http://youtu.be/huonSdcNIII>

<iframe width="420" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/huonSdcNIII"  
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>