



Master Letters of Emily Dickinson

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These three letters, which Emily Dickinson drafted to a man she called "Master," stand near the heart of her mystery. Although there is no evidence the letters were ever posted, they indicate a long relationship, geographically apart, in which correspondence would have been the primary means of communication. Dickinson did not write letters as a fictional genre, and these were surely part of a much larger correspondence yet unknown to us.

In the week following Dickinson's death on May 15, 1886, Lavinia Dickinson found what she described as a locked box containing seven hundred of her sister's poems. The Master letters may have been among them, for they were clearly not with the correspondence, which Lavinia destroyed upon discovery.

Of primary importance, the Master letters nevertheless have had an uncertain history of discovery, publication, dating, and transcription. This publication, issued at the centennial of Emily Dickinson's death, presents the three letters in chronological order, based upon new dating of the manuscripts, and provides their texts in facsimile as well as in transcriptions that show stages in the composition of each letter.

Master Letters of Emily Dickinson Details

Date : Published May 15th 1998 by University of Massachusetts Press

ISBN : 9781558491557

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Format : Paperback 52 pages

Genre : Poetry, Classics, Autobiography, Memoir, Literature, 19th Century, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review Master Letters of Emily Dickinson for online ebook

Evan Fradin says

Tenderly solemn, deeply mysterious, and profoundly beautiful - Master Letters of Emily Dickinson demonstrates Dickinson's overwhelming genius.

Without question, reading Dickinson's Master Letters is a magnificent use of your time.

Carolyn Hembree says

"Have you the little chest--to put the alive--in?" Yikes, it doesn't get much sexier, seriously, than Dickinson's Master letters. Recently, I read one reflection that complained of Dickinson's submissive tone in these. Yes and no. In all three letters there's the game of it: submission and dominance. Oh, sure she asks, "What would you do with me if I came 'in white'?" But then the final letter ("If you saw a bullet hit a bird") says, "I didn't think to tell you, you didn't come to me 'in white'--nor ever told me why--"

To my mind the letters are a fusion of her letter writing and verse. The dashes are present at their most wonderfully disruptive, scoring sentences with new and unexpected meanings. Unlike the poems (more like the letters), these are epistolary in every sense (yes, I think the Master was Pastor Wadsworth). Because of their longer format, we get to see Dickinson use an overarching metaphor, like say the bird, that morphs and accrues new meanings as the missive goes on.

Finally, this edition is quite good. I like the introduction which discusses, among other things, previous publications of the letters and reasons for their current dating. Very affordable. It includes fascicles in a little envelope as well as facsimiles bound side-by-side with the typed versions of the letters.

Jennifer says

Another way to gain insight into the amazing and mysterious Emily. Read this as part of a class on Dickinson, otherwise probably wouldn't have known about it. If you are an Emily fan, read this.

Benjamin says

A beautiful edition of the curious manuscripts known as the "Master letters," which may be drafts of actual letters (as most people think), but might be experiments in prose (as the great poet and scholar Susan Howe suggests in *My Emily Dickinson*. This edition presents the text in holograph and print, but includes facsimiles folded in an envelope.

Ceci says

This gorgeous edition, which I was lucky enough to buy in Emily's house (!!!), necessitated a reread. More and more I'm convinced that "Master" was never a real flesh-and-blood human being, which IMHO only makes these letters more stunning.

Catherine Corman says

I am older - tonight, Master - but the love is the same so are the moon and the crescent

-Emily Dickinson, The Master Letters

Gary says

A slim little volume, so nicely done.

There are the 3 letters included with it, and also a facsimile of the letters is on the opposite page from the typed letter.

The letters written to the "Master" are presented with a facsimile on one page, and the type written version on the facing page.

A must have piece of literary history for those of us who love Dickinson's poetry, and the fascinating history surrounding it.

Kasey Jueds says

How could anyone give this any less than 5 stars? Though I guess some people have. And stars seem not quite right, anyway, as a rating system. Maybe galaxies?

Valerie says

I know this was a series of letters but I think it should count as poetry. The writing is gorgeous and the way they typed up the letters line by line made it look like a poem on the page.

The only problem I had with the book was the way the lines were typed up. They wrote out all the words, whether they were crossed out and replaced with other words. I understand why they did this but because I am not used to the notation, I felt like I had to decode what I was reading. Her handwriting was terrible, so I couldn't just read the letters.
