

EMILY DICKINSON

"The wind blows gay today, and the jays bark like blue terriers."

"Friday I tasted life, it was a vast morsel. A circus passed the house—still I feel the red in my mind though the drums are out."

"The lawn is full of south and the odors tangle, and I hear today for the first the river in the tree."

"The zeros taught us phosphorus
We learned to like the fire
By playing glaciers when a boy
And tinder guessed by power

Of opposite to balance odd
If white a red must be!
Paralysis, our primer dumb
Unto vitality."

Then comes the "crowning extravaganza. . . . If I read a book, and it makes my whole body so cold no fire will ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. Is there any other way? These are the only ways I know it."

No one but a New England yankee mind could concoct such humours and fascinatingly pert phrases as are found here. They are like the chatterings of the interrupted squirrel in the tree-hole at nut-time. There is so much of high gossip in these poetic turns of hers, and so, throughout her books, one finds a multitude of playful tricks for the pleased mind to run with. She was an intoxicated being, drunken with the little tipsy joys of the simplest form, shaped as they were to elude always her evasive imagination into thinking that nothing she could think or feel but was extraordinary and remarkable.