

[Note]

## Emily Dickinson—il miglior fabbro

by

Hiroyuki KOGUCHI

I

You were called “half-cracked” and eccentric. An old picture of yours caused a speculation you probably had a schiz. Oh, do not cry, Emily. People always make mistakes, and you knew it well. Wasn't it the reason you wanted to be alone? Alone with what was intimate with you, such as memory, phantoms, and ecstasies?

Your mind was pure, deep, tough, and witty. Though called “rascal,” you knew what you were. Indeed, you had to be a rascal. Ignore this world's noise and malady, and with “the most sound mind” in town, engage in the business of circumference.

II

Born to be a poet, you became a poetry. You sought for the meaning of death, love, pain, despair, and immortality. You frequented the silent

worlds of the universe, and you saw the deserts of mysteries abound. Critics complain you are too complex. Human nature is always complex, and we are always mysterious to ourselves. Are we not?

### III

Who are you, Emily? A woman in white, a nun, a friend of birds, plants, children, and Carlo? A good baker, pianist, secret night stroller, gardener, lamponer? Freckled-face, cherry-eyed, with brown hair, lean, and small like a wren? Yet the outside tells nothing. Let us stop fussing over your appearances. You opened new visions by transforming yourself so well into a butterfly, a squirrel, a hummingbird, a sparrow, a rainbow, a tree, and a flower. You belonged to nature, and nature haunted you. Ah, the earth was truly a magic prism for you.

### IV

Life was your central theme, and you wanted the blood, flesh, and bone of it. You wanted the truths of it and actually discovered many. Ultimately, you discovered what you had sought—the 'lower' way to make this secular world your beloved home. Indeed, by the light of poetic imagination, you became a lamplighter of this world, and you are shining like a steadfast star.

### V

How many summers passed over you? The blue skies, the breezing winds, the sunsets, the dews, all forming ecstasies for you. Natural things shone their seasonal primes and passed into democratic deaths, waltzing away into the bank of your memory. Maturity and decay are the sorrowful fate of our nature, yet your poésie scooped the efflorescent beauty of growth. Sad yet beautiful, your poetic life prevailed.

## VI

Your hunger for love and immortality were fathomless. In this world was your love unrequited? You probably demanded too much from everything, since you always wanted to examine and absorb the essence of life. Why were you so hungry? You said you even ate seraphs for breakfast. How did they taste? Yes, in your world the abyss of darkness yawned. It almost engulfed you, yet you had the giant courage and spirit to gaze into it. Through the abyss, you and your imagination flew like a bird. How often you came back, like Orpheus, with the vision of eternity from the dark world.

## VII

You were apprenticed to heaven, like a plant growing into the shining blue of the sky, but you knew your body was on earth. The celestial light and wind enticed you, and you felt orphaned and exiled. You were a prisoner. But your prison was not a fool's paradise. There you sat still, staring at and examining the mystery of the universe. The prison nourished your imagination, which ultimately set you free. You gained true liberty!

## VIII

Hart Crane, oh bless him, he knew what you were. You dared, he says, "dignify the labor, bless the quest—" in facing invisible, silent worlds. Crane needed your courage and fortitude in the unfriendly universe before he made a final plunge into the blue eternity. The eternity also charmed you, Emily, but you knew the way back from it. Your journeys to and fro between this and that worlds were dedicated to making a map. Who understood your effort in your time? How often and how much you had to endure through misunderstanding, heartlessness,

imposition, cruelty, and lovelessness! How often you had to bury your heart into tombs! How often you wanted to kill yourself! Yet you survived them all.

## IX

Subversive, wild, and pagan, your will and ambition were strong. That was the only way for you to be able to live with justice and honesty. Your passion was dangerous, "Delenda est America," yet who knew that this was a secret to your art? Eruption was creative. Egoism was imaginative. Paganism was artistic. As a genuine poet, you truly succeeded in your verbal revolution.

## X

"Tender pioneer—," show us the way to follow your footsteps and to live a worthy life in this limited world. Your struggle and poetic rewards are our legacy. The earth always needs soft, invigorating dew. Your poetry will be read ever, and we can always learn from it how to live and die with the fortitude of unconquerable will and dignity.