

Odyssey Oracle

Contents

This page... Song of Class of 2009

2... Odyssey By Annette Bland

4... Used to Be

5... Madison Symphony
Orchestra Review
By Tiffany Harston

6... Encountering
Emily Dickinson

13... Dickinson Responses from
Alumni

14... Awards and Achievements

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Year 6 No. 10 March 25, 2009

Song of the Odyssey Class of 2009

Inspired by Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"

We celebrate ourselves and sing
ourselves.

We are the Odyssey Class of
2009.

Our ancestors came from
Chicago, Illinois; Yazoo,
Mississippi; Racine,
Wisconsin; Memphis,
Tennessee; Brokenbow,
Oklahoma; Waycross,
Georgia; Detroit,
Michigan; Malvern,
Arkansas; Mobile,
Alabama; Terra Haute,
Indiana; Finland, Mexico,
Italy, and France

Speaking English, Spanish,
Finnish, Italian, French,
Hebrew, pig-Latin,
ebonics, and sign
language.

We have lived on a farm in

Michigan, on Chicago's
Southside and Cabrini
Green, in Jacksonville,
Florida, Houston, Texas,
Mexico City, and here in
Madison, Wisconsin.

We have worked at McDonald's,
Burger King, Taco Bell,
Wendy's, Popeye's,
Rocky Rococco,
Walmart, Auntie Anne's
Pretzels, Cops, and
Whataburger, taken care
of children at La Petite
Academy, cleaned grease
exhaust systems, built
mausoleums, cut meat,
dealt blackjack, and
delivered newspapers.

We have been an office manager,
pharmacy technician,



library assistant, weapons specialist for the National Guard, bank teller, telemarketer, dishwasher, telephone operator, nanny, CNA, waitress, sandwich maker, dockworker, janitor, gardener, truck driver, oil changer, wood finisher, mail sorter, battery maker, armored car driver, sign language interpreter, security officer, construction worker, car washer, secretary, cook, and Mexican Army nurse.

We have been a loner, hard worker, procrastinator, good listener, sportsman, realist, thinker, helper, buffer, and seeker.

We call ourselves Baptist, Apostolic, Muslim, Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostal, Church of God in Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, Bahai, African Methodist Episcopal, Buddhist, Wiccan, and nondenominational.

We are happy, frustrated, tall, sexy, slim, coarse, big 'n beautiful, intelligent, classy, impressive,

spiritual, caring, loving, silent, loquacious, friendly, shy, busy, outgoing, dependable, educated, confused, spontaneous, dedicated, courageous, gifted, funny, special, exciting, enthusiastic, outspoken, lovable, dedicated, determined, lost, magical, daring, remarkable, emotional, strong, sturdy, unwavering, fragile, busy, good-hearted, easy-spirited, compassionate, humorous, interesting, grounded, kind, energetic, vivacious, optimistic, helpful, eager, friendly, proud, creative, imaginative, opinionated, appreciative, humble, reliable, honest, trustworthy, generous, faithful, artistic, passionate, loyal, biased, tired, sentimental, God-fearing, sweet, focused, always smiling, and ambitious to be somebody in life.

We are the Odyssey Class of 2009.

Article published in *Voices*,
April 27, 2007,
Madison, WI.

**Odyssey: [Od-uh-see]
a Long and
Eventful Journey
By Annette Bland,
Odyssey Class of '06**



What if someone you hardly knew told you that a humanities class could change your life? Would you believe that person? Several years ago I ran into a former co-worker. I knew she had children and was from Chicago, but I didn't know much else about her. During our conversation she eagerly told me she was a student in the University of Wisconsin Odyssey Project.

She was learning about Walt Whitman, Socrates, William Blake, Langston Hughes, Shakespeare and others. Little did she know that I recognized only one name and that was Shakespeare, and I really didn't know much about him. The more



she talked about the Odyssey Project, the more excited she became. I started to tell her that I loved to read and write, but before I could finish she said, “Then you’d love this class!” Before she left, she gave me a funny look and said, “I’m telling you if you get involved, it will change your life.”

Not my life, I thought. Sure, she was exaggerating. I thought to myself the class may be good, but it couldn’t possibly change a life. I decided to check things out for myself. I’m just like that. I went to the South Madison Public Library to look for more information. There it was: a brochure saying UW Odyssey Project, and printed on the front it said “a free start to college” and “a course in the humanities for adults facing economic barriers.” An adult with economic barriers: that was me, all right.

I completed the application and later received a phone call from the director, Professor Emily Auerbach, to schedule an interview which would be followed with a letter to let me know if I was accepted or not.

It seemed like forever for that letter to arrive, but finally it did. I was scared to open it for fear rejection was waiting for me on the inside. CONGRATULATIONS! towered over all of the other words in the letter. I was in another world. I called my family and friends to tell them the good news.

Odyssey’s setting is an unbelievably warm, friendly, and loving atmosphere. I learned about art history, literature, African American and American

history, philosophy, creative writing and much more. The students were from all over the world. You want to see a colorful class? Come to Odyssey.

The class has a vibe of its own. Unlike no other, Odyssey dances to the beat of its own drum. Each student’s presence is vital to the class as a whole. We came separately, but we intertwined naturally. Like a rainbow, the rain is separate from the sun, but together they create beautiful harmony and colors.

The graduation was the best time ever. I didn’t have anything to compare it to since I hadn’t graduated from high school. I dropped out and later went back and earned my GED. However, I’m sure that if I had graduated from high school it wouldn’t have been better than the Odyssey graduation. Some of the guests assured me that they’d been to many graduations but nothing compared to Odyssey’s.

My son was there, and my children’s grandmother, an uncle, a cousin, many friends and their children came too. Family members from my church came, and my father was there also. The support and love from all present was so thick you could’ve cut it with a knife.

It left a genuine print of happiness on my heart. Life isn’t easy, I know that, but it is better and more exciting for me. I get to discover things that I never knew about myself. The Odyssey class isn’t magic. We all faced many obstacles as students—some of them extremely painful, and the difference was that we pulled together and supported each

other. Odyssey feels more like family than just a class.

My heart’s desire is to make a positive change within my family. Education wasn’t a high priority in my family. Many of my family members have learned skills, but no one had pursued a college education. My mother was my role model. Everyone called her Sugga Momma instead of Lois Simmons because she was too sweet. She died in her youth. She was a strong believer in education, and she made sure my brother Russell and I understood that. This for my Momma, too.

Odyssey is also about finding your voice. My voice is actually finding me, and that’s all good. Education is a profound, priceless, obtainable contribution I can personally make in my family and in the community. It can be passed on from generation to generation, and ultimately that’s my goal. My son Dwayne (age 26) became a student in the UW Odyssey Project (graduated ’07) and I know it is changing his life for the better, too. Don’t let anything or anyone stop you from pursuing an education. I believe education adds to the quality of life and relationships. It’s a light that shines in dark places.

Where else are you going to find such a golden opportunity? A free start to college, the UW Odyssey Project includes free tuition, books, childcare, dinner, and transportation. Classes meet every Wednesday from September through May from 6:00-9:00 PM at the Harambee Center in South Madison. It isn’t easy, but it’s so worth it. Come to Odyssey and see for yourself.

Used to Be

I used to be a snake slithering here and there,
looking for a way in to steal your most prized possessions,
Lying, cheating, and deceiving to get what I wanted,
usually not mine,
Creeping to get what you had simply because I wanted it,
Taking without thought, never intending to give back, reckless.

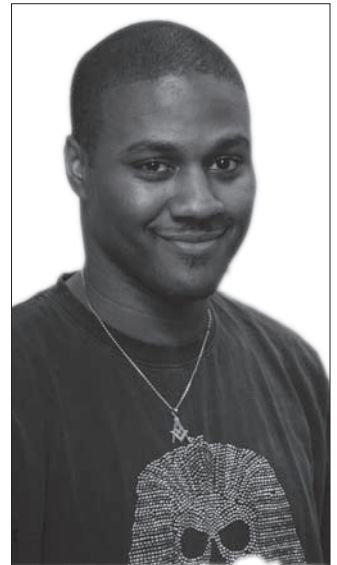
But now I am a bird, free, in flight,
and most importantly, right,
flying high above the earth,
singing songs that reach to the center of the earth,
replenishing.

I am a mother, giving life,
steering in the right direction
with truth, forgiveness, and understanding.
I am light, chasing away the dark,
giving life to the dead, a path for righteousness.

I am a crutch, holding and helping those in need,
providing shelter from the cold or heat,
food and knowledge to nurture the soul,
strength, wisdom, backbone.
I am me, finally free.
That old snake no longer lives inside of me.
(**Shanita Lawrence**)

I used to be a child, innocent to a fault—
But now I am an open wound, Life is Salt—
I used to be an Open Book, pages blank, naked and exposed—
But now my Chapters are sealed with every disappointment that Life shows—
I used to be Heavenly, inexperienced to Earth and the ways of Trends—
But now I am of Blood, born into the physical, born into Sin—
I used to dream about Childhood, happy, without Reason or Rhyme—
But now I look towards Afterlife, What will I be this Time?
(**Cameron Travis**)

I used to be a feather driven away by first wind's blow
But now I am a navy ship docked in the night.
I used to be a wick badly burnt and torched
But now I am a colorful parachute soaring above.
I used to be a lizard slithering in the desert's heat
But now I am a dove always flying, happy.
I used to be a leaf tossed to and fro
But now I am a tree planted firmly in soil.
I used to be a musical note just dangling with nowhere to go
But now my life is a jazzy song playing on the radio. . . .
(**Rhonda Johnson**)



Bewildering Joy: Madison Symphony Orchestra Review

By Tiffany Harston

Seeing the Overture Hall [for the February 2009 MSO Concert] made me ecstatic. It was my first time attending an orchestra concert, and it was not what I would have expected. Guest soloist Olga Kern played the piano with graceful fingers. The way her fingers moved across the keys was astounding, and the orchestra behind her gave the music a sound I didn't know existed. My heart skipped a beat as I felt that I was being carried away. It seemed that all my worries were of the past. The music took me to a peaceful place.

The sounds were amazing; the clarinet, violas, cellos, flutes, violins, and drums all put together such well made beautiful music. The symphony gave the hall a humbling rumble, saying we are here to soothe the soul, to become food for your soul. The symphony would be something I

would introduce to my children to help them find a sense of calm. I will also now use the music to bring peace to my home. This was an experience that I have to thank Odyssey [and ticket donors Bob and Carroll Heideman] for opening up my mind to.

I sat next to an elderly woman, and when I asked how long she had been attending the orchestra, she stated for more than 20 years. Her mother started to bring her as a young girl, and she kept attending because she enjoys the music. I also explained to her that this was my first time attending, and she stated that I was in for a real treat.

For myself I found it to be a start on a new journey I plan to continue learning about. We are all instruments in this thing we call life. The difference is how you will use your instrument.



Encountering Emily Dickinson

#883

**The Poets light but Lamps—
Themselves—go out—
The Wicks they stimulate—
If vital Light**

**Inhere as do the Suns—
Each Age a Lens
Disseminating their
Circumference—**

The poets illuminate the path. They are but sparks that create fire. Their ideas last longer than their physical minds. The flames or thoughts continue to allow us to peer through the darkness of the future. Each age is a lens, so as poets dissect the meaning of their lives (environment), it helps all human understand their place in the world!

I like writers who write about writing's purpose. One of the reasons I continue to write is to enlighten myself as well as others. I feel that all we have to contribute to other living beings is what we've learned in our own lives. More than technology, these lessons will allow our species to achieve its true potential.

(James Horton)

#454

**It was given to me by the Gods—
When I was a little Girl—
They give us Presents most—you know—
When we are new—and small.
I kept it in my Hand—
I never put it down—
I did not dare to eat—or sleep—
For fear it would be gone—
I heard such words as “Rich”—
When hurrying to school—
From lips at Corners of the Streets—
And wrestled with a smile.
Rich! ‘Twas Myself—was rich—
To take the name of Gold—
And Gold to own—in solid Bars—
The Difference—made me bold—**



Illustration of #454 by James Horton

#668

**“Nature” is what we see—
The Hill—the Afternoon—
Squirrel—Eclipse—the Bumble bee—
Nay—Nature is Heaven—
Nature is what we hear—
The Bobolink—the Sea—
Thunder—the Cricket—
Nay—Nature is Harmony—
Nature is what we know—
Yet have no art to say—
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.**

This poem shows the solitude of a person trying



to find answers. . . . “Nature is what we see.” He speaks of birds, crickets, bumble bees, squirrels. He obviously is alone on a summer afternoon and hasn’t had time until now to notice the beautiful world around us. He’s been living a sheltered alone and lonely life until today, when Nature has shown the way.

The poem reminds me of me because I’ve had a lot of time being alone and to myself. Most of the time I choose to be alone, now that the kids are grown up and out on their own. . . . I find time to stop doing everything, and I look up to the sky on bad days. I believe when I look up to the sky, I’m looking up to heaven. Like the person in the poem says, “Nature is Heaven.” I love this poem. It reminds me of my alone time when I feel in doubt. Then everything around me begins to have meaning and purpose about it: “Nature is what we see.”

(Roberta James)

This definitely speaks of how this person equates the beauty of nature with heaven, actually calling this nature heaven. Everything in nature is in harmony with itself—the bird’s song with the sea’s wavy sounds and even the insects and the weather all work in symphony with each other. How little we know of it all.

This one takes me back to when I was 14 years old and went on my first camping trip. This is exactly how I felt about all that was around me. Coming from the inner city of Chicago, I wanted to get lost in the sights, smells, and sounds that simply overloaded my senses out in the wilderness for the first time. Actually, I did get lost, twice—once by accident, and the next time on purpose.

(Charles Sallay)

#254

**“Hope” is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—**

**And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm—**

**I’ve heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.**

It expresses “Hope” as a bird with feathers, to me meaning it has no boundaries, no limits, and can be found not in space but within—the real place to search.

The image of the “little bird” . . . says that regardless of the storms we may come across in life, with “Hope” we can weather the storm and can be calm (warm) and steadfast . . . even in the midst of troubled waters.

On a personal note, I was very moved emotionally because I’ve had to daily affirm within myself to never give up Hope, and that Hope is always a strength to lean on or call on. Both Gandhi and Dr. King, for example, always maintained Hope at all cost or opposition.

(Edwin Shumpert)

Hope is a thing because it is a feeling, and the feeling is like a bird. Hope never fails us, and hope is always in us. She says that hope is sweetest because when you most need it is when you are in the middle of a storm. Hope keeps you from failing. The poem also talks about how hope can be found everywhere. Even in the chilliest land, somebody can be kept warm. When you are in the strangest place, like the sea, or in the most critical circumstances, you do not lose everything because of hoping.

This is my favorite poem because it is true. Even in the worst places and moments of our life, hope can keep us from failing; hope can hold us. If you hope, you do not need to pay or give away something. Hope is like a bird. The hope can keep you flying and reaching what you want.

(Erika Rosales Serate)

#1272

**So proud she was to die
It made us all ashamed
That what we cherished, so unknown
To her desire seemed—
So satisfied to go
Where none of us should be
Immediately—that Anguish stooped**

Almost to Jealousy—

It was her time to go, and she accepted it. They felt ashamed because they might not have felt it was her time to go. Jealousy took over the pain and hurt. They wanted to be where she was because she is in a better place.

This one hits home with me. I wish I could have taken someone's place so I could be stress and worry free.

(Shannon Lawrence)

#576

**I prayed, at first, a little Girl,
Because they told me to—
But stopped, when qualified to guess
How prayer would feel—to me—**

**If I believed God looked around,
Each time my Childish eye
Fixed full, and steady, on his own
In Childish honesty—**

**And told him what I'd like, today,
And parts of his far plan
That baffled me—
The mingled side
Of his Divinity—**

**And often since, in Danger,
I count the force 'twould be
To have a God so strong as that
To hold my life for me**

**Till I could take the Balance
That tips so frequent, now,
It takes me all the while to poise—
And then—it doesn't stay—**

Emily Dickinson speaks of God and how praying was imposed on her as a youth. Once she realized how "prayer" made her feel, it confused her when it came to what was beyond this life: "And parts of his far plan / that baffled me —/ The mingled side/ of his Divinity." Even through her confusion, she still had a faith that would not allow her to remove God from her life, no matter how she tries to maintain her life in equal proportions.

As being a "religious mutt" before mainly

because I saw many different aspects of truth in different religions, I can appreciate this work. Confusion is a part of life, as are love and hate. We must learn to have an unmoving faith even when what we see around us doesn't make sense and we cannot find an immediate medium. Faith in **WHAT YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE** will always allow a pathway for you, even if you cannot see the path. This is what I believe Emily Dickinson was expressing.

(Cameron Travis)

In this poem, Emily Dickinson is talking about being a little girl and praying because she was made to do so. She revealed in the poem that when she was old enough to be "qualified to guess" (in other words, when she was able to understand things on her own and not because she was being forced to do something), she stopped praying. But in stopping to pray, she began analyzing the things she was told as a child. For instance, she started thinking about the presence of God and his omnipotence in relation to her childish ways and perception.

She also thought of what it would be like to really tell Him what she wanted and how His plan confused her. She wondered about "the mingled side of this Divinity," which means the side of His divinity that possibly seemed mixed up to her. It baffled and confused her. She also talked about her life and how it seemed so unbalanced, which prevents her from praying. She thought about God's power and strength and how she wanted His strength to hold her life together.

I really liked this poem when I read it. It spoke to my own emotions and heart. I have



been where Emily Dickinson was—being made to pray as a child and not truly understanding why and what I was praying about. Then I came to an age of understanding—the age where I was able to articulate and ask questions from my own experiences. I often asked God, “Why do some people seemingly have great lives while others suffer? Will you actually protect me from life’s storms? Are you there?” and many more questions. I also feel Emily Dickinson is saying that she began understanding God for herself and not because of things she had heard about Him. This poem reminds me of Blake’s writings.

(Rhonda Johnson)

#749

**All but Death, can be Adjusted—
Dynasties repaired—
Systems—settled in their Sockets—
Citadels—dissolved—**

**Wastes of Lives—resown with Colors
By Succeeding Springs—
Death—unto itself—Exception—
Is exempt from Change—**

In this poem, Emily Dickinson is saying that death is the only thing that cannot be changed. Once Death strikes, it’s game over. Nothing you can do will change that outcome. We can change everything (or almost everything) around us and in us, but once Death has pulled your card, you are doomed.

I believe this to be true. Death is not a respecter of person, doesn’t care what plans have been made, the money you make, or the people you touch. Once your time has come, your time is up. So make peace with that and try to be the best that you can be.

(Shanita Lawrence)

#248

**Why—do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing—too loud?
But—I can say a little “Minor”
Timid as a Bird!**

**Wouldn’t the Angels try me—
Just—once—more—**

**Just—see—if I troubled them—
But don’t—shut the door!**

**Oh, if I—were the Gentleman
In the “White Robe”—
And they—were the little Hand—that
knocked—
Could—I—forbid?**

She’s asking why men treat women as second class. Why are women shut out of heaven, meaning the world? She felt that for women, being able to do what they wanted to do in life, being free, was heaven. For her, it was openly writing and being respected as a writer.

For me, it’s like racism when men think they’re superior to women. I think any time anyone is shut out, fear is clearly at play. Anyone who is secure and sure of themselves would not feel threatened by anyone else. In fact, they would welcome everyone to join them—to spread their wings and fly.

(Wynetta Taylor)

I believe she’s wondering why the man or society as a whole shut her out, and she really couldn’t express herself as a woman. Being loud would be using her own voice. . . . She feels that society and men don’t give women a chance because they shut them out, or shut them in, or shut them up, or even shut the door. I believe the workplace today is still sexist. For example, if you are a woman you are known to take the caregiver roles or the homemaker lifestyle. But if you’re a male you’re most likely looked upon as the knight



Little Angels by Raphael

in shining armor and the protector (police officers or fire fighters). I think that many women in certain positions don't have a solid voice to be heard or if they do, they aren't being listened to.

(Nicole Barnett)

An angel kicked the lady out of heaven. She didn't want to be noticed or be in the spotlight. She questioned the sound: was she too loud? She tried singing in a minor tone so she wouldn't be noticed. She's asking that they just give her one more chance to prove that she can do right. She feels that if she were the man who wore the white robe, then she would have power and strength.

I do not agree with this. Everyone has a voice, and they should not have to be "timid like a bird" or hide their real selves in order to be a part of something. One should not feel insecure about oneself. As a person, your power is confidence, esteem, and self respect.

(Dominique Christian)

#442

**God made a little Gentian—
It tried—to be a Rose—
And failed—and all the Summer laughed—
But just before the Snows**

**There rose a Purple Creature—
That ravished all the Hill—
And Summer hid her Forehead—
And Mockery—was still—**

**The Frosts were her condition—
The Tyrian would not come
Until the North—invoke it—
Creator—Shall I—bloom?**

God made me just how He wanted me to be. I didn't like who I was or how I was made, so I tried to be something I wasn't and failed. Everyone laughed who saw what I tried to do and be. As time passed, I accepted who I was and how I was made. I grew in that knowledge of who I was created to be, and I flourished. Everyone who had laughed and made fun of me stopped.

I had to accept who I was and how I was made. That was the only way I'd grow. I waited for the right time to come and was content with what I



was. I asked God, will I continue to grow? *Bloom where you are planted.*

(Felicia Jones)

#383

**Exhilaration — is within —
There can no Outer Wine
So royally intoxicate
As that diviner Brand**

**The Soul achieves — Herself —
To drink — or set away
For Visitor — Or Sacrament —
'Tis not of Holiday**

**To stimulate a Man
Who hath the Ample Rhine
Within his Closet — Best you can
Exhale in offering.**

Excitement comes from being at peace and comfortable with who you are. I don't have a need of an outside stimulant. I am naturally excited as being a child of God filled with His presence and spirit. I have a choice to do what everyone else is doing being worldly, or I can be separated unto the things of God, Holy as He is. I can socialize and be and do things that others do, or I can be in communion and fellowship with God. It doesn't have to be a special occasion for me to do this.

I can get excited by material possessions and have everything I want or want what others have,

or I can breathe in all the blessings God has for me as I find fellowship with Him.

You don't have to drink wine to be intoxicated or be excited. You can have a natural high and be intoxicated with the peace, love, and hope that's all inside of you, being happy with yourself just as you are.

(Felicia Jones)

Self stimulation/motivation starts from within. Nothing can stimulate or arouse the body and soul the way your own brain/mind can.

The soul can through the mind accomplish this place or state of existence, all on its very own, at any given time, alone or with a friend or during a special honored time of sentiment, whether it's a recognized holiday or not.

To attempt to exhilarate another person who already has a means of intoxication that the body and soul can reach can only happen through the mind and from the inside.

I so agree with what I feel this particular poem says to me when I read it. It reminds me of the time I spend during class homework. During this time I'm transported to a secret place of higher learning, deeper thinking, and more in-depth expression than I've ever had to think from before. This place has a permanent mailing address in my mind, and no one knows where it is or how to reach it but me alone.

(Mary Moore)

This speaks of Exhilaration. I personally love the word and its essence of expression. It tells you that it is from within . . . truly. It mentions that it is of a "Diviner Brand," that is to say of God. The "soul" reaches or achieves this plateau to stimulate a man or woman. The wisdom of it at best is to not fight it; just breathe and exhale the offering, the experience of the moment, the day, etc.

On a personal note, I think of it as a natural "high" or euphoria. In the poem, Emily Dickinson refers to it as being an intoxicant or fine wine.

In my opinion and experience, just being in the atmosphere and exposed to the humanities and various classics of literature and the arts is quite exhilarating.

(Edwin Shumpert)

#1763

Fame is a bee

It has a song—

It has a sting—

Ah, too, it has a wing.

Fame is addictive and can seduce you; it can cause you to take chances with your own life. Before you have gotten to know the full reality of what all your FAME can entail, it may leave.

(Alice McDaniel)

Fame is a bee. It flies around to every flower it can reach during its short life. Fame has a song, so it keeps itself entertained. It also draws others into its business with the potency of its song. Then it stings them, causing pain and possibly destruction. Then with its wings, it flies away to its next victim.

Fame can cause people to lose "who they are." It can also cause people to better their lives. Some stung by fame abuse it; the venom of fame gets in the bloodstream and rushes to the heart. When it reaches the heart, it either changes the good heart to bad or strengthens the good heart. Fame can also with the flutter of the wings be gone as quickly as it came.

(Otis Harris)

#543

I fear a Man of frugal Speech—

I fear a Silent Man—

Haranguer—I can overtake—

Or Babbler—entertain—

But He who weigheth—While the Rest—

Expend their furthest pound—

Of this Man—I am wary—

I fear that He is Grand—



She fears a man that is quiet but feels comfortable with a person that has a lot to say or a person who just rambles. She fears a silent person is better—a complete person. She feels inferior towards a quiet person.

I'm a silent person myself; I wonder if other people think of me that way. I know that some people think of me as selfish because I don't talk a lot.

(Ricky Barners)

#501

**This World is not Conclusion.
A Species stands beyond—
Invisible, as Music—
But positive, as Sound—
It beckons, and it baffles—
Philosophy—don't know—
And through a Riddle, at the last—
Sagacity, must go—
To guess it, puzzles scholars—
To gain it, Men have borne
Contempt of Generations
And Crucifixion, shown—
Faith slips—and laughs, and rallies—
Blushes, if any see—
Plucks at a twig of Evidence—
And asks a Vane, the way—
Much Gesture, from the Pulpit—
Strong Hallelujahs roll—
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
That nibbles at the soul—**

This World is not Conclusion was deep. I assume she was talking about hope, faith, life, and death. . . . I'm assuming "narcotic for the soul" is meant as a metaphor, saying that religion or believing in God is one's crutch or painkiller to living life. I think she wrote this poem to show that even intelligent people still have doubts but keep the faith because it's soothing.

. . . . I remember going to church every Sunday with my granny because I guess it was traditional. But so much has changed. Now I too have doubts, but I send my daughter to church every Wednesday and Sunday because it's soothing to me and because it's tradition.

(Sherice Lewis)

#1453

**A Counterfeit—a Plated Person—
I would not be—
Whatever strata of Iniquity
My Nature underlie—
Truth is good Health—and Safety, and the Sky.
How meagre, what an Exile—is a lie,
And Vocal—when we die—**

A fake or person that likes to cover himself up from what he really is not what you want to be. That person would be a trickster. The truth keeps a person's mind healthy and hopefully safe—safe enough, from Emily Dickinson's standpoint, to get to heaven. Wickedness and lies you should send away. There is no richness in lying.

I feel her words are right. Who wants to be around a fake person? Why be evil or hateful by being a person that lies?

(Jaunté Willis)

#855

**To own the art within the Soul
The Soul to entertain
With Silence as a Company
And Festival maintain**

**Is an unfurnished Circumstance
Possession is to One
As an Estate perpetual
Or a reduceless Mine.**

To be at peace within yourself is a reward that is a never-ending wealth. In order to own your own art, you need to reflect internally and silently.

(Betsy Pelto)



Two Dickinson Responses from Alumni

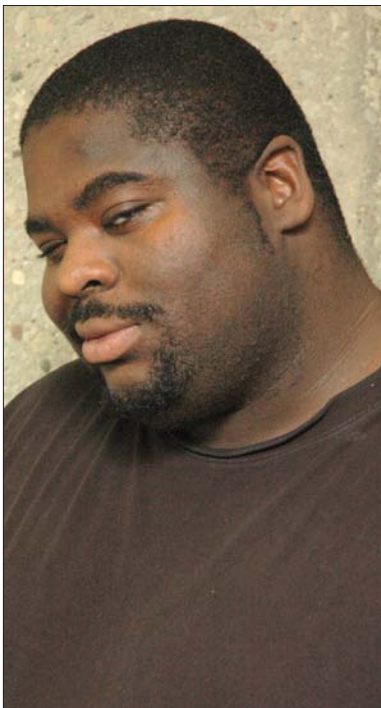
#1587

**He ate and drank the precious Words—
His Spirit grew robust—
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was Dust—**

**He danced along the dingy Days
And this Bequest of Wings
Was but a Book—What Liberty
A loosened spirit brings—**

This poem is about a man who begins to truly live once he starts to read. The words and concepts allow him to temporarily forget that he is but a man, living in poverty. Instead, these words allow him to soar, to experience other levels of reality.

I chose this one because in many ways it is about me. My mother would read to me every night. It started when I was still in the womb and continued until I was four years old. At that point, when story time came she handed me the book and told me to read. See, the beautiful thing about reading is you can be anybody who ever lived, go places you've never been, and do the most amazing things. Ever since she handed me a book, I've been reading. I now read some two to three books a week for leisure in addition to my free research I do every day.



There's a reason why I say that my mother was a saint, and it's because she released the shackles of my mind. My mother couldn't give me the material world, and she knew that; instead, she gave me the universe. She taught me how to fly and travel through dimensions.

Justin Wilson ('08)

J. 1677

**On my volcano grows the Grass
A meditative spot—
An acre for a Bird to choose
Would be the General thought—**

**How red the Fire rocks below—
How insecure the sod
Did I disclose Would populate
with awe my solitude.**

I believe this means on the surface we all wear masks. The volcano is the surface of who we are, and this is what most people see: a meditative spot. This is the perfect place for most individuals to start to get to know a person. It is the most common spot, a general thought, as Ms. Dickinson explains. However, there is another side deep within this volcano that is not stable, rather unsettling, and disturbed. The red fire rocks within this volcano or person. The pain that is waiting to escape leaves a path of pain and destruction along the way, touching and destroying everything, man and woman.

This poem I can relate to because I don't like for people to see or know my pain. I try to hide my pain and do not like to ask for help. I feel alone all the time because I feel no one understands me truly. My mother used to tell me all the time I was like a volcano because I kept things inside, not sharing my feelings. She also said that one day I would erupt and it would not be good.

**Jeffery
McCarroll ('08)**



Awards and Accomplishments

Teresa Tellez-Giron's (2004) radio program with La Movida is doing great. It earned two grants through Kids Fund and United Way, and also has a major sponsor. The program is one of the most successful in terms of serving the Latino Community for delivering helpful information/tools of prevention and intervention.

Maria Torres (2008) and her son Joeshua were awarded the Bread and Roses Award from Grassroots Leadership College for their demonstrated commitment and passionate leadership. Their organization's name is Mended Little Latino Hearts de Wisconsin, and its mission is to give the gift of hope to families of children with congenital heart defects and heart disease.

Katy Farrens (2006) made

the dean's list at Upper Iowa University.

Juanita Wilson (2007) received a letter that she made the dean's list at Madison Area Technical College.

Shanita Lawrence (2009) received a scholarship from The Business Forum.

Nicole Barnett (2009) received a scholarship from The Housing Ministry of American Baptist and made the dean's list at Madison Area Technical College.

Severn Anderson (2008) found out that he won an \$800.00 Scholarship through the Madison Area Technical College Foundation. His scholarship was made possible through the Emil J. Frautschi Scholarship Fund. He has also received a Pell Grant and aid from 'Wisconsin Indians.'

Josephine Lorya (2008) received perfect honors at Madison Area Technical College last semester.

She earned all A's in her classes and was also on the dean's list.

Mary Wells (2007) won a \$1500 Business Forum scholarship, made the dean's list for the 2nd year in a row at Madison Area Technical College, was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and is close to earning an IT-Comp TIA A+ Computer Essentials Certificate.

Anthony Ward (2004) is now one of Madison's finest. He graduated from the Police Academy this past January.

Diane Dennis (2007), the Odyssey coordinator, was nominated by Emily for a campus-wide award, and she won! Diane will receive a 2009 Classified Employee Recognition Award for her excellent behind-the-scenes work in helping to run the Odyssey Project and other humanities programs. She will receive this prestigious award at a dinner at the UW Chancellor's house on Wednesday, April 29.

Mandisa Hayes (2008) made the dean's list at Madison Area Technical College.

Congratulations, everyone!



left: Anthony Ward and Chief of Police Noble Wray

middle: (from left) Quintella Ward (2004), Anthony Ward (2004), and LaToya Ward (2005) at Anthony's graduation from the Police Academy.

right: Mary Wells' Phi Theta Kappa certificate
Photos by Drake N. Carter

