

Poems by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

THESE ARE THE DAYS WHEN BIRDS COME BACK

THESE are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,--
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

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IF I SHOULD DIE

IF I should die,
And you should live,
And time should gurgle on,
And morn should beam,
And noon should burn,
As it has usual done;
If birds should build as early,
And bees as bustling go,--
One might depart at option
From enterprise below!
'Tis sweet to know that stocks will stand
When we with daisies lie,
That commerce will continue,
And trades as briskly fly.
It make the parting tranquil
And keeps the soul serene,
That gentlemen so sprightly
Conduct the pleasing scene!

GOING TO HEAVEN!

GOING to heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how,--
Indeed, I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to heaven!--
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first,
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

I'm glad I don't believe it,
For it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!
I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon

I left them in the ground.

THE MURMUR OF A BEE

HE murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
'Twere easier to die
Than tell.

The red upon the hill
Taketh away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

I HAVE NOT TOLD MY GARDEN YET

HAVE not told my garden yet,
Lest that should conquer me;
I have not quite the strength now
To break it to the bee.

I will not name it in the street,
For shops would stare, that I,
So shy, so very ignorant,
Should have the face to die.

The hillsides must not know it,
Where I have rambled so,
Nor tell the loving forests
The day that I shall go,

Nor lisp it at the table,
Nor heedless by the way
Hint that within the riddle
One will walk to-day!

THE DAISY FOLLOWS SOFT THE SUN

HE daisy follows soft the sun,
And when his golden walk is done,
Sits shyly at his feet.
He, waking, finds the flower near.
"Wherefore, marauder, art thou here?"
"Because, sir, love is sweet!"

We are the flower, Thou the sun!
Forgive us, if as days decline,
We nearer steal to Thee,--
Enamoured of the parting west,
The peace, the flight, the amethyst,
Night's possibility!

I NEVER LOST AS MUCH BUT TWICE

NEVER lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod;
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,

Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST

SUCCESS is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear.

Emily Dickinson

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