

# An Emily Dickinson Suite

by  
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*Commissioned in 2009 by  
Amherst Regional High School, Amherst, Massachusetts,  
Director of Bands: Brian Messier*

Nine vignettes for wind ensemble  
inspired by poems of Emily Dickinson



1.

This is my letter to the world,  
That never wrote to me,--  
The simple news that Nature told,  
With tender majesty.

Her message is committed  
To hands I cannot see;  
For love of her, sweet countrymen,  
Judge tenderly of me!



2.

To hear an Oriole sing  
May be a common thing --  
Or only a divine.

It is not of the Bird  
Who sings the same, unheard,  
As unto Crowd --

The Fashion of the Ear  
Attireth that it hear  
In Dun, or fair --

So whether it be Rune,  
Or whether it be none  
Is of within.

The "Tune is in the Tree "

The Skeptic -- showeth me --  
"No Sir! In Thee!"



3.

I'm nobody! Who are you?

Are you nobody, too?

Then there's a pair of us -- don't tell!

They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!

How public, like a frog

To tell your name the livelong day

To an admiring bog!



4.

How happy is the little stone  
That rambles in the road alone,  
And doesn't care about careers,  
And exigencies never fears;  
Whose coat of elemental brown  
A passing universe put on;  
And independent as the sun,  
Associates or glows alone,  
Fulfilling absolute decree  
In casual simplicity.



5.

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.



6.

A narrow fellow in the grass  
Occasionally rides;  
You may have met him, did you not,  
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,  
A spotted shaft is seen;  
And then it closes at your feet  
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,  
A floor too cool for corn.  
Yet when a child, and barefoot,  
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash  
Unbraiding in the sun,--  
When, stooping to secure it,  
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people  
I know, and they know me;  
I feel for them a transport  
Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,  
Attended or alone,  
Without a tighter breathing,  
And zero at the bone.



7.

A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!  
Your prayers, oh Passer by!  
From such a common ball as this  
Might date a Victory!

From marshallings as simple  
The flags of nations swang.  
Steady -- my soul: What issues  
Upon thine arrow hang!



8.

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 chillest land  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.



9.

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