

About Emily Dickinson

From Emily Dickinson Museum

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Why is Emily famous?

Emily wrote a lot of poetry, and she was very good at it. She wrote mostly short poems, but each poem was full of meaning. Emily wrote a lot about nature, poets, religion, and death. She liked to send her friends poems along with flowers or baked goods. However, she didn't publish her poetry during her life.

After Emily died, her sister Vinnie was surprised to find eight hundred poems that Emily had hidden. Emily's family and friends had known that she liked to write poetry, but nobody knew she had written so many poems – almost 1,800! Vinnie decided that the world had to see her sister's poetry, so she got it published. Soon, many people were reading her poems. Now, Emily Dickinson is regarded as one of the greatest poets of the English language.

What was Emily's family like?

Emily's mom stayed at home, taking care of the kids and the house, and Emily's father was a lawyer and politician. He even served a term in the United States Congress! Emily had an older brother, Austin, and a younger sister, Vinnie. When they grew up, Austin married one of Emily Dickinson's best friends, Susan Gilbert. Austin and Sue moved to a house next door to Emily and her parents; the house is called The Evergreens. Austin and Sue had three children. Emily loved spending time with her niece and nephews. Emily never married and never had any kids of her own.

What did Emily like to do?

Emily did a lot of things besides writing poetry. She wrote lots of letters to her friends and family, and she spent time reading books. She loved to bake and cook. A friend of hers wrote, "She makes all the bread for her father only likes hers & says '& people must have puddings.'" She loved nature. She often went outside to garden, and she went on long walks with her big dog, Carlo.