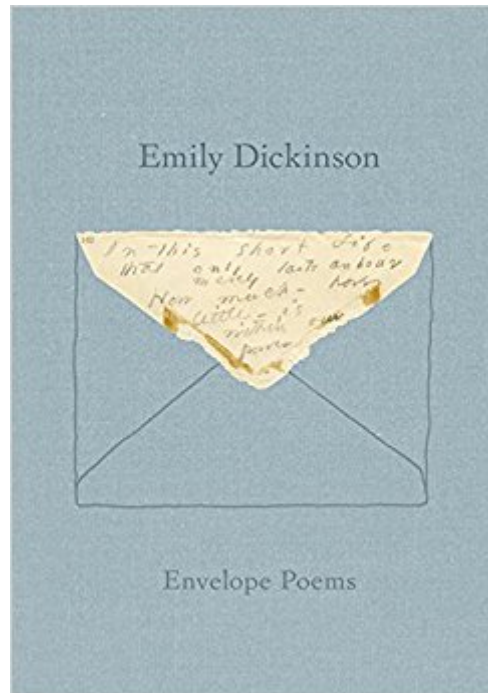




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Envelope Poems



Synopsis

Another gorgeous copublication with the Christine Burgin Gallery, *Emily Dickinson's Envelope Poems* is a compact clothbound gift book, a full-color selection from *The Gorgeous Nothings*. Although a very prolific poet and arguably America's greatest Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) published fewer than a dozen of her eighteen hundred poems. Instead, she created at home small handmade books. When, in her later years, she stopped producing these, she was still writing a great deal, and at her death she left behind many poems, drafts, and letters. It is among the makeshift and fragile manuscripts of Dickinson's later writings that we find the envelope poems gathered here. These manuscripts on envelopes (recycled by the poet with marked New England thrift) were written with the full powers of her late, most radical period. Intensely alive, these envelope poems are charged with a special poignancy—addressed to no one and everyone at once. Full-color facsimiles are accompanied by Marta L. Werner and Jen Bervin's pioneering transcriptions of Dickinson's handwriting. Their transcriptions allow us to read the texts, while the facsimiles let us see exactly what Dickinson wrote (the variant words, crossings-out, dashes, directional fields, spaces, columns, and overlapping planes).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“An insightful new volume, *The Gorgeous Nothings*, edited by Jen Bervin and Marta Werner, also provides a fascinating glimpse of Dickinson by assembling images documenting the

poetry she scrawled on repurposed envelopes – envelopes that have themselves been elevated to a new sort of art.

– Chicago Tribune

“For years, Dickinson critics have been looking for some kind of order among the manuscripts – some way to describe or theorize the “filing system” that the poet left and we found. In *The Gorgeous Nothings*, instead, what’s restored to these traces of the work is a sense of occasioned disorder. What’s been preserved through time in her handwriting is the decision to occupy the page. The page becomes just as important as the writing.

– Los Angeles Review of Books

“We see from *The Gorgeous Nothings* the way [Dickinson’s] art and life were not separate endeavors. Dickinson wrote poetry every time she addressed or received an envelope. Whenever there was paper around, she put quill or pencil right to it. Dickinson, master of paradox, started these un-conversations with nobody, and so many years after her death, now in curled script, with their sweet, perfect Ms and half-formed Ys, unpublished and unseen until now they speak to us. And they have so much yet to say.

– Brenda Shaughnessy, Los Angeles Times

“Here is a book almost as rare as its author, Emily Dickinson (1830-1886).

– Larry Smith, New York Journal of Books

“*The Gorgeous Nothings* is a rare gift for all poetry lovers.

– Craig Morgan Teicher, NPR

“The beautiful reproduction, on the pages of *The Gorgeous Nothings*, of what might seem only negligible scraps of waste paper brings us closer to the restlessness of the constantly thinking poet who, in her later years, repeatedly seized her pencil and a fragment of an envelope to write about the lowliest and the most exalted states of being.

– Helen Vendler, The New Republic

“The first and immediate shocks are in the words, with other, lingering, aftershocks following in the visual details of their settings. The great thing about [*The Gorgeous Nothings*] is, of course, that it gives us all of this, complete.

– Holland Cotter, The New York Times

“Dickinson’s incandescent thinking is everywhere on display, and the makeshift nature of the scraps gives us a vivid idea of what composition must have felt like for a woman whose thoughts raced far ahead of her ability to capture them.

– Dan Chiasson, The New Yorker

“[*The Gorgeous Nothings*] opens up an aspect of her craft that suggests she was, in the so-called late ecstatic period of her career, experimenting with creating texts in relation to the visual, spatial, and technological possibilities of her medium – composing in response to the confines of her writing world rather than despite it.

– The Quarterly Conversation

“*The Gorgeous Nothings* is one of the most ambitious, important literary feats of the year. It’s stunning, revelatory, and it functions as a key text to Dickinson’s oeuvre: seeing it demands a tectonic shift in the way we read her, brings her back to us even more extremely idiosyncratic than we could have guessed.

– The Rumpus

“Visual poets

around the world will soon be mining these endlessly suggestive fragments. — Marjorie Perloff, *Times Literary Supplement* — “The Gorgeous Nothings is proof that one of our most important poets can still amaze and teach us new thing about the practice of poetry. — Tupelo Quarterly — “Magnificent: the absolute perfect combination of solid scholarship and art. — Susan Howe — “This exquisitely produced book *The Gorgeous Nothings* — lovingly curated by Bervin and Werner — allows you to encounter Emily Dickinson — envelope poems — in full-color facsimile for the first time. It — an experience suspended between reading and looking, of toggling between those two modes of perception, and it thoroughly refreshes both. — Ben Lerner, *The New Yorker*

Arguably America’s greatest poet, Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) published fewer than a dozen of her eighteen hundred poems during her lifetime. Jen Bervin’s work includes *The Dickinson Composites*, *The Desert*, and *Nets*. Marta Werner’s books include *Emily Dickinson’s Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing and Radical Scatters: An Electronic Archive of Emily Dickinson’s Late Fragments and Related Texts*.

Well this is truly a gift from Miss Emily and the editors and publishers. And it’s a full color facsimile book of Emily Dickinson’s last poems written on the backs of envelopes which are reproduced here along with a delicate textual type of the poems. It makes available in a less expensive format (hard cover 96 pgs. for \$12.95) the select poems from *Gorgeous Nothings: Emily Dickinson’s Envelope Poems* (2013) by the same editors Jen Bervin and Marta Werner and produced by Cristine Burgin Publications. All of these charming attributes of facsimile publishing make the book a keepsake, but they also offer a new even intimate vision of the life and work of one of America’s finest poets. As noted critic Helen Vendler says of these last Dickinson fragments — “*What might seem only negligible scraps of waste paper brings us closer to the restlessness of the constantly thinking poet who, in her later years, repeatedly seized her pencil and a fragment of an envelope to write about the lowliest and the most exalted states of being.* — Dickinson had stopped writing poems for publication at this point or even for her own delicate poem packets of finished poems. She declares her late earned stance in metaphor: *One note from One Bird is better than a million words A scabbard has / holds / needs / but one sword* This beautifully executed book of poems truly needs to be seen and held in the hands as a piece of visual art. It contains the essence of a poet who for over a century has informed and delighted us with her fierce charm and her oh, so

memorable lines. It truly is a gift from Miss Emily

A worthy addition to Emily Dickinson studies and appreciations.

Beautiful edition of the poems Emily used to write in envelopes and loose pieces of paper. A fascinating evidence of her talent and creativity.

What a wonderful book! Snippets and drafts of poems, in a unique and attractive format. A lovely little book. If you love Emily Dickinson, this is a must!

Book is interesting. Was delivered in excellent condition.

Lovely

Exquisite book...

Charming adaptation of well-loved poems. A joy to hold and read

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