

The Single Hound

101
pages

The Single Hound

Poems of a Lifetime

Emily Dickinson



ALMA CLASSICS

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The Single Hound

The Single Hound

TO SUE

*One sister have I in our house,
And one a hedge away –
There's only one recorded,
But both belong to me.*

*One came the way that I came,
And wore my last year's gown –
The other, as a bird her nest,
Builded our hearts among.*

*She did not sing as we did –
It was a different tune –
Herself to her a music,
As bumblebee of June.*

*Today is far from childhood,
But up and down the hills
I held her hand the tighter,
Which shortened all the miles.*

*And still her hum the years among
Deceives the butterfly –
Still in her eye the violets lie
Mouldered this many May.*

THE SINGLE HOUND

*I spilt the dew, but took the morn,
I chose this single star –
From out the wide night's numbers,
Sue – for evermore!*

– *Emily*

(c.1858)

PART ONE

I

Adventure most unto itself
The soul condemned to be;
Attended by a single hound –
Its own identity.

(c.1864)

II

The soul that hath a guest
Doth seldom go abroad –
Diviner crowd at home
Obliterate the need,
And courtesy forbid
A host's departure, when
Upon Himself be visiting
The Emperor of Men!

(c.1863)

III

Except the smaller size, no lives are round –
These hurry to a sphere and show and end.
The larger, slower grow, and later hang –
The summers of Hesperides are long.*

(c.1863)

IV

Fame is a fickle food
Upon a shifting plate,
Whose table once a guest – but not
The second time – is set,
Whose crumbs the crows inspect,
And with ironic caw
Flap past it to the farmer's corn –
Men eat of it and die.

(Undated)

PART ONE

V

The right to perish might be thought
An undisputed right –
Attempt it, and the universe
Upon the opposite
Will concentrate its officers:
You cannot even die,
But nature and mankind must pause
To pay you scrutiny.

(Undated)

VI

Peril as a possession
'Tis good to bear,
Danger disintegrates satiety.
There's basis there
Begets an awe
That searches human nature's creases
As clean as fire.

(Undated)

VII

When Etna basks and purrs,
Naples is more afraid
Than when she shows her garnet tooth –
Security is loud.

(c.1869)

VIII

Reverse cannot befall
That fine prosperity
Whose sources are interior –
As soon adversity
A diamond overtake
In far Bolivian ground –
Misfortune hath no implement
Could mar it, if it found.

(c.1863)

IX

To be alive is power –
Existence in itself,
Without a further function,
Omnipotence enough.

To be alive and will
'Tis able as a god!
The further of ourselves be what –
Such being finitude?

(c.1864)

X

Witchcraft has not a pedigree –
'Tis early as our breath;
And mourners meet it going out
The moment of our death.

(Undated)

XI

Exhilaration is the breeze
That lifts us from the ground
And leaves us in another place
Whose statement is not found;
Returns us not, but after time
We soberly descend –
A little newer for the term –
Upon enchanted ground.

(c.1869)

XII

No romance sold unto
Could so enthrall a man
As the perusal of
His individual one.
'Tis fiction's to dilute
To plausibility
Our novel – when 'tis small enough,
To credit – 'tish't true!

(c.1863)

XIII

If what we could were what we would,
Criterion be small:
It is the ultimate of talk
The impotence to tell.

(c.1863)

XIV

Perception of an object costs
Precise the object's loss –
Perception in itself a gain
Replying to its price.
The object absolute is nought –
Perception sets it fair,
And then upbraids a perfectness
That situates so far.

(c.1865)

XV

No other can reduce
Our mortal consequence
Like the remembering it be nought
A period from hence;
But contemplation for
Cotemporaneous nought –
Our single competition –
Jehovah's estimate.

(c.1865)

XVI

The blunder is in estimate.
"Eternity is *there*,"
We say as of a station –
Meanwhile He is so near,
He joins me in my ramble,
Divides abode with me,
No friend have I that so persists
As this Eternity.

(Undated)

XVII

My wheel is in the dark,
I cannot see a spoke –
Yet know its dripping feet
Go round and round.

My foot is on the tide –
An unfrequented road –
Yet have all roads
A “clearing” at the end.

Some have resigned the loom,
Some in the busy tomb
Find quaint employ;
Some with new, stately feet
Pass royal through the gate,
Flinging the problem back at you and I.

(c.1859)

XVIII

There is another loneliness
That many die without:
Not want or friend occasions it,
Or circumstance or lot,

But nature sometimes, sometimes thought,
And whoso it befall
Is richer than could be divulged
By mortal numeral.

(c.1867)

XIX

So gay a flower bereaved the mind
As if it were a woe –
Is beauty an affliction, then?
Tradition ought to know.

(c.1879)

XX

Glory is that
Bright tragic thing
That for an instant
Means dominion –
Warms some poor name
That never felt the sun,
Gently replacing
In oblivion.

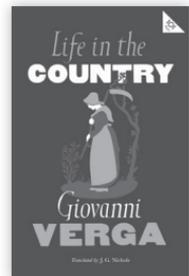
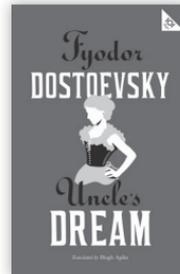
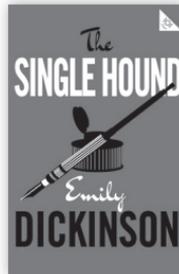
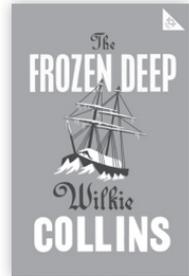
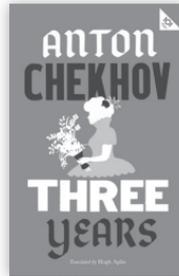
(Undated)

XXI

The missing all prevented me
From missing minor things.
If nothing larger than a world's
Departure from a hinge
Or sun's extinction be observed,
'Twas not so large that I
Could lift my forehead from my work
For curiosity.

(c.1865)

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