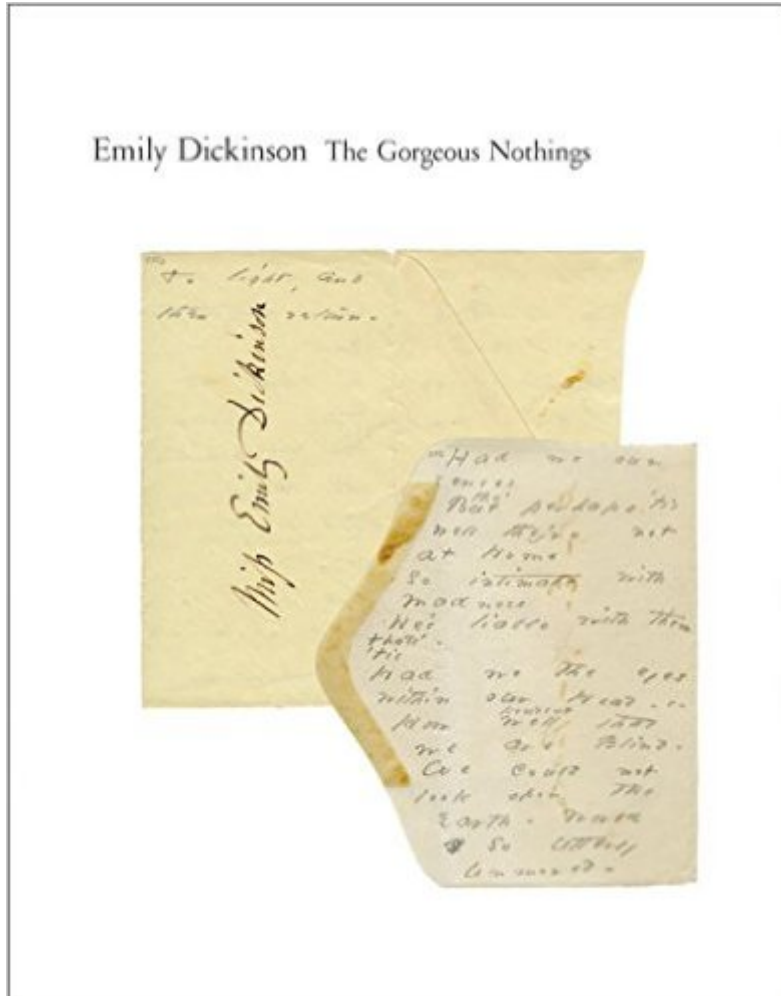


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The Gorgeous Nothings: Emily Dickinson's Envelope Poems



Synopsis

The Gorgeous Nothings is a pivotal book: the first full-color publication of Emily Dickinson's complete envelope writings in facsimile from her visually stunning manuscripts, here in a deluxe, large-scale edition. The Gorgeous Nothings is the first full-color facsimile edition of Emily Dickinson's manuscripts ever to appear and is a deluxe edition of her late writings, presenting this crucially important, experimental late work exactly as she wrote it on scraps of envelopes. A never-before-possible glimpse into the process of one of our most important poets. The book presents all the envelope writings—52—reproduced life-size in full color both front and back, with an accompanying transcription to aid in the reading, allowing us to enjoy this little-known but important body of Dickinson's writing. Envisioned by the artist Jen Bervin and made possible by the extensive research of the Dickinson scholar Marta L. Werner, this book offers a new understanding and appreciation of the genius of Emily Dickinson. 110

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The editors have spared nothing in the art, the words, the cataloguing, and the sharing of a side of Emily Dickinson—her writing on fragments, the crossings out and divisions of words, the careful spacing on fragments of paper, the love of the poet and her life that they put in this project. For anyone who wants to understand Dickinson as a real person he or she can reach through her poetry, I recommend this book.

These pieces are highly condensed art, thought in motion, playful, provocative, engaging, rich. The photo reproductions let you see not only how Dickinson adapted to the spaces of these texts but how she did so intentionally. This is concrete poetry avant la lettre, wonderful, powerful, meditative, and profound.

I couldn't wait for the delivery (sorry,). I sped down to my local bookstore where a copy waited for me. I carefully took it upstairs, got my cup of tea, and sat at a table to browse through it. No sooner had my fingertip traced the markings on one of the images when I felt the most amazing warmth ... energy. I could do nothing but sit there and look at this magnificent book. I was enchanted. This is Emily's hand. These are her thoughts as they came to her, edits and all. It was magical. The book was much thicker than I expected because each envelope/scrap was photographed from all possible angles, front and back, and all was reproduced in full size. It is a treasure.

This is a gorgeous book and well worth your attention. The people who put it together have superb editorial and artistic sensibility, and the book takes one so close to Dickinson's modes of thinking and composition that it practically brings shivers. Having spent some time in archives, seeing some of the sketchings of words and images on cards and all sorts of paper, of Charles Olson and David Jones, I think there is something quite opening (to the mind and sensibilities) about such encounters. I have perhaps some slight qualms about then putting them into books, as it's not the same thing, i.e. it makes something a little more formal and distanced out of the experience, yet there is simply no other way for many people to encounter such writings, fragments, hesitations, moments of consciousness -- and I can't imagine anyone doing it better than Marta Werner and Jen Bervin have managed to do it here. Bravo!

Everyone who has spent substantial time with Dickinson's poetry and learned all that can be learned about her life, as well as life in Amherst at that time, should obtain this reproduction of the way she wrote. Frankly, no one seems to have taken into consideration a number of influences that dictated the way she wrote, namely poverty, her father's stinginess (perhaps too strong), the difficulty of having clean or any paper to write on, and more, all of which led to her having to seize scraps anywhere and any way they were available to have something upon which to write. The reproductions in this book verify, they confirm that approach. I learned this from my wife, who -- I say this as a scholar myself, though in a different field -- knows as much and I believe more than anyone else about Dickinson, her life and work.

the overwhelming simplicity of this volume accurately reflects the profound directness of emily dickinson's poetry i first read her poetry in the early 1960s as an english major in college where i had the good fortune to have r.w.b. lewis as my professor the poet has always held a special place in my heart, nowhere manifest more than by choosing the first name emily for my first child and only daughter i purchased this book as a gift for "my emily" she will treasure this volume as do i

Emily's ethereal jottings matched with her unusual handwriting makes for an unusual treat for the Dickinson fan. The book itself is large, heavy, intentionally stark yet rich with detail. I asked for this book for Christmas and, when I received it, was more touched by it than by any other gift. Beautifully done.

I've compiled so much information about the Belle over the years, I did a six-part series of columns (so far) on a poetry site I belong to. I have many books about Emily in addition to her collected poems, her biography, her letters, etc. I've been collecting books about her since the late 1970's. This is an absolutely cherished treasure. I turn the pages in awe.

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