



**Emily
DICKINSON
Museum**
THE HOMESTEAD &
THE EVERGREENS

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emily Dickinson Museum to Celebrate National Poetry Month with Third Annual “A little Madness in the Spring” April 21, 22 and 23

AMHERST, Mass.—The Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens will sponsor the third annual “A little Madness in the Spring” event in honor of National Poetry Month with a varied program of Dickinsonian revelry. Highlights include a reading by poet Mary Jo Salter; an all-day, all-night marathon reading of Emily Dickinson’s 1,789 poems led by a number of prominent poets and writers; and a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the landmark play *The Belle of Amherst*. All events are free and open to the public.

“This tremendous scene” also includes a lecture by Karen Sánchez-Eppler, professor of American studies and English at Amherst College and author of the newly-published *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in 19th-Century American Culture*; a children’s mini-marathon reading of selected Dickinson poetry; “I heard, as if I had no Ear,” a talk by artist Lesley Dill, whose acclaimed print, sculptural and installation work draws upon the poetry of Dickinson; and a nature walk, led by John Green of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment—a co-sponsor of the nature program—along the Emily Dickinson Trail in Groff Park. A complete schedule for the weekend is attached.

“‘Madness’ gives us a chance to celebrate Emily Dickinson’s poetry and legacy in a variety of ways, and in a short period of time,” said Cindy Dickinson, the museum’s director of interpretation and programming. “Bringing people together to celebrate poetry and Emily Dickinson is something we hope to achieve year-round, but in especially ‘mad’ and creative ways during National Poetry Month.”

Mary Jo Salter, this year’s featured poet, will kick off the festival on Friday afternoon at 4 p.m. with a reading on the Homestead grounds. Author of several collections of poems, her most recent work is *Open Shutters*. The Emily Dickinson Senior Lecturer in the Humanities at Mount Holyoke College, Salter is an essayist and reviewer for such publications as *The New York Times Book Review* and *The Yale Review*, and has received fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. She will read from her own work, and will discuss the significant influence Emily Dickinson has had on her poetry.

From Doris Abramson to Matthew Zapruder, the list of readers participating in Saturday’s poetry marathon is a who’s who of notable literary figures. Slated to begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning on the Homestead lawn, the marathon will continue until all of Dickinson’s poems have been read. There will be opportunities throughout the marathon for audience members to read, and those who make it until the end can celebrate with a sunrise breakfast. The Poetry Center at Smith College is collaborating with the Museum on this event.

The weekend concludes on Sunday afternoon with a celebration of *The Belle of Amherst*, the one-person play by William Luce that has had a profound effect on the public’s interest in Emily Dickinson’s poetry. The museum will mark the play’s 30th anniversary at 2 p.m. with a showing of a filmed version of the play and a panel discussion. Moderated by Cullen Murphy, senior editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, the panel will explore the role that performances and presentations of different media have played in our modern-day perception of the poet, her times and her work. The museum has received a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation of the Humanities in support of this program.

During “Madness” weekend, the museum will offer guided tours of the Homestead and The Evergreens on Friday, from 1 to 5 p.m.; on Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and on Sunday, from 10 a.m. to noon.

“A little Madness in the Spring” is made possible by the generous support of the Valley Advocate, 88.5FM-WFCR, NPR News and Music for Western New England, TD Banknorth, Jones Town & Country Realty, Black Sheep Deli, The Lord Jeffery Inn and the Amherst College Department of English.

The Emily Dickinson Museum’s days and hours of operation change seasonally. In April and May, the museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Beginning in June and continuing through August, the museum will be open Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors/students, \$5 for young people ages 6 to 18, and no charge for children under 6.

The museum is located at 280 Main Street in Amherst and is owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. For more information about the Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens please call 413/542-8161 or visit www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Wheelchair-accessible parking is available at the Homestead; all other vehicles are asked to park on the street or in an Amherst College lot on Spring Street. Call for more information about accessibility.

“A little Madness in the Spring”

Friday, April 21 - Sunday, April 23

The Emily Dickinson Museum’s third annual celebration of National Poetry Month.

All programs are free and open to the public; one program (nature walk) requires advance registration.

Friday, April 21

4 p.m. Poetry Reading and Appreciation by Mary Jo Salter. Emily Dickinson Senior Lecturer in the Humanities at Mount Holyoke College, Salter will read from her own work and comment on Dickinson’s influence and inspiration. On the Homestead lawn.

Saturday, April 22

9 a.m. The Marathon. A marathon reading of all 1,789 Dickinson poems begins and will continue until we finish! On the Homestead lawn. Readers include: Janet Aalfs, Doris Abramson, Madeline Blais, Annie Boutelle, Corinne Demas, Patrick Donnelly, Amy Dryansky, Deb Gorlin, Tzivia Gover, Stephanie Grant, James Haug, Patricia Hill, Cynthia Huntington, Marsha Janson, Jay Ladin, Julius Lester, Patricia Lee Lewis, David Lenson, Margaret Lloyd, Cleopatra Mathis, Gail Mazur, Cammie McGovern, Marilyn Nelson, Lisa Olstein, Susan Snively, Margaret Szumowski, Ellen Dore Watson, Dara Wier, Jane Yolen, Matthew Zapruder.

2 p.m. Some Other Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Books: *The Hale Children’s Homemade Libraries*. A lecture by Karen Sánchez-Eppler, professor of English and American studies at Amherst College. Sánchez-Eppler is the author of *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in 19th-Century American Culture* (2005). Pruyne Lecture Hall, 115 Fayerweather, Amherst College campus.

4 p.m. The Mini-Marathon. Children will read selected poems by Emily Dickinson in an hour-long mini-version of the poetry marathon. At the Homestead.

Sunday, April 23

11 a.m. “Some keep the Sabbath.” A nature walk along the Emily Dickinson Trail at Groff Park on Mill Lane in Amherst. Led by naturalist John Green, the walk will explore the differences and similarities between today’s flora and fauna and those of the 19th century. Advance registration required; call 413-542-2034 to register. Co-sponsored with the Hitchcock Center for the Environment.

Noon “I heard, as if I had no Ear.” Lesley Dill, visual artist. Lesley Dill will discuss her passion for and journey with Emily Dickinson’s words, including her most recent work, “Six Degrees of Collaboration.” At the Homestead.

2-5 p.m. “The Poets light but Lamps”: A Viewing and Discussion of *The Belle of Amherst* and Modern Perceptions of a Major Poet. In celebration of the 30th anniversary of *The Belle of Amherst*. The celebration will include a showing of the filmed version of the play, followed by a moderated panel discussion. Moderator is Cullen Murphy of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Panelists are scholar Christopher Benfey, visual artist Lesley Dill, playwright William Luce, author Elizabeth Spires, historical reenactor Belinda West and filmmaker Jim Wolpaw. At Cole Assembly Room in Converse Hall at Amherst College. This program is funded in part by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.

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