



Emily
DICKINSON
Museum
THE HOMESTEAD &
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NEWS RELEASE

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DOES EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY HAVE HEALING POWER? March 28 "Wider than the Sky" Reading and Discussion Looks at Loss

Amherst, MASS – On Wednesday, March 28 at 7 p.m. at the Emily Dickinson Museum, Cindy MacKenzie and Barbara Dana, editors of a forthcoming book "*Wider than the Sky*": *Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*, will read and share personal stories of grief and loss overcome by Dickinson's poetry.

"We're very glad to be able to offer this program to a wide audience," said Jane Wald, executive director for the Emily Dickinson Museum. "The way Dickinson captured her own emotions with words can have a profound and heartening effect on the emotions of others."

The book, which will be published by Kent State University Press this fall, was inspired by the writers' own experiences using Dickinson's poetry to heal after loss. The volume features essays by seventeen contributors, including Dickinson scholars Ellen Louise Hart, Polly Longworth and Martha Nell Smith; poets Cynthia Hogue, Jay Ladin and Gregory Orr; and therapist Marion Woodman. The book's title comes from a Dickinson poem that begins "The Brain - is wider than the Sky."

Dana and MacKenzie will read selections from the book and share several Dickinson poems that have had particular resonance during difficult times in their own lives. The audience will be invited to join in the discussion and, if they care to, share poems significant to their own life experiences.

There is no charge to attend the March 28 reading but advance registration is requested. To register, call (413) 542-2034 or e-mail nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

Barbara Dana is an actor and award-winning author of books for children and young adults. Her books include *Zucchini*, *Zucchini Out West*, *Crazy Eights*, *Necessary Parties*, *Rutgers and the Water Snouts*, *Spencer and His Friends* and *Young Joan*, based on the life of Joan of Arc. She has written a number of screenplays, including the award-winning screen version of her novel *Necessary Parties*. Her first play, *War in Paramus*, premiered Off-Broadway at the Abingdon Theatre Company in 2005. Dana is currently at work on a novel for HarperCollins based on the young life of Emily Dickinson.

Cindy MacKenzie is a professor of English at the University of Regina in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. She has written extensively on Emily Dickinson, including articles in the *Emily Dickinson Bulletin* and *The Emily Dickinson Journal*. She is also the author of *A Concordance to the Letters of Emily Dickinson*. She serves on the board of the Emily Dickinson International Society and is currently at work on "*To Pile like Thunder*": *Emily Dickinson's Poetics*, a book-length study of Dickinson's rhetorical devices. MacKenzie is also an assistant editor for an upcoming collection of essays on Dickinson's letters.

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