



NEWS RELEASE

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“A little Madness in the Spring” Turns Emily Dickinson Museum Upside Down April 28 & 29; Dickinson Museum Goes to the Dogs

AMHERST, Mass.—The Emily Dickinson Museum’s celebration of National Poetry Month, appropriately named after Dickinson’s poem “A little Madness in the Spring,” takes over Amherst on Saturday, April 28, and Sunday, April 29, with a range of lectures, programs and outdoor events that will inspire even the most canine of poetry fans.

“This year, we’re paying special tribute to the poet’s dog Carlo. Carlo became a fixture in the poet’s life from 1850 to his death in 1866 and was a source of constant companionship for Dickinson,” said Jane Wald, executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum. “To that end, we’ve created a program on Sunday that even dogs can enjoy.”

The weekend opens on Saturday with an 11 a.m. talk by writer Jeanne Braham and artist Barry Moser at the Amherst Women’s Club. Together, Braham and Moser collaborated on a recently released book, *The Light within the Light: Portraits of Donald Hall, Richard Wilbur, Maxine Kumin and Stanley Kunitz*, which examines portraiture created with both words and art. Former U.S. poet laureate, Richard Wilbur will introduce the program with some of his own poetic portraits. A reception and book signing will follow the program.

On Saturday afternoon, the sometimes silly, sometimes serious program focuses on the landscape of both Dickinson homes. Landscape consultant Marta McDowell, author of *Emily Dickinson’s Gardens*, will give a lecture on Dickinson’s herbarium at 2 p.m. at the Amherst Women’s Club. Following the lecture, participants can choose between two hands-on workshops at the Homestead at 3:30 p.m., one on establishing an herbarium garden and another on planting a container conservatory much like the one Dickinson kept.

At 3:15 p.m. on Saturday, poet Mary Jo Salter will launch the museum’s new landscape audio tour, “Grounds of Memory,” with a short reading on the museum grounds. The tour, which was funded in part by the Institute for Museum and Library Services, was recorded with the help of WFCR 88.5FM and features the voices of Richard Wilbur, Mary Jo Salter, John Martin, Jane Wald, Marta McDowell and Walter Carroll. The tour includes 18 stops significant to the poet’s family and is free throughout the weekend on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Emily Dickinson’s poetry celebrates the landscape and natural world with such depth and nuance. The landscape was so meaningful to each member of her family in his or her own way,” said Wald. “We’re so excited to be able to help visitors make meaningful connections with the land as well as the two Dickinson family homes.”

Two Juniper Literary Festival lectures will take place on Saturday, April 28, at the Emily Dickinson Museum in conjunction with “A little Madness in the Spring.” *Weird War: The Politics of Whimsy* will investigate contemporary world events and the literary responses to them at 2:15 p.m. in the Homestead Tour Center. In the same location at 3:30 p.m., *Going Viral: The Internet and New Literary Criticism* will explore the intersection of the literary Website with traditional media.

On Sunday afternoon, “A little Madness in the Spring” goes to the dogs with an outdoor celebration of the poet’s dog Carlo that begins at 12:30 p.m. on the museum grounds. Visitors are invited to bring their dogs out for a number of 19th-century dog amusements and a dog parade in honor of the poet’s walks with Carlo. A real “Carlo” will meet and greet guests. All canine guests are required to be on short leashes, and for children in want of a four-legged friend, stuffed animals are also welcome. Owners are encouraged to register their pets in advance by calling 413/542-2034.

For dog’s best friend, a lecture by professor and author Katherine C. Grier titled “The Dog is the noblest work of Art” will take place at 3 p.m. at the Amherst Women’s Club. Grier is the author of the recently published book *Pets in America* and a professor in the Office of Academic Programs at the Winterthur Museum. She will give a history of the domesticated dog in the United States. A book signing will follow.

All “Madness” events are free and open to the general public, with the exception of the gardening workshops, which require pre-registration and a materials fee. To register, call 413/542-2034 or e-mail nfischlein@emilydickinsonmuseum.org. For a full schedule of events, visit www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/events.html.

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