



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Donna M. Abelli

Development & Marketing Manager

t. 413/542-5084

f. 413/542-2152

dmabelli@emilydickinsonmuseum.org

Annual Emily Dickinson Poetry Walk and Open House May 16 To Commemorate Anniversary of Poet's Death

AMHERST, Mass. – The Emily Dickinson Museum: The Homestead and The Evergreens will sponsor the annual Emily Dickinson Poetry Walk and Open House on Saturday, May 16, at 1 p.m. The events—which mark the anniversary of the poet's death on May 15, 1886, with readings of Dickinson's poetry at six historic sites in Amherst—are free and open to the public. (In the event of rain, the program will take place at First Congregational Church, 165 Main Street.)

The Poetry Walk will begin at 1 p.m. in the Homestead garden at the museum, proceed through Amherst stopping at various sites significant in Dickinson's life, and end at her grave in West Cemetery. The format of this year's walk, however, marks a departure from previous walks. Five area poets—Deborah Gorlin, Daniel Hall, Lisa Olstein, Pat Schneider and Ellen Watson—will each read and comment on his or her favorite Dickinson poem at a different site. Attendees will receive a souvenir booklet containing the poems that the readers have selected for the walk. The specific stops along the walk are as follows:

- 1 p.m. Dickinson Homestead garden, 280 Main Street
- 1:20 p.m. Amherst Train Station, Railroad Street
- 1:40 p.m. Front steps of the Evergreens, 214 Main Street
- 2 p.m. Front lawn of the Amherst History Museum, 67 Amity Street
- 2:20 p.m. Parking lot behind Zanna, 187 North Pleasant Street (next to Ren's Mobil Service, site of Dickinson's home)
- 2:30 p.m. Dickinson's grave site, West Cemetery, Triangle Street

The Museum will then host an open house after the walk from 3 to 4 p.m. The Homestead and The Evergreens will be open for self-guided tours during that time, and guides will be on hand to answer questions. Walk readers will also be present to sign their books.

Gorlin teaches writing at Hampshire College and is one of the poetry editors of *The Massachusetts Review*. Hall is the Writer-in-Residence at Amherst College and also directs the school's Creative Writing Center. Olstein serves as associate director of the MFA program for Poets and Writers at the University of Massachusetts and as director of the Juniper Summer Writing Institute. Schneider is the founder and director emerita of Amherst Writers & Artists. Dore Watson directs the Poetry Center at Smith College and is one of the poetry editors of *The Massachusetts Review*.

Programs and maps of the walk's one-mile route will be available at the Dickinson Museum, and participants are welcome to join the activity at any point along the route. Those who wish to participate only in the cemetery reading should meet at the Dickinson grave in West Cemetery on Triangle Street at 2:30 p.m.

The Emily Dickson Poetry Walk and Open House are part of *The Big Read: The Poetry of Emily Dickinson* and take place during a busy Emily Dickinson weekend. Also scheduled are the premiere of *Emily of Amherst*, (May 15 through 17), an interpretive biographical ballet based on the poet's life presented by Amherst Ballet, and a Sunday afternoon tea on the museum grounds (May 17). For more information about these two events, visit www.amherstballet.org.

The Big Read: The Poetry of Emily Dickinson is part of a pilot initiative created by the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Poetry Foundation to celebrate great American poets and the nation's historic poetry locales. Free copies of a Reader's Guide and a Teacher's Guide to the poetry of Emily Dickinson will be available to attendees at all *The Big Read* events. For more information about *The Big Read* programs please contact Cindy Dickinson, at 413-542-8429 or csdickinson@emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

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.

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