

My Letter to the World

Selected Poems of
Emily Dickenson

Set to Music by
Daniel R. Mitchell

Voice (Soprano or Tenor)
Piano
Double Bass (plucked)



Emily Dickenson

Daguerreotype taken at Mount Holyoke, December 1846 or early 1847.
The original is held by Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

List of Songs

1. This Is My Letter To The World
2. Tell All The Truth
3. Hope Is The Thing With Feathers
4. Faith Is A Fine Invention
5. I Taste A Liquor Never Brewed
6. I'm Nobody!
7. Unreturning
8. I Dwell In Possibility
9. I Shall Not Live In Vain
10. Dawn (When Night Is Almost Done)
11. Success Is Counted Sweetest
12. Our Share Of Night To Bear
13. The Heart Seeks Pleasure First
14. Wild Nights
15. Much Madness Is Divinest Sense
16. Fame Is A Bee
17. If Ever The Lid Gets Off My Head
18. She Sweeps With Many-colored Brooms

Performance Notes

Tempo, dynamics, and piano pedal marking are recommendations.
As always, values used for performance are left to the discretion of the musicians.

The written pitch range is C4 to A5 and would allow these to be sung by Mezzo-soprano.

The Double Bass part is optional for most of the songs. It can also be performed with an electric bass guitar, or keyboard.

This Is My Letter To The World

♩ = 80

Voice

Piano

Bass

p *mf*

6 *mp*

This is my let - ter to the World That nev - er wrote to Me The

mp

Red.

mp

11 *mf*

sim-ple News that Nat - ure told With tend-er Maj - es - ty

mf

Red.

mf

16

Her Mes - sage is com -

21

-mit - ed To Hands I can-not see For love of Her Sweet coun-try -

26

-men Judge ten - der - ly of Me

The musical score for page 31 consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and contains five measures of whole rests. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat. It contains five measures of music. The first four measures feature a melodic line in the treble clef with eighth notes and a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The fifth measure features a melodic line in the treble clef with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Dynamics include a piano (*p*) marking at the start of the fifth measure. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat, containing five measures of music. The first four measures feature a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The fifth measure features a melodic line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Dynamics include a piano (*p*) marking at the start of the fifth measure. The word "Ped." is written below the first four measures of the bottom staff, indicating a pedal point.

Tell All The Truth

♩ = 96

Voice *mf*
Tell all the truth but tell it slant

Piano *mp* *mf*
Red. *Red.* *Red.*

Bass *mp* *mf*
Red. *Red.* *Red.*

4

Suc-cess in Cir-cuit lies Too bright for our in -

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

7

-firm De - light the Truth's su - perb sur - prise.

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The system includes a vocal line with rests, a piano accompaniment with a busy sixteenth-note texture, and a bass line with a simple harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp* and *Red.* markings.

13

Musical score for measures 13-15. The vocal line contains the lyrics "As Light - ning to the Chil - dren eased With". The piano accompaniment continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, and *p* markings.

16

Musical score for measures 16-18. The vocal line contains the lyrics "ex - plan - a - tion kind. The". The piano accompaniment features a change in texture and dynamics. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp* markings.

19

Truth must daz - zle gra - du - al - ly Or

mp *mf*

(Red.) Red. Red. Red. Red.

mp

22

ev - e - ry man be blind.

(Red.) Red. Red. Red.

25

(Red.) Red.

Hope Is The Thing With Feathers

$\text{♩} = 80$

Voice *mf*

Piano *p* *mf*

Bass *p* *mf*

Hope is the thing with fea - thers

7

that perch - es in the soul, And sings the tune with - out the words and ne - ver stops at all. And

Red. Red. Red.

13

sweet - est in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm that could a - bash the lit - tle bird

Red. Red. Red. Red.

19

that kept so ma-ny warm. I've heard it in the chil - lestland and on the stran-ge-st

mf

mf

mf

24

sea, Yet, nev - er, in ex-trem-i - ty, it asked a crumb of

mf

mf

mf

29

me.

p

p

Faith Is A Fine Invention

♩ = 120

Voice

mp ————— *mf*

Faith Faith

Piano

mp ————— *mf*

Bass

mp ————— *mf*

5

is a fine in-ven - tion For

9

Gen - tle-men who see; But mic - ro-

mf

13

f

-scopes are pru - dent in an e - mer - gen cy!

17

I Taste A Liquor Never Brewed

♩ = 96

mf

Voice

Piano

Bass

mp *mf* *mp*

mf

I taste a li- quor nev-

4

- er brewed, from tank - ards scooped in pearl;

7

Not all the vats up - on the Rhine Yield such an al - co -

10

-hol! In - e - bri - ate of air am I And

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

13

de-bauch - ee of dew, Ree-ling, through end-less sum - mer days,

Ped. Ped. Ped.

16

from inns of mol - ten blue.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Musical score for measures 19-21. The system includes a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a bass line. The piano part features a dense texture of chords and moving lines. The bass line provides a simple harmonic foundation. Dynamics include *mf* and *(Red.)* markings.

Musical score for measures 22-24. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "When land - lords turn the drunk - en bee out". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture. Dynamics include *mp* and *(Red.)* markings.

Musical score for measures 25-27. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "of the fox - glove's door, When but - ter - flies re - nounce their drams, I". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar texture. Dynamics include *(Red.)* markings.

28

shall but drink the more! Til ser - aphsswing their sno - wy hats, And saints

(Red.) Red. Red. Red. Red.

This system contains three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics. The middle two staves are the piano accompaniment, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a rhythmic pattern. The piano part includes five 'Red.' markings under the left hand staff.

31

to wind - ows run, To see the li - tle tip - ler lean - ing a -

Red. Red. Red.

This system contains three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics. The middle two staves are the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes three 'Red.' markings under the left hand staff.

34

- gainst the sun!

(Red.) Red. Red.

This system contains three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics. The middle two staves are the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes three 'Red.' markings under the left hand staff.

I'm Nobody!

$\text{♩} = 108$ *mf*

Voice: I'm No - bod - y! Who are you? Are you No -

Piano: *mp*

Bass: *mp*

The first system of the musical score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. It features three staves: Voice, Piano, and Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The voice part begins with a half rest followed by the lyrics 'I'm No - bod - y! Who are you? Are you No -'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The bass line starts with a half note B-flat, followed by quarter notes G and F, and then eighth notes E and D.

5

Voice: - bod - y too? Then there's a pair of us! Don't tell they'd ad - ver - tise you know!

Piano: *mf*

Bass: *mf*

The second system of the musical score continues from the first. It features three staves: Voice, Piano, and Bass. The voice part continues with the lyrics '- bod - y too? Then there's a pair of us! Don't tell they'd ad - ver - tise you know!'. The piano accompaniment includes a *mf* dynamic marking. The bass line continues with a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth and quarter notes.

9

Voice: I'm No - bod - y!

Piano: *mp*

Bass: *mp*

The third system of the musical score concludes the piece. It features three staves: Voice, Piano, and Bass. The voice part ends with the lyrics 'I'm No - bod - y!'. The piano accompaniment includes a *mp* dynamic marking. The bass line continues with a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth and quarter notes.

13

Who are you?

p

p

p

17

mf

red.

mf

20

How dreary to

mp

mp

red.

mp

24 *mf*

be Some - bod - y!

27 *f*

How pub - lic like a

30 *mf*

frog, To tell one's name the live - long June

33

f

To an ad - mir - ing Bog!

f

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

f

Detailed description: This musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. It begins with a half rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note Bb4. The lyrics 'To an ad - mir - ing Bog!' are written below the notes. The second staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. The third staff is a bass line in bass clef with a key signature of one flat, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The fourth staff is a bass line in bass clef with a key signature of one flat, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include a forte (*f*) marking at the beginning and end of the piece, and a *Red.* (ritardando) marking above the piano accompaniment in the third measure.

Unreturning

$\text{♩} = 72$

Voice

Piano

Bass

mf

mf

mp

mf

mp

5

lit - tleboat That tod - dled down the bay! 'Twassuch a

mf

mp

mf

mp

9

gal - lant, gal - lant sea That beck - oned it a - way! 'Twassuch a

f

mf

f

mf

13

gree - dy, gree - dy wave Thatlicked it from the coast; Nor ev - er

(Red.) Red. Red. Red. Red.

This musical system covers measures 13 to 16. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staves. The lyrics are: "gree - dy, gree - dy wave Thatlicked it from the coast; Nor ev - er". The piano part includes five "Red." markings under the bass line. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

17

guessed thestate - ly sails My lit - tle craft was lost!

Red. Red.

p

p

p

This musical system covers measures 17 to 20. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staves. The lyrics are: "guessed thestate - ly sails My lit - tle craft was lost!". The piano part includes two "Red." markings under the bass line. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). Dynamics include a piano (*p*) marking in the vocal line and piano (*p*) markings in the piano accompaniment.

I Dwell In Possibility

♩ = 72

Voice

Piano

Bass

6

mp *mf*

I dwell in pos - si - bil - i - ty A fair - er house than

Piano

Bass

13

mp

prose. More num - er - ous of Wind - dows Su - per - i - or for

Piano

Bass

18

mf

doors Of Cham - bers as the Ce - dars Im -

mf

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

mf

23

-preg - na - ble of Eye And for an Ev - er - last - ing roof the Gam - brels of the

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

28

f *mf*

Sky Of vi - si - ters the fair - est For Oc - cu - pat - ion

f *mf*

f *mf*

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

f *mf*

33

This The spread - ing widely nar - row Hands To ga - ther

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

38

Par - a - dise.

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

dim.

dim.

43

(dim.) *p*

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

(dim.) *p*

I Shall Not Live In Vain

♩ = 92

Voice

Piano

Bass

4

mf

If I can stop one heart from breaking I shall not

mf

mf

8

live in vain;

f

f

f

11

mf

If I can ease one life the ach - ing,

mf

Red.

Red.

mf

14

Or cool one pain, Or help one faint - ing ro -

Red.

Red.

Red.

17

-bin Un-to his nest a - gain, I shall not live in

Red.

Red.

Red.

Red.

21

f

vain.

f

f

Rit.

Rit.

Rit.

Dawn

$\text{♩} = 72$

Voice

Piano

Bass

p *mp*

p *mp*

5

p

When night When night is al - most

Piano

Bass

p

p

p

9

mp

al - most done, And sun - rise

Piano

Bass

mp

mp

mp

13

grows so near That we can touch the spac - es, That

mf

mf

mf

17

we can touch the spac - es, It's time to smooth the

mf

mf

mf

21

hair to smooth the hair And get the dim - ples rea - dy, And won - der we And

mf

mf

mf

25

won - der we could care For that old fa - ded

f

f

f

Red.

Red.

f

28

mid - night That Fright - ened but an

Red.

Red.

Red.

31

hour.

Red.

Sucess Is Counted Sweetest

♩ = 70

Voice

Piano

Bass

mp *mp* *f*

8

mf

Suc-cess is count-ed sweet-est. By those who

mf

15

ne'er suc-ceed. To com-prehend a

mf

21

nec - tar Re - quir - es sore - est need. *f*

f

f

27

Not one of all the Pur - *mf*

mf

mf

mf

33

-ple Host Who took the Flag to - day Can tell the De - fi - ni - tion

(Red.) Red. Red.

38

f

So clear of Vic - to - ry As he de - feat - ed

f

f

43

mf *mp*

Dy - ing As he de - feat - ed

mf *mp*

mf *mp*

49

mf

Dy - ing on whose for - bid - den ear The dis - tant

mf

mf

55

f

strains of tri - umph Burst a - gon - ized and

f

f

60

clear.

mf

mp

mf

mp

Our Share Of Night To Bear

$\text{♩} = 90$

mp

Voice

Piano

p

mp

Bass

mp

Our share

5

of night to bear Our share of morn - ing.

3

9

Our blank in bliss to fill,

13 *mf*

Our blank in scorn - ing.

mf

(*Ad.*) *Ad.*

mf

17

Our share of Night to bear Our share of morn - ing. Our blank in bliss to

mf

(*Ad.*) *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.*

21

fill Our blank in scorn - ing.

mf

(*Ad.*) *Ad.* *Ad.*

Here a star, and there a star, some lose their

Red. Red. Red. Red.

way. Here a mist, and

mf

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

mf

there a mist, A - ter - wards

f

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

f

Day.

And.

The musical score for page 37 consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a whole note G4, followed by three measures of rests. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, starting with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5, then a quarter note D5, and a half note E5. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, starting with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2, B2, and C3, then a quarter note D3, and a half note E3. The word "Day." is written above the first measure of the vocal line, and "And." is written above the first measure of the bass line. The score concludes with a double bar line.

The Heart Asks Pleasure First

$\text{♩} = 72$

Voice

Piano

Bass

mp *mf* *mp*

mp *mf* *mp*

mp *mf* *mp*

The heart

6

asks plea - sure first, And then, ex - cuse

mf *mp*

11

from pain; And then, those li - tle an - o -

mf *mf*

-dines that dead - en suf - fer ing.

Red. Red. Red. Red.

p *mp* *p*

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

mf *mp* *mf*

And then, to go to sleep; And then,

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

mf *mp*

30

if it should be the will of its in - quis - it - tor The li - ber -

The score for measures 30-34 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics: "if it should be the will of its in - quis - it - tor The li - ber -". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring a series of chords and melodic lines, with five "Ped." markings. The bottom staff is the bass line, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes.

35

-ty to die.

p

The score for measures 35-38 consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics: "-ty to die.". A dynamic marking "*p*" is placed above the staff. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, with four "Ped." markings and a dynamic marking "*p*" at the end. The bottom staff is the bass line, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes.

Wild Nights

$\text{♩} = 92$

Voice

Piano

Bass

p *cresc.* *f*

Wild Nights

6 *mp* *f*

Wild Nights! Were I with thee Wild Nights should be our lux - u - ry!

8 *mp* *f*

10 *mf*

Woid nights Wild nights

mf

13

Wild nights Wild nights were I with thee wild nightsshould be our lux - ur -

16

- y. Fu - tile the winds

19

to a heart in port Done with the

22

f

com - pass, Done with the Chart!

25

28

mf

Row-ing in E - den Ah the sea

32

Might I but moor to night in

This musical system covers measures 32 to 34. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staves. The vocal line consists of a series of notes with lyrics: "Might I but moor to night in". The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with a steady eighth-note pattern and a left-hand part with a similar rhythmic pattern.

35

thee!

p

This musical system covers measures 35 to 37. The vocal line in measure 35 contains the word "thee!". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic patterns. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in the right-hand piano part at the end of the system.

Much Madness Is Divinest Sense

♩ = 72

Voice *mp*
Much mad-ness is div-i-ness

Piano *p* *mp*

Bass *p* *mp*

9

sense to a dis-cern-ing eye; Much sense the stark-est mad-ness.

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

16

mf
Much mad-ness is div-in-est

mf

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

senseto a dis-cern-ing eye; Much sense the stark - est mad - ness.

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

'Tis the ma - jor -

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

- i - ty in this, as all, pre - vails. As - sent, and you are sane; De -

mp

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

mp

mp

- mur you're straight way dan - ger - ous and han - dled with a chain.

mf

mf

Red.

mf

And han - dled with a chain.

mp

pp

mp

pp

mp

pp

Fame Is A Bee

♩ = 92

mf

Voice

Piano

Bass

mf

mf

Fame is a

4

mp

Voice

Piano

Bass

mp

mf

bee. Fame is a bee.

7

mf

Voice

Piano

Bass

mf

It has a song It has a sting

10

Ah, too, it has a wing.

Musical score for measures 10-12. The vocal line begins with a rest in measure 10, followed by the lyrics "Ah, too, it has a wing." in measures 11 and 12. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

13

it has a wing

Musical score for measures 13-15. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "it has a wing" in measures 13, 14, and 15. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with chords and a left hand with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Dynamic markings *p* (piano) are present above the vocal line and below the piano accompaniment.

16

Musical score for measures 16-18. The vocal line is silent in all three measures. The piano accompaniment continues with a right hand of chords and a left hand of eighth notes.

If Ever The Lid Gets Off My Head

♩ = 80

Voice

Piano *mp*

Bass *mp*

6

mf

If ev - er the lid gets off

mf *mp*

11

my head And lets the brain a - way The

mf *mf*

16

fel - low will go where he be-longed With - out a hint from me,

mp *mf*

mp *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 16 through 20. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "fel - low will go where he be-longed With - out a hint from me,". The piano accompaniment consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

21

And the world,

Detailed description: This system contains measures 21 through 25. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "And the world,". The piano accompaniment consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

26

if the world be look - ing on, Will see how far

mp

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 26 through 30. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "if the world be look - ing on, Will see how far". The piano accompaniment consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano).

31

from home It is pos - i - ble for sense to live.

mf

mf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 31 through 35. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'from home It is pos - i - ble for sense to live.' The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more active right hand with chords and moving lines. A mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking is present in both the right and left piano staves.

36

The soul there all the

Detailed description: This system contains measures 36 through 40. The vocal line has a rest in measure 36, followed by the lyrics 'The soul there all the'. The piano accompaniment continues with a consistent eighth-note bass line and active right-hand accompaniment.

41

time.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 41 through 45. The vocal line has a rest in measure 41, followed by the lyric 'time.' The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note bass line and active right-hand accompaniment.

Musical score for measures 46-49. The score consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below it. The top staff contains whole rests for all four measures. The grand staff features a piano accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns. The bass line has a consistent eighth-note accompaniment.

Musical score for measures 50-53. The score consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below it. The top staff contains whole rests for all four measures. The grand staff features a piano accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns. The bass line has a consistent eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in the second measure of the bass line and the first measure of the grand staff.

She Sweeps With Many-colored Brooms

♩ = 72

Voice

Piano

Bass

6

mp *mf*

She sweeps with ma-ny - col - ored brooms,

11

mp *mf*

And leaves the shreds be - hind;

16

mp \longleftarrow *mf*

Oh, house - wife in the ev - en - ing west come back and dust the

mf \longleftarrow *mp* \longleftarrow *mf*

mf *mp* *mf*

21

mp

pond! You dropped a pur - ple rav - eling in, You dropped an am - ber

mp

mp

26

mf

mp \longleftarrow

thread, And now You've lit - tered all the east with duds of em - er - ald. And still she

mf \longleftarrow *mp* \longleftarrow

mf *mp*

31

mf

plies her spot - ted brooms And still the a - prons fly, Til brooms fade soft - ly in - to

mf

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

36

p

stars And then I come a - way.

p

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

41

p

Red. Red. Red.

p