

269 (249)

Wild nights - Wild nights!
 Were I with thee
 Wild nights should be
 Our luxury!

5 Futile - the winds -
 To a Heart in port -
 Done with the Compass -
 Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -
 10 Ah - the Sea!
 Might I but moor - tonight -
 In thee!

1861

1891

314 (254)

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
 That perches in the soul -
 And sings the tune without the words -
 And never stops - at all -

5 And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
 And sore must be the storm -
 That could abash the little Bird
 That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -
 10 And on the strangest Sea -
 Yet - never - in Extremity,
 It asked a crumb - of me.

1862

1891

320 (258)

There's a certain Slant of light,
 Winter Afternoons -
 That oppresses, like the Heft
 Of Cathedral Tunes -

5 Heavenly Hurt, it gives us -
 We can find no scar,

But internal difference -
Where the Meanings, are -

None may teach it - Any -
10 'Tis the Seal Despair -
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air -

When it comes, the Landscape listens -
Shadows - hold their breath -
15 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death -

1862

1890

339 (241)

I like a look of Agony,
Because I know it's true -
Men do not sham Convulsion,
Nor simulate, a Throe -

5 The eyes glaze once - and that is Death -
Impossible to feign
The Beads upon the Forehead
By homely Anguish strung.

1862

1890

340 (280)

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading - treading - till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through -

5 And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum -
Kept beating - beating - till I thought
My mind was going numb -

And then I heard them lift a Box
10 And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space - began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,

Titled - Confirmed -
 Delirious Charter!
 Mine - long as Ages steal!

1862

1890

445 (613)

They shut me up in Prose -
 As when a little Girl
 They put me in the Closet -
 Because they liked me "still" -

5 Still! Could themselves have peeped -
 And seen my Brain - go round -
 They might as well have lodged a Bird
 For Treason - in the Pound -

Himself has but to will
 10 And easy as a Star
 Look down upon Captivity -
 And laugh - No more have I -

1862

1935

479 (712)

Because I could not stop for Death -
 He kindly stopped for me -
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
 And Immortality.

5 We slowly drove - He knew no haste
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility -

We passed the School, where Children strove
 10 At Recess - in the Ring -
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
 We passed the Setting Sun -

Or rather - He passed Us -
 The Dews drew quivering and Chill -
 15 For only Gossamer, my Gown -
 My Tippet - only Tulle⁹ -

9. Sheer silk net. *Tippet*: shoulder cape.