



Name: _____ Class: _____

“Hope” is the thing with feathers - (254)

By Emily Dickinson
1891

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was an American poet who lived a mostly introverted, secluded life. She wrote over 1,800 poems — many of which deal with themes of death and immortality — in her seclusion. The following poem was first published in 1891 and discusses the nature of hope. As you read, take notes on Dickinson's symbol of hope and the figurative language used to describe it.

- [1] “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 Gale¹ — is heard —
And sore² must be the storm —
That could abash³ the little Bird
That kept so many warm —
- I've heard it in the chilliest land —
[10] And on the strangest Sea —
Yet — never — in Extremity,⁴
It asked a crumb — of Me.



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1. **Gale (noun):** strong wind
2. In this case, “sore” refers to the severity or terribleness of this hypothetical storm.
3. **Abash (verb):** to destroy the self-confidence of; to bewilder or embarrass
4. **Extremity (noun):** the furthest limit; or the extreme degree or nature of something