

EMILY DICKINSON TALKS TO T. W. HIGGINSON

What if I had come to you in white,
barefoot, intentionally
alive, your formidable objections
my private joke; my sparrow,
your prize. And when you told me
a dead boy means just that,
a fallen tree, I would not have flinched,
but loved you still, face to face,
sincere as any word, or bride. Or
instead of arranging irises in a vase, I had
chosen an exotic bird, more sapphire
than blue, or hearth, then worn him
as my winter coat, my plume. What if,
instead of summer yellow,
instead of good heart,
instead of anxious eyes,
I had come to you, practiced, in person,
sharp as a dahlia, or some terrible law,
counting on your awe?