



# My Emily Dickinson (New Directions Paperbook)

*Susan Howe*

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**My Emily Dickinson (New Directions Paperbook)** Susan Howe

"Starts off as a manifesto but becomes richer and more suggestive as it develops."—*The New York Sun*

With exacting rigor and wit, Howe pulls Dickinson free of all the sterile and stuffy belle-of-Amherst cotton wool and shows the poet in touch with elemental forces of nature, and as a prophet in all her radical zealotry and poetic glory. *Her* Emily Dickinson is a unique American genius, a demon lover of poetry—no neurasthenic spider artist. Howe draws into her discussion Browning, *Wuthering Heights*, the Civil War, "Master," the great Puritan preachers, captivity narratives, Shakespeare, and phantom lovers. As she chases away narrow and reductive feminist readings of the poet, Howe finds instead a radically powerful and true feminism at work in Dickinson, focusing the whole on that heart-stopping poem "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun."

A remarkable and passionate poet-on-poet engagement, *My Emily Dickinson* frees a great poet from the fetters of being read as a special female neurotic, and sets her against a fiery open sky where "Perception of an object means losing and losing it...only Mutability certain." *My Emily Dickinson* won The Before Columbus Foundation Book Award.

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