

CONVERSATIONS WITH NATURE: GOD, NATURE AND THE SELF, IN THE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

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Abstract

Emily Dickinson, with her poetic focus on nature, ranks among the top writers and poets of the nineteenth century who assumed the amazing assignment of encountering and explicating nature. It occupies quite a large part in the whole volume of her poetry. She seems to have been in constant uninterrupted contact with nature. It captured her attention, joggled her mind, stimulated her imagination, embodied her meditations, or became an object of her definitions. Nature remains a separate entity. It contains and disguises the Creator’s secrets which are not completely revealed to man through the natural world. The whole system of the natural world is ordained and maintained by God, and man is under his governance. As Johnson asserts, “God has deputized his authority in dealing with all his other creatures”. This mission has become the concern of Nature, which is personified as the gentlest mother. Dickinson’s poetic definitions are simply insisting on the reality of essential qualities that are being demonstrated by this experiment of green. This is where the speaker’s limitations of the ability to ‘know’ is revealed, and this sets her apart from the Transcendentalists. Unlike them, she is powerless in her limited “Wisdom” to understand the inner truth of nature, because of its remoteness. Nor can she express it by the effortless process of ‘vent,’ as Emerson called it, because its very transcendence places it beyond her ‘Art’.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, nature, God, self