



People

Emily Dickinson 1830–1886

Emily Dickinson was a reclusive American poet. Unrecognized in her own time, Dickinson is known posthumously for her innovative use of form and syntax.



Synopsis

Born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst, Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson left school as a teenager, eventually living a reclusive life on the family homestead. There, she secretly created bundles of poetry and wrote hundreds of letters. Due to a discovery by sister Lavinia, Dickinson's remarkable work was published after her death—on May 15, 1886, in Amherst—and she is now considered one of the towering figures of American literature.

Early Life and Education

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst, Massachusetts. Her family had deep roots in New England. Her paternal grandfather, Samuel Dickinson, was well known as the founder of Amherst College. Her father worked at Amherst and served as a state legislator. He married Emily Norcross in 1828 and the couple had three children: William Austin, Lavinia Norcross and middle child Emily.

An excellent student, Dickinson was educated at Amherst Academy (now Amherst College) for seven years and then attended Mount Holyoke Female Seminary for a year. Though the precise reasons for Dickinson's final departure from the academy in 1848 are unknown; theories offered say that her fragile emotional state may have played a role and/or that her father decided to pull her from the school. Dickinson ultimately never joined a particular church or denomination, steadfastly going against the religious norms of the time.

Family Dynamics and Writing

Dickinson began writing as a teenager. Her early influences include Leonard Humphrey, principal of Amherst Academy, and a family friend named Benjamin Franklin Newton, who sent Dickinson a book of poetry by Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1855, Dickinson ventured outside of Amherst, as far as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There, she befriended a minister named Charles Wadsworth, who would also become a cherished correspondent.

Dickinson's seclusion during her later years has been the object of much speculation. Scholars have thought that she suffered from conditions such as agoraphobia, depression and/or anxiety, or may have been sequestered due to her responsibilities as guardian of her sick mother. Dickinson was also treated for a painful ailment of her eyes. After the mid-1860s, she rarely left the confines of the Homestead. It was also around this time, from the late 1850s to mid-'60s, that Dickinson was most productive as a poet, creating small bundles of verse known as fascicles without any awareness on the part of her family members.

In her spare time, Dickinson studied botany and produced a vast herbarium. She also maintained correspondence with a variety of contacts. One of her friendships, with Judge Otis Phillips Lord, seems to have developed into a romance before Lord's death in 1884.

Death and Discovery

Dickinson died of kidney disease in Amherst, Massachusetts, on May 15, 1886, at the age of 55. She was laid to rest in her family plot at West Cemetery. The Homestead, where Dickinson was born, is now a museum.

Little of Dickinson's work was published at the time of her death, and the few works that were published were edited and altered to adhere to conventional standards of the time. Unfortunately, much of the power of Dickinson's unusual use of syntax and form was lost in the alteration. After her sister's death, Lavinia Dickinson discovered hundreds of poems that Emily had crafted over the years. The first volume of these works was published in 1890. A full compilation, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, wasn't published until 1955, though previous iterations had been released.

Emily Dickinson's stature as a writer soared from the first publication of her poems in their intended form. She is known for her poignant and compressed verse, which profoundly influenced the direction of 20th-century poetry. The strength of her literary voice, as well as her reclusive and eccentric life, contributes to the sense of Dickinson as an indelible American character who continues to be discussed today.

Source: biography.com

Harriet Tubman (c.1820–1913)



Harriet Tubman was born around 1820 in the South of the United States. She was an African-American and a slave. In those days in the South, African-Americans were slaves. People bought slaves to work in their houses, farms, and fields. Their masters bought and sold them like property. When Harriet became a young woman, she wanted to be free. She wanted to escape to the North of the United States. Everyone in the North was free.

Finally, Harriet Tubman escaped from the South to the North on the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was not a real railroad. It was a secret organization of people. These people helped slaves to escape. At night, they took the slaves to a safe house. The slaves hid there. The next night, they took the slaves to the next house or “station” on the railroad. The word underground can mean secret. This is why people called the organization the Underground Railroad.

When Harriet Tubman was free, she decided to help slaves. So she joined the Underground Railroad. Soon she became its leader. It was a very dangerous job. She went back to the South time after time. She brought back slaves to freedom in the North. Before Harriet Tubman died in 1913, she helped 300 slaves to escape. She helped these people begin new lives as free men and women.

Source: Introducing the USA (Milada Broukal, Peter Murphy)

Marilyn Monroe

1926–1962



Actress Marilyn Monroe was born as Norma Jeane Mortenson on June 1, 1926 in Los Angeles, California. During her all-too-brief life, Marilyn Monroe overcame a difficult childhood to become one of the world's biggest and most enduring sex symbols. During her career, Monroe's films grossed more than \$200 million. Monroe died of a drug overdose on August 5, 1962, at only 36 years old.

Marilyn Monroe Biography

Monroe was born, Norma Jeane Mortenson, in June 1926. Her mother Gladys had a turbulent mental state and struggled to cope with bringing up her children. For the first six years, Marilyn was brought up by foster parents. Her mother then tried to take back Marilyn, but she suffered a mental breakdown and Marilyn was moved between different orphanages and foster homes. The traumatic childhood made her shy and reserved.

Just after her 16th birthday, in 1942, Monroe married her 21-year-old, next-door neighbour Jimmy Dougherty. Marilyn became a housewife, but the couple were not close, and Monroe reports being bored. In 1943, her husband left to join the Merchant Marines to participate in America's War effort. They split up shortly after.

To earn a living, Marilyn took a job at a local munitions factory in Burbank, California. It was here that Marilyn got her first big break. Photographer David Conover was covering the munitions factory to show women at work for the War effort. He was struck by the beauty and photogenic nature of Norma, and he used her in many of his photographs. This enabled her to start a career as a model, and she was soon featured on the front of many magazine covers.

1946 was a pivotal year for Marilyn, she divorced her young husband and changed her name from, the boring, Norma Baker to the more glamorous Marilyn Monroe (after her grandma). She took drama lessons and got her first movie contract with Twentieth Century Fox. Her first few films were low key, but from these beginnings, it gained her more prominent roles in films such as *All About Eve*, *Niagara* and later *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* and *How To Marry A Millionaire*.

These successful film roles thrust her into the global limelight. She became an iconic figure of Hollywood glamour and fashion. She was an epitome of sensuality, beauty and effervescence and was naturally photogenic. But she often found the trappings of fame difficult to deal with.

In 1954, she married baseball star Joe DiMaggio. In September 1954, she starred in *The Seven Year Itch*, which was released to widespread media interest – after a successful media stunt on Lexington Avenue, New York.

In 1955, she sought greater independence from Fox, and began her own movie production and began studying method acting. Despite the media often being dismissive of Monroe's potential, her efforts to improve acting paid off, and later films received critical acclaim for her wider scope of acting. She was nominated for Golden Globe Best Actress Award for *Bus Stop* (1956). In 1959, she won a Golden Globe for her role in *'Some Like It Hot'*.

Her relationship with Joe DiMaggio was quickly strained, due to his jealous and controlling nature. Monroe soon filed for divorce, though the couple retained a friendship despite the divorce. Monroe began dating playwright Arthur Miller and in 1956 married. To get married, Monroe converted to Judaism. The marriage received significant media interest for the combination of Miller the left-wing intellectual and Monroe, the perceived 'dumb blonde'.

To complicate matters, Miller was under investigation for his alleged "Communist sympathies", and media bosses encouraged Monroe to end the relationship, but Monroe was unmoved. The FBI opened a file on her, worried about the political views of her husband.

In the late 1950s, and early 1960, her health began to deteriorate. She suffered from a Barbiturate addiction and experienced periods of depression. Her marriage to Miller broke down, and she had affairs with Yves Montand, Frank Sinatra and others. During the 1960s, her ill health made shooting films challenging, and production was often delayed. She was still in great demand and often appeared on the front cover of glossy magazines. In 1962, she was invited to the White House to sing for J.F. Kennedy's birthday.

Tragically, she died early from an overdose of barbiturates in 1962 aged just 36.

Source: biographyonline.net