

## A WAKE OF MUSIC - Six poems by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

### **“Hope” is the thing with feathers**

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –  
That perches in the soul –  
And sings the tune without the words –  
And never stops – at all –  
  
And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –  
And sore must be the storm –  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm –  
  
I’ve heard it in the chilliest land –  
And on the strangest Sea –  
Yet – never – in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb – of me.

## **We talked as Girls do —**

We talked as Girls do —

Fond, and late —

We speculated fair, on every subject, but the

Grave —

Of ours, none affair —

We handled Desires, as cool —

As we—Disposers—be—

And God, a Quiet Party

To our Authority —

But fondest, dwelt upon Ourselves

As we eventual — be —

When Girls to Women, sofly raised

We — occupy — Degree —

We parted with a contract

To cherish, and to write

But Heaven made both, impossible

Before another night.

## **Waiting**

I sing to use the waiting,  
My bonnet but to tie,  
And shut the door unto my house;  
No more to do have I,

Till, his best step approaching,  
We journey to the day,  
And tell each other how we sang  
To keep the dark away.

## **There is a solitude of space**

There is a solitude of space,  
A solitude of sea,  
A solitude of death, but these  
Society shall be,  
Compared with that profounder site,  
That polar privacy,  
A Soul admitted to itself;  
Finite Infinity.

## **Of Being is a Bird**

Of Being is a Bird

The likest to the Down

An Easy Breeze do put afloat

The General Heavens – upon –

It soars – and shifts – and whirls –

And measures with the Clouds

In easy – even – dazzling pace –

No different the Birds –

Except a Wake of Music

Accompany their feet –

As did the Down emit a Tune –

For Ecstasy – of it

## **I shall not live in vain**

If I can stop one heart from breaking,

I shall not live in vain;

If I can ease one life the aching,

Or cool one pain,

Or help one fainting robin

Unto his nest again,

I shall not live in vain.