

Emily Dickenson's Blessing

by [Evelyn Hooven](#) (March 2024)



Portrait of a Woman, Edmund Dulac, 1907

I'm thinking here of a seldom-cited poem where the author acknowledges her gift as "the limit of my dream." She does not here characterize herself as very small, visited by the personified Eternal. Greeted at times with a wry, low-key humor, the blessed fact of the gift of creation is meant to be lived with, the boundaries of her inquiry re-arranged.

This "new value in the soul" is fully welcomed. At least at some moments. The poet whose letter to the world was without reply experienced generous sufficiency, "supremest earthly sum."

One Blessing had I than the rest
So larger to my Eyes
That I stopped gauging—satisfied—
For this enchanted size—

It was the limit of my Dream—
The focus of my Prayer—
A perfect—paralyzing Bliss—
Contented as Despair—

I knew no more of Want—or Cold—
Phantasms both become
For this new Value in the Soul—
Supremest Earthly Sum—

The Heaven below the Heaven above—
Obscured with ruddier Blue—
Life's Latitudes leant over—full—
The Judgment perished—too—

Why Bliss so scantily disburse—
Why Paradise defer—
Why Floods be served to Us—in Bowls—
I speculate no more—

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Evelyn Hooven graduated from Mount Holyoke College and received her M.A. from Yale University, where she also studied

at The Yale School of Drama. A member of the Dramatists' Guild, she has had presentations of her verse dramas at several theatrical venues, including *The Maxwell Anderson Playwrights Series* in Greenwich, CT (after a state-wide competition) and *The Poet's Theatre* in Cambridge, MA (result of a national competition). Her poems and translations from the French and Spanish have appeared in *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, *ART TIMES*, *Chelsea*, *The Literary Review*, *THE SHOp: A Magazine of Poetry* (in Ireland), *The Tribeca Poetry Review*, *Vallum* (in Montreal), and other journals, and her literary criticism in Oxford University's *Essays in Criticism*.

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