

# 'Candidates' of words in Emily Dickinson's Poems

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## Introduction

Many of Emily Dickinson's poems contain variants. There are two kinds of variants. In the first type, there are variant words within the same poem. In the second type, there are alternate versions of a poem. Dickinson sometimes inserted alternate words into the body of a poem, sometimes with marks, sometimes without, and sometimes making marks seemingly to indicate the desire for an alternate word, but no alternate words were present. She sometimes displayed many variants; for example, the word "sudden" in poem 1356 A ("A little Madness in the Spring") has seven variants: "bright · whole · swift— · gay · fleet · sweet · quick." In cases in which more than one manuscript are left, some words are often different between the poems. We never know which word Dickinson regarded as the final one, as she published only about ten poems out of more than 1700 ones while she was alive.

Dickinson tried various kinds of revision. They included the changes of arrangement—such punctuations as dash, comma, period, capital letter and small letter, spelling, tense, singular and plural and a part of speech. As for the change of vocabulary, there were various relationships between 'candidates': abstract words and concrete words, synonyms, antonyms, homophones, different words in meaning, different words of the same part of speech, different words in different parts of speech. Her revision also included addition and deletion of phrases. She usually made minor revisions, but sometimes did dramatic ones, as if her revisions were major ones.

In a letter to T.W.Higginson on August 16th, 1870, Dickinson defined poetry as follows:

“If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me I know *that is* poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that is* poetry. These are the only way I know it. Is there any other way.” (letter 342a)<sup>1</sup>

That is to say, poetry was something which dramatically moved Dickinson. What she had to do as a poet was to put feelings and observations into words as exactly as possible. However, it was often the case that she came across situations for which she could not find the words to express them, although she had a rich vocabulary mainly learned from the dictionary, the Bible and Shakespeare. She would then scrutinize words, displaying ‘candidates.’ She confessed how she chose words in poem 1476: “Your thoughts dont have words every day/They come a single time/Like signal esoteric sips/Of the communion Wine....”(A, ll.1 – 4) and poem 1243 (“Shall I take thee, the Poet said”). In this way, Dickinson considered which word she should choose, having some words as “the suspended Candidate.” Then, the exact words mysteriously and unexpectedly came to her as if by inspiration; a power which she could not control worked for her in choosing words for her poems.

The study of ‘candidates’ of words helps us to understand a poem profoundly. This thesis studies ‘candidates’ of words which significantly affect the meaning of a poem. To study what words she had in her mind as ‘candidates’ also allows us to better grasp her view.

## I Personal Pronouns

The fact that 111 of Dickinson’s poems out of 1789 present a ‘candidate’ for a pronoun indicates that she carefully considered pronouns in all her poetry.

Poem 57 (“I robbed the Woods—”) pictures a human being’s violent behavior towards nature as a way to satisfy his selfish desire. Honest nature is contrasted

with a human being who betrayed nature. In a later version written two years later, a person who did the act is changed from "I" into "he." Dickinson may have intended to send the second version to somebody, as it was written on embossed notepaper and folded as if for mailing. The former version is described as a speaker's experience, while the latter takes the form of impersonal description. It may be interpreted that the former version depicts the criticism towards Dickinson herself. Accordingly, the former version has a stronger impact on the reader. She may have changed the personal pronoun to send it to somebody, reducing the impact.

Her eight poems present a 'candidate' from a male pronoun to a female pronoun and vice versa. Dickinson often changed a part of a poem when she sent it to people around her. Taking one example, poem 277 conveys three variants. Although the manuscript sent to Louise and Frances Norcross is lost, Todd recorded the first line: "Going to them, happy letter!" It is thought that the manuscript would have had plural pronouns throughout. In the earlier of the surviving manuscripts, pronouns are "she" and "her." A later manuscript, which was intended to be sent to Samuel Bowles but was not, employs "he" and "him."

One of the most interesting poems to consider about a personal pronoun is poem 346 ("I showed her Hights she never saw—") which has two manuscripts. In version A, a man invited a woman to climb "Hights" and show her "Secrets." Rejected by her, he died, and then she was lighted with "solemn glow." In version B, the roles of male and female are completely reversed, by changing pronouns. It is interpreted that Dickinson did not have a fixed idea about the role of male and female. Referring to critics' comments, Judith Farr discusses that "We can see, that whether Dickinson's persona is female or male, she imagines the same situation: love and renunciation."<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Patterson considers the revision negatively, saying that Dickinson "changed the pronouns and reversed the situation. But the delicate imagery became grotesque and clumsy with the introduction of

masculine pronouns.”<sup>3</sup> The two versions indicate that Dickinson did not have a fixed idea about the roles of male and female.

Dickinson’s poems employ such various personas as a queen, the poor, a boy, a girl, the inanimate and the dead. By doing so, she effectively presented what she wanted to affirm. Her use of changing personal pronouns was also one of her most commonly used devices.

## II Antonym

Although there are countless cases in which Dickinson displayed synonyms as ‘candidates’, she sometimes used antonyms instead. Poem 263 contains “First” in version B for “Last” inversion A at the beginning of the poem : “Just so — Jesus — raps — / He — does’nt weary — / Last — at the Knocker — .” There is a variant, “smiling —” for “pensive” in poem 331 (“The only ghost I ever saw”) which describes the ghost : “His laughter, like the breeze / that dies away in Dimples Among the pensive Trees —”. Dickinson again employed “first” for “last” in poem 688 which portrays a person who has just died : “And if He spoke — What name was Best — / What last / What one broke off with at the Drowsiest — .” Poem 1175, which treats human being’s curiosity for infinity, presents “terrible” for “wonderful” in the beginning : “Contained in this short Life / Were wonderful extents — .” Poem 1183 B has variants, “closer · further · simply · merely · finer” for “nearer” in the following phrases :

Not hoping his notice far

But nearer to adore — (poem 1183 B, ll.5 — 6)

The word “further” is contrasted with “nearer.” As is often the case, the poem does not clarify who ‘he’ is. However, ‘he’ is not a person in this world, but ‘he’ is thought to be God. The poem emphasizes a narrator’s adoration for him,

whether "nearer" or "further." In the poems cited above, the 'candidates' make minor changes to the poem.

Let us study poems in which a 'candidate' brings effective change into them.

The famous comical poem 260 substitutes "advertise" for "banish":

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Are you—Nobody—Too?

Then there's a pair of us?

Don't tell! they'd advertise—you know! (poem 260 A, ll.1—4)

Finding "Nobody," the speaker regards him/her as a person who has the same way of thinking. That is, the speaker does hope he/she is unknown, because if people know him/her, he/she no longer will have his/her own idea. In other words, to advertise him/her means to banish him/her; if he/she is advertised, he/she will be banished, sinking into a "Bog." The persona confesses "the simple desire for a private life," as Harold Bloom has pointed out.<sup>4</sup> Although "advertise" and "banish" have opposite meanings, this poem uses the words to mean the same. In other words, advertising the speaker leads to banishing him/her. The expression "banish" is elaborated, while "advertise" is direct.

The last stanza in poem 564 ("She hideth Her the last—") in which the sun is admired reads:

To imitate Her life

As impotent would be

As make of Our imperfect Mints,

The Julep—of the Bee— (poem A, ll.9—12)

Dickinson substituted the antonym "possible" for "impotent." The word "Impo-

tent” does not mean that the speaker abandons “To imitate Her Life,” but it implies it is extremely difficult. Trying “To imitate Her Life,” the speaker sometimes realizes it is impotent, but on other occasions, he/she feels it may be “possible.” The word “Impotent” also connotes possibility, as Dickinson wrote in poem 939 that “Impossibility, like Wine/Exhilarates the Man/Who tastes it.”

It is interesting to note that the poem refers to poetics as well as the sun. “Mints” are the sources of creativity when Dickinson writes, “I could catch the Mint/ That never ceased to fall” in poem 473 (“I was the slightest in the House —”). Then, the “Julep,” the collections of essence implies poems, and “the Bee” is a poet as is often the case in her poems. Furthermore, Dickinson displayed “Brew from” for “make of.” To brew is to compose poetry as in poems 878 (“Least bee that brew”), 207 (“I taste a liquor never brewed”), 304 (“The nearest Dream recedes — unrealized —”).

The image of fragrance in “Mints” and “Julep” is elaborately incorporated. That is, the fragrance suggests possibility, as the fragrance is endlessly spreading. The poem’s crucial intention is that “To imitate Her life” is extremely difficult, but it is possible. This intention resulted in Dickinson using two words: “possible” and “impotent.” In this way, this poem shows the great possibility as a poet, asserting the difficulty.

Poem 580 (“We see—Comparatively—”) describes how seeing things comparatively brings “us” change in viewing things; “Our Cordillera” becomes just “A furrow” and “Our Apennine” becomes just “a Knoll.” The first stanza of the poem states that “We could not grasp its segment / Unaided—Yesterday—”). The variant displays “Angle” for “segment.” “Angle,” which means the point of view by which we can see things, is more appropriate in this context than “segment,” which means a part of things. “Angle” makes it possible for people to grasp wider and expanding point of view. The last stanza reads:

To spare these striding spirits  
Some Morning of Chagrin—  
The waking in a Gnat's—embrace—  
Our Giants—further on— (ll.13—16)

The phrase “striding spirits” has two variants: “shrinking {spirits}—” and “wincing natures—.” “Shrinking” and “wincing” are opposed to “striding.” Namely, realizing new value of worth is expressed in two opposing ways: both fear and belief are expressed by the variants. We will discuss Dickinson's way of employing variants later.

Studying the end of the poem 772 (“Essential Oils—are Wrung—”), which announces Dickinson's poetics, version A conveys the imagery of death, while version B portrays the imagery of eternity. The poem concludes by emphasizing the eternity of “Essential Oils,” contrasted with the transiency of “The General Rose”:

While this—in Lady's Drawer  
Make Summer, when the Lady lie  
In Spiceless Sepulchre. (poem 772 A, ll.6—8)

Version B substitutes “Ceaseless Rosemary” for “Spiceless Sepulchre.” Employing the contrast, “Essential Oils” make life, when the lady is in death. On the other hand, the lady is in heaven in version B. The imagery of fragrance in version B, which embodies eternity, adds a very effective dimension. The eternity of “Essential Oils” is emphasized by Dickinson's use of two opposite backgrounds.

Dickinson did not express opposite idea by presenting antonyms, but she did often employ one frequent idea. Antonyms, in her view, were not unrelated words, but closely related ones.

### III Swaying Feeling

We are going to study ‘candidates’ which depict a narrator’s mixed feeling. Poem 255 describes how “The Drop” can have a meaningful relationship in describing the sea. The poem begins :

The Drop, that wrestles in the Sea—

Forgets her own locality—

As I—toward Thee—

She knows herself an incense small—

Yet small—she sighs—if all is all—

How—larger—be ? (poem 255 A, 11.1—6)

“The Drop” forgets its smallness in the first stanza. Then, the second stanza expresses the possibility to be larger, although “The Drop” recognizes the smallness. “The Drop” further affirms that “she” can be large at the end of the poem. In version B, “in” is substituted for “toward” and “Offering” is substituted for “incense.” William H. Shurr comments about the variants from a sexual point of view : “. . . the version Dickinson sent to Bowles was modified slightly to remove the more obviously erotic statements ; instead of desiring to be ‘in Thee,’ as the fascicle version has it, she would simply move ‘toward thee’ : and for the version to Bowles she changed the total gift of herself as ‘Offering’ to blander word “incense.”<sup>5</sup> That is to say, there is more distance between “the Drop” and the sea in version B. According to Sharon Cameron, the poem “carefully juxtaposes self-assertion (“wrestles,” “locality,” “Conceit”) against submission (“forgets,” “small”).”<sup>6</sup> Viewing the variants from the juxtaposition, “Offering” expresses submission and “incense” has the image of self-assertion, because “incense” expands endlessly. The two words skillfully illustrate the persona’s swaying feeling be-

tween submission and self-assertion.

A variant in Poem 307 also shows a speaker's swaying feeling. The second stanza says :

A timid thing—to drop a life  
Into the mystic well—  
Too plummetless—that it come back—  
Eternity—until— (poem 307 A, ll. 5—8)

There is a variant, “hallowed” for “timid”; the speaker has both expectation and fear toward marriage in heaven. The speaker's belief overwhelms anxiety in the last two stanzas; she was no longer small, but this “small life” “Swelled—like Horizons.” Taking risk, she attained happiness in heaven.

The variants in these poems vividly reflect Dickinson's swaying feeling while composing.

#### IV The World Beyond This World

Variants on space beyond this world reflects Dickinson's interest in the world beyond this world.

Poem 422 (“Give little Anguish,”) shows how “Avalanches” affect “Lives.” The second stanza states :

Straighten—look cautious for their breath—  
But make no syllable, like Death—  
Who only shows his Granite face—  
Sublimier thing—than Speech— (poem 422 A, ll.5—8)

“Granite face” in version A written about autumn 1862 is substituted for “Marble Disc” in version B sent to Susan Dickinson sometime in early 1863. Although “Marble Disc” can be understood as “a tombstone” as John Cody has pointed out,<sup>7</sup> it also may be interpreted as the space beyond this world. Studying ‘disc’ in other Dickinson’s poems, it means space which connects this world and a world beyond this world in two poems. In poem 837, a person who is in this world and the moon “hold a mutual disc.” In poem 1068 a disc diminishes “the distance/Between Ourselves and the Dead.”

Let us turn our attentions to the word ‘firmament.’ “Firmament” in poem 571 B (“Two Butterflies went out at Noon—”) written in the summer months of 1863, is substituted for “Circumference” in version C written about 1878. After going out, two butterflies “stepped straight through the Firmament” in version B, and they “espied Circumference” in version C. Although “Firmament” implies a world beyond this world as well as the sky, “Circumference” more explicitly refers to a world beyond this world.

The word, “Firmament” is a variant for “Parallax” in poem 1269 :

I thought that nature was enough  
Till Human nature came  
And that the other did absorb  
As Parallax a Flame— (poem 1269 A, ll.1—4)

The fourth line is paraphrased as if a flame absorbed parallax ; “A Flame” corresponds to “Human nature” and “Parallax,” “nature.” The word “Parallax”/“Firmament” is used here “to suggest immense distance,” as Rebecca Patterson has pointed out.<sup>8</sup> “Parallax” is an astronomical term ; it refers to the world beyond this world.

The word “firmament” is changed into “sanctity” in poem 1434 A—1 (“To the

unwilling dust"). We have four different versions of the poem. Burying "thee" in secret, here are four different versions of the line which includes "firmament" and the variants :

Breezes caress and firmament salute thee, (A-1, 1.5)

Breezes adjoin, and sanctity enforce thee— (A-2, 1.5)

Breezes caress and firmament salute thee,

"adjoin" is displayed for "caress"

"sanctity enforce" is displayed for "firmament salute" (A,1.5)

Silence—denote—/And Sanctity—enforce thee— (B, 11.5-6)

The word "firmament" is understood as nature, and "sanctity" refers to the world of death. Accordingly, Dickinson has the images of nature and death for "firmament."

Now, let's turn to an examination of the word 'arc.' Poem 853 refers to the flight of a bird into the world beyond this world. The poem begins by the description of this risky flight :

She staked Her Feathers—Gained an Arc—

Debated—Rose again—

This time—beyond the estimate

Of Envy, or of Men— (poem 853 A, 11.1-4)

We have "Wings—and gained a Bush—" for "Feathers—Gained an Arc—." The variant "Bush" mainly refers to this world, while "an Arc," the world beyond this world. An "Arc" is far more rich in meaning and has a closer relationship with the rest of the poem than "a Bush." An "Arc" is especially important as it relates to "Circumference." The following line of the poem declares that the bird is

“now, among Circumference.” Critics show us the relationship between arc and circumference as follows. Inder Nath Kher maintains that “...‘Arc’ stands for the curve of circumference which seems beyond the reach of an unimaginative person in this poem.”<sup>9</sup> James Olney remarks that “The Arc that she gains in her first try at her Business is like a little section of the entire Circumference, and that in itself is a considerable achievement, but not to be compared with her second attempt, rising ‘beyond the estimate/Of envy, or of Men.’”<sup>10</sup> Gary Lee Stonum makes the point that “The bird is able to trade the partial bliss of the arc for the soaring paradise of circumference, and it does so without needing to acknowledge any authority or power outside itself.”<sup>11</sup> As the three critics suggest, the bird approaches “Circumference” through “Arc.”

The variants of the poem 353 (“I’m ceded—I’ve stopped being Theirs—”) shows how Dickinson ponders “Arc.” The poem asserts that a speaker married of his own free will, discarding girlhood without freedom. It is implied that the marriage is done in heaven. The end of the second stanza conveys the speaker’s happiness: “Existence’s whole Arc, filled,/With one small Diadem” (poem 353 A, ll.12–13). Accordingly, the speaker is now satisfied. The variant “surmises” is presented for “Whole Arc,” but it is crossed out, and the variant “Rim” is presented for “Arc,” but it is also crossed out. Both variants are written at the bottom of the poem. Then the variant “Eye” is offered above “Arc.” The poem says “The Crescent dropped,” which means that her girlhood was over. Therefore, “Arc” can be regarded as the “Crescent.” “Eye” is the most important part of the body which perceives the world.

These variants show that Dickinson’s deep concern about what lay between this world and another world. While human beings may be able to glimpse this space at times, Dickinson had great difficulty doing so. She struggled how to express it in her poems, by using ‘candidates.’

## V Scenery and Thought

Depicting what she thought she saw, Dickinson sometimes pictured exactly what she did see. At other times, she expressed her thoughts according to the scenery around her. Even in the former case, she often had her own idea about what she saw. Let us study two poems which disclose these two aspects by 'candidates.'

Poem 318 describes the beautiful and colorful sunset, employing the image of a housewife in version A written sometime in early 1862. Here is the last stanza :

And still, she plies her spotted Brooms —  
And still the Aprons fly,  
Till Brooms fade softly into stars —  
And then I come away — (poem 318 A, ll. 9—12)

The last stanza in version B, which was sent to Susan Dickinson about 1865, is quite different :

And still she plies Her spotted thrift  
And still the scene prevails  
Till Dusk obstructs the Diligence —  
Or Contemplation fails. (poem 318 B, ll.9—12)

The stanza depicts not only the scenery, but also how a speaker considers, looking at the scenery. The second version makes the conclusion of the poem quite a different one ; poem A ends quietly when the sun sets and the speaker disappears, while poem B ends with the failure of "Contemplation." To put it another way, the speaker and nature are fused in poem A, but the speaker is disrupted by nature in poem B. As for the ending of the poem, Miller D. Budick points out that "The

somber note with which the poem concludes is not simply an acknowledgement of death—“And then I come away”—but a suggestion of the vacuous center around which the cosmic phenomena swirl. The variant version of the third stanza reinforces the poem’s more troubling implications.”<sup>12</sup>

The variants of poem 513 show a spider’s thought behind the description of a spider. The first two stanzas depict how the spider earnestly builds a web for a short time. Then the third stanza reads :

An Hour to rear supreme  
 His Continents of Light—  
 Then dangle from the Housewife’s Broom—  
 His Boundaries—forgot— (poem 605 A, ll.9—12)

“Continents” are substituted for “theories,” “dangle from” are substituted for “perish by” and “Boundaries—” are substituted for “sophistries” in version B. Let us consider the quotations which affirm that the variants negate the value of what the spider is doing. Greg Johnson says “An interesting variant which Dickinson lists for ‘Boundaries’ is ‘Sophistries,’ which makes the situation even more hopeless ; the art was only a kind of whistling in the dark after all, of no true value to anyone.”<sup>13</sup> Paula Bennet observes that “The negative connotations of these words are inescapable and yield an entirely different reading of the text. The pragmatic housewife with her broom is not the only one to question the value of the spider’s silver web. The speaker has her doubts too. For the worlds of light which the spider—artist weaves are both and are not real. Insofar as they are art, they are the products of imagination ; hence, they are insubstantial. Indeed, they are sophistries or lies.”<sup>14</sup> Barton Levi St. Armand has taken a position against the three critics mentioned above. He appeals the value of what the spider is doing, saying that “Tested pragmatically against the concrete reality of Death’s scythe or the house-

wife's broom, the gossamer nets spun by both spider and poet seem mere 'Sophistries,' an empty rethoric whose plausibility is soon banished by the brute facts of existence. Yet Dickinson also realizes that such an art is fully as wonderful as it is perishable, and ideal 'Pearl of Great Price.'"<sup>15</sup> As Armand notes, the poem seems to negate the work of the spider, but it really does not. Rather, the poem suggests some aspects of Dickinson's poetics. Poetry, in Dickinson's view, is fleeting; once she finds truth, she notices another truth one after another as she expresses in poem 843 ("It bloomed and dropt, a Single Noon—"). In other words, "destruction" is a definition of poetry in a sense when she says in poem 1353 ("To pike like Thunder to its close/ Then crumble grand away/While Everything created hid/ This—would be Poetry—"). The word "Sophistries" provides Dickinson's uniqueness; her poetry can be understood by only a limited number of people who really appreciate her value as an artist.

## VI Key Word

Let us turn to considering 'candidates' which are employed as key words of a poem.

Overcoming many difficulties, a speaker travels, searching for "the Grace" in poem 556. Depicting how "my feet" are tired, the final stanza concludes:

They strive—and yet delay—  
They perish—Do we die—  
Or is this Death's experiment—  
Reversed—in Victory? (poem 556 A, ll.22—25)

The word, "stagger," which is a variant for "perish," means 'my feet' are exhausted, and the word, "perish" suggests death. Greg Johnson comments on "per-

ish” as follows. “The burden of the poet’s meaning falls upon the word “perish,” and the ambiguity of the word is itself meaningful. Since this is the final word of the poem’s narrative proper, does it indicate simple extinction, the end of the journey through absolute death? Such a possibility ...is balanced in this poem by a more complex vision of death. The ‘perishing’ of the poet’s feet may simply mean that the journey itself, the walking, has come to an end...”<sup>16</sup> What “perish” really means is not concluded but deliberately offers ambiguity, as the following questions suggest. It was ambiguity that made Dickinson choose the two words as ‘candidates.’

Poem 778, which depicts subtle relationship between “Four Trees” and things around them, begins as follows :

Four Trees — upon a solitary Acre —  
 Without Design  
 Or Order, or Apparent Actions —  
 Maintain — (poem 778 A, ll.1 — 4)

Although “Design or Order, or Apparent Actions” are negated, four trees appeal its existence, which is expressed more articulately by a variant “Do reign” for “Maintain.” Shira Wolosky acutely explains the difference of the words as follows : “The variant... attributes to the trees a manarchical dominion over the scene, albeit one that is still without design or order. “Maintain,” on the other hand, suggests a different notion of control and coherence.”<sup>17</sup> The second and third stanzas present the relationship between the four trees and things around them. The poem tries to find out what plan the four trees have “unto the General Nature,” but the conclusion is that it is unknown. The poem does not state that the four trees do not have any plan unto the general nature, but they do have one. However, people can never grasp it ; only nature knows it. The words, “Do reign” and “Maintain”

express Dickinson's belief that there is an intended plan in nature. What the poem wants to convey is condensed into the words "Do reign" and "Maintain." The two phrases mirror the difference of Dickinson's certainty about nature's plan.

Poem 1407 utilizes a squirrel, comparing it with a human being. Here is the first stanza :

A Saucer holds a Cup  
In sordid human Life  
But in a Squirrel's estimate  
A Saucer holds a Loaf— (poem 1374 A, ll.1—4)

A "Cup" is a container which holds something. It also implies that a human being is greedy. On the other hand, a "Loaf" is something necessary to live. In the second stanza, a squirrel is dignified by being called "the little King," and the squirrel lives in harmony with nature. Then, the third stanza admires the squirrel's teeth which "eclipse Birmingham." The squirrel seems to criticize the industrial world. The final stanza concludes as follows :

Convicted—could we be  
Of our minutiae  
The smallest Citizen that flies  
Is heartier than we— (poem 1374 A, ll.13—16)

The poem presents a variant, "Has more integrity" for "heartier." Both aspects are described so far, but the choice of the phrases in the final sentence makes a difference in the conclusion of the poem.

These examples show how Dickinson carefully considers what words she uses to conclude her poems. She always hesitated when deciding conclusion or which

words should be more emphasized in the conclusions of her poems.

### Conclusion

Emily Dickinson's worksheets have revealed a lot of things about how she wrote. As extreme brevity was one of the characteristics in her poems, studying 'candidates' is all the more crucial to our understanding of how Dickinson chose and used her words.

It was possible for Dickinson to express her thought from multiple viewpoints. She flexibly changed from a female pronoun to male pronoun and vice versa. Her style included employing antonyms as 'candidates.' She regarded antonyms as not quite opposite terms but closely related ones.

When she had to put a concept which was difficult to express into words, she pondered, displaying 'candidates.' For example, she expressed the world between this world and another world, having such words as 'arc,' 'firmament,' 'circumference,' and 'disk,' in mind. Also, the word 'bush' came into her mind because she thought that there was not a clear boundary between this world and another world.

We can see Dickinson's complicated state of mind while composing. Even if Dickinson tried to express herself assertively in her poems, it was sometimes very difficult, if not impossible for her to do so. However, her use of 'candidates' sometimes gives us more information to understand and appreciate Dickinson's verbal struggles.

One of Dickinson's poetics was to "Tell all the truth but tell it slant—" (poem 1263). Dickinson's worksheets sometimes indicate that she struggled to decide how slantly she should tell the truth.

In this way, the study of 'candidates' is vital to an understanding and appreciation of Dickinson's poems and to her struggles as an artist.

### NOTES

All quotations from Emily Dickinson's poems are from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, 3 volumes, edited by R.W.Franklin (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England : The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

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15. Barton Levi St. Armand, *Emily Dickinson and Her Culture : The Soul's Society*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1984, p.34.
16. Johnson, p.180.
17. Shira Wolosky, *Emily Dickinson : A Voice of War*, New Haven & London : Yale University Press, 1984, p.16