

Gilbert, who served as a mother-surrogate to Emily.

Sewall, while seeming at first to reject Cody's suggestion that Emily was in love with Sue and hurt and upset when she lost her to Austin, later refers to Emily's letters to Sue as "nothing less than love letters."

All of these writers cite ostensibly lesbian poems to support their biographical narrative. Dickinson's homoerotic poetry seems to span the entire length of her literary career, from one of her first poems, written in 1854 ("I have a Bird in spring") to one of her very late poems, written in 1883 ("To see her is a picture" in the third variant). While the subject of these poems is sometimes identifiable (it is frequently Sue), most often she is not. This is not surprising since, as several scholars have observed, we probably have only about one tenth of the letters Dickinson wrote and less than a thousandth of those written to her. But, while we may have no idea who the persons were who evoked some of Dickinson's most moving love lyrics, of one thing we may be certain: many of them were women.

The speaker in Dickinson's homoerotic poems is usually the lover and pursuer in the relationship. Such a relationship is often represented by the symbol of a nest in which the speaker finds (or at least expects to find) comfort and "home" with the other. But she recognizes that she cannot expect permanence in her love, not because it is an inherently flawed kind of love, but generally because the beloved other woman will eventually marry, as it was assumed most women would in the nineteenth century, being without an independent source of income or a profession that would make them self-sufficient. The speaker accepts the reality of this situation, but not without difficulty. What is much more difficult for her to accept, of course, is a beloved woman's cruelty which has no basis in custom or pragmatism. In such a situation the speaker usually cries out bitterly against the other woman, but

she is willing to return to her and apparently to be hurt again. She is frequently self-pitying. Only occasionally does she perceive herself victorious in love, and then it is a poor victory, having conquered the other woman by arousing her pity. These homoerotic poems are never joyous, but that is to be expected in a society where heterosexual marriage was virtually believed inevitable and there was little possibility of two unrelated women establishing a life together if they were not wealthy through independent inheritance.

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DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Because of the knowledge explosion of recent decades, there has been an increasing demand for works of reference, both generalized and specialized, which will serve not only the interested lay public but also those engaged in primary research who would otherwise be unable to keep up with advances in neighboring fields.

The history of the great reference book enterprises goes back to the eighteenth-century **Enlightenment**. Stimulated by several lesser British exemplars, the great French *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* began to appear in 1751. Edited by Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert, this work strove not only to provide a storehouse of factual information, but also to bring to readers the latest conceptual advances. It comes as something of a shock to find that the major article on "Sodomie" largely concerns masturbation,

having been taken over from an earlier work by S. A. D. Tissot, a physician obsessively concerned with that subject. Clearly the attempt to move beyond traditional religious ideas into a realm of unbiased secular information had not even begun at this point. Better informed is the article on "Socratic Love" in the more personal *Dictionnaire philosophique* of Voltaire (1764). Incidentally, this tradition of the sometimes idiosyncratic one-person dictionary has been revived in recent years by such scholars as Mary Daly, Wayne Dynes, and Monique Wittig.

The eighteenth century also saw the beginning of a more informed tradition of treatment in medical reference works, of which the first notable example is Robert James, *A Medical Dictionary* (1743-45). This tradition continued into the nineteenth century, as seen in the French multivolume *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales* and *Encyclopédie des sciences médicales*.

Dictionaries of sexual information did not appear until the twentieth century. The *Handwörterbuch der Sexualwissenschaft* (1923), edited by Max Marcuse, combines articles derived from the mainstream German tradition of sex research with newer psychoanalytic viewpoints. The first example in English is *The Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge* (1934), edited by the Australian homophile Norman Haire, though this volume is largely based on German materials assembled by Arthur Koestler. In the post-World War II period, the *Encyclopedia of Sexual Behavior* (1961), of Albert Ellis and Albert Abarbanel, attempted to be truly cross-cultural with much material on non-Western cultures, even though the coverage may seem thin or dated today.

When not subject to censorship, slang dictionaries often contain considerable lexicographical material on homosexuality, though the terms included are usually culled from the usage of heterosexuals, often from the argot of the urban lower classes or members of the criminal

underworld. There are also erotic dictionaries of various languages; significantly, the first of these appears to be that of Pierre Pierrugues, of Latin terms and in Latin, of 1826. The classic in this genre is Alfred Delvau's *Dictionnaire érotique de la langue verte* (1864).

Homosexuality and lesbianism have not fared well in general encyclopedias in English, such as the Britannica and the Americana, perhaps because these are addressed in part to a secondary-school readership, for which extensive discussion of such matters is not deemed suitable. The general articles are relatively brief and suffer from outdated and incomplete information. Biographical articles rarely mention that the subjects are gay or lesbian, and contributions of eminent figures to the study of homosexuality are omitted from their biographies. The general rule is, the more accessible and popular a reference work is, the more uninformative it is likely to be on the topic of homosexuality.

With today's demand for more information on sexual matters, it is to be hoped that this situation will change. Yet with the increasing tempo of information build-up, it will probably be necessary to resort more and more to information stored in computer-accessed data banks.

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DIONYSUS

Greek god associated with wine and emotional exuberance. Although the name occurs in linear B tablets from the end of the second millennium B.C., his figure absorbed additional elements from Thrace and the East in the following centuries. Dionysus, called Bacchus in Latin, was the son of Zeus and a mortal Semele. When his mother unwisely besought Zeus to reveal himself in his true form, she was