Civil War(s) and Dickinson Manuscript Book Reconstructions, Deconstructed

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... Mr. Leyda pointed to what is almost certainly a packet of poems copied in the late seventies in identical handwriting and on identical stationery that the Harvard Poems broke up and dispersed over a period of six years! The integrity of this packet is of serious biographical importance.

—Rebecca Patterson, “Author’s Preface,” Emily Dickinson’s Imagery xvi

A strange scene takes place in the middle of 1891, when the biographical project [Mabel Loomis Todd’s 1894 edition of Emily Dickinson’s letters] has barely begun. Mabel, with Austin’s collusion, begins to tamper with the overwhelming evidence of Emily’s bond with Susan. A booklet containing “One Sister have I in the house / And one a hedge away” is taken apart so as to remove the poem. Emily’s sewing holes are cut to disguise the poem’s place in the booklet, but though the page is thus mutilated, and torn in two places, it’s not destroyed for the sake of another poem on the verso. Using black ink the mutilator scores out all the lines and, most heavily, the climax “Sue – forevermore!”

—Lyndall Gordon, Lives Like Loaded Guns 267

In the world of her writerly practice, what constituted a book of or by Emily Dickinson? Did she call or think of the binding together of texts into what we now call fascicles “bookmaking”? In our world of readerly-writerly practice, what constitutes a book of or by her? Most concur that a book of poems or letters by Emily Dickinson published by Harvard University Press is the most “authoritative.” When The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson was published in 1981, the always intriguing handmade
books, forty or more separate bundles of more than eight hundred poems (nearly half of what constituted her “letter” to posterity) found among her life’s “detritus”—each consisting of several stationer’s sheets “in folio,” or folded once to make two leaves, four pages, stacked on top of one another (not interleaved), and then bound with string, threaded through two holes near the top and bottom of the left side of the versos, as one might expect for binding a notebook—gained a firmer hold on scholarly attention and on readers’ imaginations. Until then, professional scholars such as Ruth Miller and Jay Leyda had certainly examined them closely, with Miller arguing for their artistic integrity. Also, scholars such as Martha Lindblom O’Keefe had privately published a lengthy study of these gatherings of Dickinson poems coterie-style, in handmade books distributed to interested readers and friends. These critics’ patterns of reading were not bound by the choreographies of the Mabel Loomis Todd, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Alfred Leete Hampson, Millicent Todd Bingham, and Thomas H. Johnson editions, all of which neatly separated poems from their prose contexts, and from the contexts of the handmade books, though Bianchi comes closest to retaining contexts of the orders and disorders left by Dickinson.

**Questions of Genre and Editing**

Mindfulness of the handling of all of Dickinson’s documents is central to the focus of this essay. My assertion that Bianchi did a better job of maintaining Dickinson’s orders and disorders may seem at odds with Franklin, who in *The Editing of Emily Dickinson* claimed that the packets at Harvard, “numbered 1-40, were returned to Lavinia and thereafter were in the possession of Susan Dickinson, her daughter Martha Dickinson Bianchi, and finally Mrs. Bianchi’s friend Alfred Leete Hampson. These manuscripts have been shuffled, cut up, and generally dealt with roughly. The others, numbered 80-95, along with many loose poems, remained with Mrs. Todd and passed afterwards into the possession of her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham, who gave them to Amherst College. These packets are in good order. They have not been mutilated, and, significantly, the notebook does not indicate that any poems are missing from them” (34). Yet packet 80 was clearly mutilated when Franklin made that declaration. After more time with the documents, Franklin became increasingly aware that Todd not only mutilated manuscripts but did so with even more documents than he originally thought: “given all this, one may now reasonably identify Mrs.
Todd, rather than Lavinia or Austin Dickinson, as the person who mutilated packet 80 and, perhaps, erased the verso of 80-7” (“Emily Dickinson’s Packet 27 [and 80, 14, 6]” 347).

As these anecdotes about editorial work make plain, in order to introduce Dickinson’s work through the medium of print, all of her writings were resituated and reorganized from the conditions in which they were left at her death. As it did for William Blake, mass reproduction created a much wider audience for Dickinson’s texts than they otherwise would have enjoyed, yet translating them into impersonal print stripped her productions of their idiosyncrasies and of the place made for each by her ordering of texts in the books she constructed and bound by thread or by a particular audience to which she sent part of her “letter to the World.” All editors have tampered with her orders, including Johnson and Franklin, and, for that matter, myself. An editor of Dickinson’s work cannot help but do so. This essay reflects on that fact and begins to explore the possibilities opening up to us when we recognize that all reassemblies demonstrate the archives of our attentions and that great reading pleasures and tremendous insights are available to those with varying methods and organizations of critical inquiry; we each in effect make our own fascicles for reading. Also crucial to keep in mind is that to see one method of organization, including precise scholarly reconstructions, as “definitive” limits readerly imaginations and interpretations unnecessarily.

Reviewing a bit of the history of the transmission and disassembly of the fascicles and the general history of the transmission of all her writings is important in order to set the stage for the critical considerations at hand. Eager to arrange her poems thematically, early editor Todd removed the strings from the fascicles and began arranging the poems according to the conventional categories invented for poetry volumes, ones which her co-editor Higginson and most readers expected—“Life,” “Love,” “Nature,” “Time and Eternity.” Producing his variorum in the heyday of New Criticism, which defined poems as closed objects, akin to a Grecian Urn, Johnson made texts for The Poems of Emily Dickinson that were shaped by those conditions. Consequently, he tore rhythmic lines from letters to make poems from prose, to make a lyric where Dickinson may or may not have seen one. A clear example of this editorial practice is that from an October, 17, 1851 letter to her brother Austin (L58): Johnson took the following lines and represented them as a discrete poem:

There is another sky,
Ever serene and fair,
And there is another sunshine,
Though it be darkness there;
Never mind faded forests, Austin,
Never mind silent fields –
Here is a little forest,
Whose leaf is ever green;
Here is a brighter garden,
Where not a frost has been;
In its unfading flowers
I hear the bright bee hum;
Prithee, my brother,
Into my garden come! (J2)

Working within different conditions from those of Johnson, specifically those of establishing even more “authoritative” versions of Dickinson’s poems, Franklin, as a point of “correction,” does not treat these lines as a separate poem, saying they are epistolary rather than poetic.

By contrast, for reasons not made clear by the editorial note, Franklin, as did William H. Shurr, accepts Johnson’s (not Dickinson’s, which my quotation follows) lineation in The Letters of Emily Dickinson, and separates as a letter “Morning / might come / by Accident, / Sister – / Night comes / by Event – / To believe the / final line of / the Card would / foreclose Faith – / Faith is Doubt – / Sister.” Franklin says the lines immediately following—from those beginning “Show me / Eternity, and /”—conclude what he has designated as a letter to Susan Dickinson, and he calls the rest of the letter-poem a poem (Fr1658). Yet nothing in her manuscript indicates that there are two different genres on Dickinson’s handwritten pages (see Smith and Vetter and #5, “Frequently Asked Questions,” Emily Dickinson Archive for a view of the manuscript; see Hart and Smith 246 for a print translation of the letter-poem). So both Johnson and Franklin not only divorced poems from letters in which they were enclosed but also extracted poems from epistolary documents. By doing so, they establish separate genre distinctions when the differences are not so clear, in Johnson’s case to make editions of Poems and then Letters, and in Franklin’s case to stabilize what is recognized as a Dickinson poem. Johnson’s editions assume discrete genres and showcase both letters and poems as isolated units, each numbered as if they are specimens for scientific study. Though he traced many poems to their original placement in Dickinson’s handmade books, Johnson used speculative chronology as his organizing principle instead of trying to reinstate Dickinson’s groupings.
What dismembering Dickinson’s organizational units has cost can never be fully measured, and the fact remains that her poems, letters, and letter-poems remain torn out of their contexts. Even Franklin’s meticulous reassembly of the manuscript books is a product of informed guesswork, as are his claims for the “Sets.” Similarly, chronological ordering, which appears scientific, is also unreliable. Although trends in her script can be identified, from the ligated early cursive to the near-print nonligated script of her later years, in most cases Dickinson’s handwriting cannot be assigned to a particular date but rather to a date range. Also, the most common fallacy found in Dickinson criticism is that when a manuscript can be dated, critics assume that is also the date of a writing’s composition. All we can know is that a reliably dated manuscript conveys information about the date of copying, not of composition.

Similarly, what we can know about Franklin’s two-volume *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson* is that they are his conjecture of how those volumes were bound together and left at Dickinson’s death. Whether his reassemblies always constitute her orders is a matter open to question. Nevertheless, when the volumes were published in 1981, her gatherings called “fascicles” or “fascicules” by Dickinson’s first posthumous editors, and the implications of their organization for our interpretations, became more than an area of special interest for a few of Dickinson’s readers. Among other definitions, “fascicle” connotes, as Eleanor Heginbotham points out, “a bunch, a bundle, a cluster of leaves or flowers, a tuft, a bunch of roots growing from one point” (Dickinson’s own “leaves of grass,” *Reading the Fascicles* 8). Sharon Cameron observes that reading the poems in the fascicles is to read them in the *contextual* sense rather than the *canonical* sense of Dickinson and that such reading “radically” reveals “a question about what constitutes the identity of the [Dickinson] poem” (Choosing Not Choosing 4). In *Dickinson Unbound: Paper, Process, Poetics*, Alexandra Socarides “takes up the question of how Emily Dickinson made her poems, the significance of the materials she used when doing this, and the interpretive possibilities and problems that attention to the details of poetic practice raises for this remarkable writer’s work” (3). Socarides argues that Dickinson’s compositional unit was the sheet folded to make these books. Visual artist Jen Bervin, who transposes Dickinson’s arrangements of “+” and “x” and what we call the “dash” to produce 8’ × 6’ wall hangings, or quilts, notes that “By imposing conventional views of literary authorship (as expressed by book publication) and divorcing her poems from their formal integrity and its intended specificity, the implications of an unusual, complex, pervasive system are harder to understand.” As do Heginbotham, Cameron, Socarides,
and the contributors to his volume, and as did Leyda, Miller, and O’Keefe, Bervin examines Dickinson’s fascicles to learn more about her compositional techniques.

According to Franklin, these books were not compositional, nor were they arranged and finished with a particular theme in mind (of questions of faith or secret abortive love, as has been argued): his view is that the volumes were storage units, a private record of her writings. As did Johnson for the individual poems, Franklin numbered the individual manuscript books, imparting an aura of science and so bolstering his authoritative claims. Franklin also examines pinholes, paper stains, clip impressions, and other material facts to make his case for his reassembly by attempting to recapture what was found among Dickinson’s papers. All of this is laudable and created opportunities for profound advancements in the study of Dickinson and her work, as is obvious from the many provocative and generative studies of and artistic engagements with her manuscript books. What sometimes gets lost in all of these critical and creative responses is that Franklin’s valuable work is the enactment of his hypotheses, not an absolute reenactment of Dickinson’s orders. In Dickinson’s terms, his textual world is not, then, conclusion.

**Fascicle 24 and the Civil War**

Fascicle 24, the object of critical inquiry that stimulated this essay, is a wonderful witness to what might be called the “Franklin-Dickinson Books” assembled for *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*: its missing (torn away) leaves, as well as leaves with folds indicating their placement elsewhere (such as in an envelope for mailing), at least for a time, serve as poignant reminders that the manuscript books she left behind have been pawed over many times since they were last touched by Emily Dickinson. Manuscript Book 24 is also a telling example of a gathering of poems with highly suggestive resonances. Though a fair number of them clearly do belong there, it is an open question whether the documents collected as Fascicle 24 actually belong together, having been arranged and left that way for posterity by Dickinson herself. For this critical musing, occasioned by a volume of essays by scholars turning their attentions to various aspects generated by the very fact of Dickinson manuscript books left to posterity and disassembled and reassembled by various editors, I will not settle that profound question—“Are all of the books reassembled ‘correctly,’ with poems placed as the poet deposited them?”—but will instead use our uncertainties
about their assemblies and present Franklin-choreographed order to analyze ways in which the fascicles might be taught and read as a whole.

Important to keep in mind is that whatever a writer’s, reader’s, or editor’s intentions, all arrangements tell stories beyond those intentions. As Patterson contends in this essay’s first epigraph, “The integrity of” each of the manuscript books “is of serious biographical importance.” Though I am wary of Patterson’s interpreting the poems biographically and literally, her observation captures a fact of our reading—the manuscript orders do tell life stories about human conditions. Also, her interpretive practice is in keeping with the other Dickinson biographers who were her near-contemporaries (Genevieve Taggard, Josephine Pollitt, George Whicher) and even with later biographers (Richard Sewall, Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Lyndall Gordon). Patterson’s keen insight might be most usefully amended to say that the integrity of the manuscript books is of serious artistic importance.

Analyzing the resonances among the poems now identified together as Fascicle 24, readers might observe that the fascicle begins with “It sifts from Leaden Sieves –” (Fr291), a poem about winter, and then cycles backwards through the seasons (winter followed by fall followed by summer). Two poems after “It sifts” is the fall poem, “Of Brussels – it was not – ” (Fr510), and then several poems later “The Trees like Tassels – hit – / and swung” effuse over the “Far Psalteries of Summer –” (Fr523). Such a reversal of the seasons presented as an order for reading is provocative, suggesting that the natural order of things, or worldly experience, has been reversed. Also arresting in this gathering of poems is that many of them are about something being overwhelmed: the first features the landscape being overwhelmed by snow, of course, and then is followed by “Like Mighty Foot Lights – burned / the Red” (Fr507), a description of a sunset so spectacular that the viewer cannot take it in but only imagines that the universe might, just might, be able to appreciate and applaud its splendors even though no pair of eyes can fully see them. After two removed poems that Franklin asserts are “A Pit – but Heaven over it –” (Fr508) and “A curious Cloud surprised the Sky” (Fr509) is “Of Brussels – it was not –” a poem about a shedding of leaves in autumn so intense that the covering of the forest floor is compared to tightly woven “Kidderminster” rugs.

Along with these images from nature that attest to its ferocity and power, Dickinson has permeated the fascicle with symbols and images that suggest the Civil War. That “curious Cloud” “‘twas like a sheet with Horns; / The sheet was Blue – / The Antlers Gray – / It almost touched the Lawns.” Once a reader’s imagination notices that blue and gray are remarked as the
colors of the overwhelming cloud, and that this poem is situated near “When I was small, a / Woman died – / Today – her Only Boy / Went up from the Potomac – / His face all Victory” (Fr518), a poem often read as a response to the horrifyingly bloody and devastating Antietam, or “Tender [Scarlet] Maryland,” this collection reverberates with responses to the overpowering, devastating, and deadly national strife. Even outside of this manuscript book context, a credible interpretation of “It always felt to me – a / wrong / To that Old Moses – done –” (Fr521), a poem sympathizing with the Old Testament figure banished from the Promised Land merely for smashing his staff against a rock rather than speaking to it in order to bring forth water for the tired, hungry, thirsty Israelites, is that Dickinson’s poet’s eye makes visible and more palpable the plight of the disfranchised in her United States—most obviously slaves, but also women. The conditions of each were such that, like Moses, they could look at but not really possess the rich bounty of their own labors. So when Dickinson’s poem cries “My justice bleeds – for thee!” the reference may be for those who in mid-nineteenth-century America could not take advantage of the liberty enjoyed by white male property owners. Surrounded by news of battles, the horrors of which defy imagination, of fellow citizens’ deaths, and of escaped and recaptured slaves, any writer of Dickinson’s time and circumstance inscribing “It feels a shame to be / Alive – / When Men so brave – are dead –” (Fr524) was surely thinking about the Civil War.

All of these may well point to a fascicle or manuscript book that is thematically focused on the cataclysmic national event that Dickinson and her contemporaries read about on every hand, in every journal and newspaper: the War Between the States. Though scholars such as Shira Wolosky, Eliza Richards, Renée Bergland, Faith Barrett, Cristanne Miller, myself previously, and, in this volume, Paula Bennett, have all made credible arguments about Dickinson’s attentions to the Civil War, an underappreciated fact about the Dickinson family’s entanglement with the rage of domestic warfare also remains. As was true of many families, the Dickinson clan was something of a house divided against itself. When her grandfather Samuel Fowler Dickinson went bankrupt and moved to Ohio, his sons dispersed, and Samuel Fowler Dickinson, Jr., decamped to the South, eventually settling in Bibb County, Georgia, in the heart of what was known as the “plantation belt.” His son Loren, Dickinson’s first cousin, enlisted on April 20, 1861 (eight days after Ft. Sumter), and served in the Georgia Second Independent Infantry Battalion, Company C, locally known as the “Floyd Rifles.” On January 15, 1862, he was discharged because he had been
shot and “the bullet remained in his back near his spinal column,” making him “a cripple unfit for duty for months to come.” Loren Dickinson never renounced the Southern cause and by the end of 1862 was applying for a clerkship in the Confederacy. An unpublished family memoir called him “the sort of Southerner who thought ‘Damned Yankee’ was one word” (Smith, “The Civil War, Class, and the Dickinsons’ Confederate Relations”). In 1909 Loren Dickinson died a disillusioned man who drank to soften the long-nursed blow of defeat.

That Fascicle 24 is as damaged a body as was Loren Dickinson’s, and in a sense mirrors the rift in the extended family, having had leaves cut out, and showing obvious rearrangements, points to yet another important fact to keep in mind while contemplating the fascicles, their import, and their legacies: audience is absolutely crucial to making any text. Without an audience (including the writer herself as first reader), no text lives. The fascicles themselves, and our readings of them, are powerful reminders that readers, including editors, write their own stories on top of and for a writer’s remnants. In that sense, the manuscript books are iconic and function as do figural icons such as Dickinson herself—stories of their lives and texts are perpetually being overwritten and erased, and those stories are simultaneously powerfully compelling and “powerfully contested.” In “Dickinson Manuscripts in the Undergraduate Classroom,” Annette Debo incisively explains the problems with Fascicle 24: how there “are no existing holographs” for two of its poems; how their placement in this fascicle is Franklin’s informed supposition; and how “two other poems are split within the fascicle,” are, in other words, “physically severed within” it so that “scholars have theorized that the discrete pieces make up the two separate, and complete, poems” (139). Doing so, Debo underscores how unstable are Dickinson’s texts, how “fluid and alive” those instabilities are as they demand creative acts on the part of readers, and how instrumental editors and readers have been and continue to be in making “poems of Emily Dickinson,” however authoritatively edited the versions encountered may be. Keeping these facts in mind is crucial for responsible interpretation.

Questions of Editing Fascicles 2 and 19

Another mutilated grouping, Fascicle 2, underscores the importance of awareness of such problems. The marks, perhaps made by Mabel Loomis Todd and then by Jay Leyda, on the documents now gathered into that fascicle suggest that those poems were placed and left in a different order
by Dickinson and that one poem now removed to a different manuscript book by Franklin was originally part of this sequence, which includes an inked-over, mutilated version of “One Sister have I in the house” (Fr5). Franklin believes that Todd labeled these manuscripts in blue pencil with the number “80” on the first poem that appears in this book, “There is a word / which bears a sword” (Fr42); Leyda had numbered all of the poems included in this gathering with a dash and a number marking the different folios; he has added “-i” to Todd’s number: Yet the documents now gathered into Fascicle 2 are ordered differently from the order in which Leyda found them, and 80-7 has been moved into a different Franklin-Dickinson construction. “The Face I carry with / me – last –” (Fr395), numbered by Leyda “80-7” was apparently originally situated in the collection just before the manuscript labeled “80-8.” “80-8a” was particularly offensive to Todd, as is “One Sister have I in the house” (Fr5), a loving poem about Susan Dickinson, whom Todd loathed. As Lyndall Gordon notes in one of the epigraphs to this essay, one word in the last line, “Sue – forevermore!” is notably, and much more forcefully, inked over than all the other words, and on a manuscript that features already dramatic blottings out.

Why Franklin rearranged poems that clearly were gathered side-by-side at some point and then moved one so far apart from the others (“The Face I carry” [Fr395] is now in Fascicle 19) can only partially be explained by the fact that it was copied out at a considerably (several years) later time than the other poems in what is now Fascicle 2. But even a casual reader of the fascicles knows that Dickinson herself arranged poems copied out at different times into the same gathering. In Fascicle 14, “The feet of people walking home” (Fr16, Manuscript Books 293–94) is in handwriting noticeably different from everything else in that book. One might argue that to include “The Face I carry with” in its place in the Leyda order leaves a blank page in the middle of the manuscript book and that surely Dickinson did not prefer, did not intend, to do that. But there are more than a few instances in which a manuscript book features a blank page in the middle of the gathering—the books numbered 11, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, and 28 all feature such blank pages. What all of these details make clear is that for Dickinson herself, the orderings of at least some, if not all, of the manuscript books was provisional, and that readers should be mindful of that when interpreting the groupings.

Most important for this analysis, then, is not determining Franklin’s specific motive in declaring that “The face I carry with” does not belong near “One Sister have I in the house”; it is, rather, in using these examples to theorize about the importance of audience in constructing meaning. The
"There is a word."

Figure 7. Fascicle 2 (80-1), “There is a word.”
informed reader will recognize the provisionality of some assemblies and groupings, some of them arbitrary, some the result of informed speculation. Sometimes, in fact, groupings are as much dictated by readerly interests as are the more formal groupings made for Belknap Press. The fascicles challenge us with issues of representation, intentionalities (writerly, readerly, authorial), storytelling, and reception. We can only be nostalgic since we can never be certain that Dickinson’s own orders have been restored.

As we have seen, Franklin moved from declaring that the manuscripts transmitted from Susan Dickinson to Martha Dickinson Bianchi were handled more roughly than those preserved by Mabel Loomis Todd and Milliecent Todd Bingham to acknowledging that each of those handlings resulted in some damage, and that the handling of the sequence Leyda numbered 80 was assertively rough. In 1981 Franklin rearranged the sequence of the 80 group so that the poems were ordered thus:

80-1  There is a word
       Through lane it lay – thro’ bramble -
80-2  The Guest is gold and crimson –
       I counted till they danced so
       Before the ice is in the pools –
       By such and such an offering
Chapter 6

80-3 It did not surprise me –  
When I count the seeds
80-8 Bless God, he went as soldiers,  
If I should cease to bring a Rose  
One Sister have I in the house –  
(completion of “One Sister”)  
“Lethe” in my flower,  
To venerate the simple days  
I’ve got an arrow here.
80-9 I robbed the Woods –  
A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!  
Could live – did live –  
If she had been the Mistletoe
80-4 My wheel is in the dark!  
There’s something quieter than sleep
80-5 I keep my pledge.  
Heart! We will forget him!  
Once more, my now bewildered Dove  
Baffled for just a day or two

In this sequence, 80-7 (“The face I carry with me – last –” [Fr395]) has been removed by Franklin and placed after folio H 147 at the end of the manuscript book he numbered Fascicle 19. His reasoning for doing this appears to show that at least at some point in time, “The face I carry with” was affiliated with the poems gathered into Fascicle 19. Earlier Franklin had surmised,

It should be noted that the stationery of 80-7 does not match the other sheets in packet 80 and that the date assigned to it by the variorum is four years later than the rest of the packet. This sheet has only one poem on it (“The face I carry with me – last” [V 336]) and has been folded in thirds and addressed to someone whose name has been erased. Thus, binding the poem into packet 80 was clearly not Emily Dickinson's first intention for it. But the poem was there when Mrs. Todd indexed the manuscript in midsummer 1891, and it was there when she copied the packet in 1889. (Editing 72)

What Franklin suggests, then, is that Todd had moved the poem into manuscript sequence 80. What his conclusions do not take into account is the possibility that Dickinson moved the poem herself. Whether its “final” resting place as far as she was concerned was in the severely mutilated manu-
script sequence in which Leyda found it or the place Franklin finally assigns can never be definitively answered. In 1967 he certainly did not think that “The face I carry with” belonged in the book he would number 19, and he in fact proposes a very different order and constitution for what would become that book in “Manuscript Order and Disorder” (Editing 56).

So what is important for our readerly and scholarly purposes? Does noting the provisionalities, the changing of mind by one editor, invalidate the assemblies he has made in The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson? No. But what should be taken into account and remembered is that those gatherings are the archives of Franklin’s attentions and that our interpretations of those, whether we leave his orders intact or rearrange them, reflect the archives of our attentions, and all of our attentions are valid. The manuscript book that might be made of the writings we have been discussing if we restore the order in which they were found would be:

80-1  There is a word
     Through lane it lay – thro’ bramble –
80-2  The Guest is gold and crimson –
     I counted till they danced so
     Before the ice is in the pools –
     By such and such an offering
80-3  It did not surprise me –
     When I count the seeds
80-4  I robbed the Woods –
     A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!
     Could live – did live –
     If she had been the Mistletoe
80-5  My wheel is in the dark!
     There’s something quieter than sleep
80-6  I keep my pledge.
     Heart! We will forget him!
     Once more, my now bewildered Dove
     Baffled for just a day or two –
80-7  The face I carry with
     (Verso of “The face I carry with” with “Sue” erased [Open Me 64])
80-8  Bless God, he went as soldiers,
     If I should cease to bring a Rose
     One Sister have I in the house –
80-9  (completion of “One Sister”)
     “Lethe” in my flower,
     To venerate the simple days
This arrangement emphasizes associations among the poems mutilated to remove traces of Susan’s intimacies with Emily—“One Sister have I in the house” and “The Face I carry with / me – last.” The first poem is about Susan and Emily’s intense affections for her, and the second poem, most obviously read as one of a lover to her beloved, was addressed to Susan. Thus the book made from the sequence Leyda found and numbered 80 ends:

*Figure 9.* Fascicle 2 (80-6 verso, reduced; facing 80-7), “Once more my now bewildered Dove.”
Figure 10. Fascicle 19 (80-7 recto), “The Face I carry with me – last –”
Figure 11. Fascicle 2 (8o-8 recto), “Bless God, he went as soldiers.”
Figure 12. Fascicle 2 (80-8a), inked-over manuscripts.
This last poem of Dickinson’s, finished in the 80 sequence with a transcription by Todd necessitated by her mutilations, offers the best advice for reading the sequences of writings by Emily Dickinson:

To invest existence with a stately air
Needs but to remember
That the Acorn there
Is the Elf of forests
For the upper Air! (Fr55)

In other words, readers need not invest the orders we now have available of Dickinson’s manuscripts as immutably final. While they have been created with rigor, that rigor must ever be flexible, as it is but an “Elf” compared to what might yet be realized. To “dwell in Possibility” is to own the archives of our and other readers’ attentions.
Figure 13. Fascicle 2, canceled out with pencil, transcription by Todd of second stanza of “To venerate the simple days.”