# I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—

## POEM TEXT

I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—
But You have enough—of those—
I could bring You Odors from St. Domingo—
Colors—from Vera Cruz—

Berries of Bahamas—have I—
But this little Blaze
Flickering to itself—in the Meadow—
Suits Me—more than those—

Never a Fellow matched this Topaz—
And his Emerald Swing—
Dower itself—for Bobadilo—
Better—Could I bring?

## SUMMARY

I could give you precious gemstones if I wanted to, but you already have plenty of those. I could give you perfumes from St. Domingo or dyes from Vera Cruz.

I've got fruit from the Bahamas, but this little flame-colored flower flickering all alone in the field pleases me more than any of those other options.

Nothing can measure up to this flower, which is vibrant as topaz (a bright, orangey-red gemstone) and has an emerald green stem. It's as beautiful as a wedding gift for a wealthy ruler. What better present could I give you?

## THEMES

### THE VALUE OF THOUGHTFUL GIFTS

The speaker of "I could bring You Jewels" contemplates what gift to "bring" to a dear friend. She imagines giving this friend heaps of "Jewels," perfumes, and dyes from far-off lands, but ultimately feels her love is better expressed through a little flame-colored flower she finds in the "Meadow." The best gift isn't necessarily the most expensive or impressive one, the poem implies, but rather something that comes from the heart.

As the speaker muses about what to give to a friend, she lists off all manner of flashy, exorbitant gifts. She considers "Jewels," foreign perfumes, and exotic fruits, suggesting that she'd be willing to pay a fortune for the right gift. That she'd go all the way to "St. Domingo," "Vera Cruz," or the "Bahamas" to find a gift illustrates that she'd go to great lengths in order to express her appreciation for this friend.

Ultimately, however, the speaker foregoes expensive and exotic presents in favor of a humbler yet more personal gift. She settles on a small, flame-colored flower she finds in a field. The flower may not be expensive, glamorous, or rare, but the speaker finds its "Blaze" (or striking orange-yellow color) more enchanting than any of those other goods.

The poem subtly suggests that this is because the little flower better represents the speaker's love for her giftee. She says that the way it "Flicker[s] to itself" all alone in the field "Suits" the speaker better than those other gifts, suggesting, perhaps, that it reminds the speaker of her own burning passion.

Such a gift, the poem implies, is much more meaningful. Indeed, the speaker says that nothing could ever "match[] this Topaz," likening the flower she's picked to a vibrant, flame-colored gemstone. That *she* finds this flower as beautiful as any precious "Jewel" means that it is the perfect gift for her friend; it expresses both something of the speaker and of the friendship these two people share, since the friend will know this gift came from the speaker's heart. In this way, the poem implies that the most valuable gifts are heartfelt expressions of love and intimacy.

**Where this theme appears in the poem:**

- Lines 1-12

### THE BEAUTY OF EVERYDAY SURROUNDINGS

The speaker of "I could bring You Jewels" rejects materialism and showy status symbols, instead celebrating the humble beauty of her immediate surroundings. Rather than buy some fancy or exotic present for her friend, she chooses to pluck this friend a flower from a nearby meadow. In comparing the flower's petals and stem to peerless gemstones, the speaker suggests that people don't need to go far or spend a lot of money to find something special. Look closely, the poem implies, and you'll discover that natural beauty already exists all around.

The speaker wrestles with what to "bring" her friend, wanting to give her something beautiful but wanting it to feel personal as well. The speaker considers giving this friend "Jewels" but decides against it because her friend has "enough" of them already. This implies that the friend is well off and doesn't need

another pretty but relatively cold and impersonal present (and one that would likely be lost among the friend's many other possessions).

The speaker also rejects the notion that she has to travel far and wide to find something special. She vetoes perfumes from "St. Domingo," "Berries of the Bahamas," and "Colors—from Vera Cruz" not because she *can't* obtain them, but because she knows she doesn't *need* to; there's ample beauty right in the nearby meadow. There, she discovers a lovely little flower the color of "Topaz," its green stem like "an Emerald Swing."

Flowers may be humble, abundant, and short-lived compared to actual jewels, but that doesn't mean they're not as lovely as any gemstone. In this way, the poem suggests there's natural beauty to be found all around—if only people stopped to look at and appreciate it.

**Where this theme appears in the poem:**

- Lines 6-12

## LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

### LINES 1-2

*I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—*
*But You have enough—of those—*

The poem's speaker begins the poem but considering what gift to get for a friend or loved one. She addresses this person directly, making the poem feel both intimate and conversational. Note how casual the poem's opening lines sound: the speaker makes it seem as though getting "Jewels" would be no big deal. She "could" obtain jewels if she "had a mind to"—that is, if she wanted to.

Apparently, the speaker isn't worried about cost. She dismisses the gift of jewels not because they'd be hard to get, but because her friend has "enough" already. Perhaps this friend is well-off and has no difficulty buying expensive things. Another jewel might just be one in a pile rather than something unique and special.

Notice the use of caesura in the first two lines:

I could bring You **Jewels—had** I a mind to—
But You have **enough—of** those—

Dickinson's poetry is filled with idiosyncratic dashes like these. Here, they slow the reader down. The caesuras create a halting, hesitant rhythm, subtly enacting the way the mind sometimes moves in jumps and starts. The dashes also make the poem feel less assured and more like the reader is witnessing someone's actual mind at work—that is, like the speaker is thinking through what to get this friend in real-time.

The poem is written in rough trochaic meter, meaning that it generally follows a **stressed**-unstressed rhythm (**DA**-dum). It uses a mix of pentameter, tetrameter, and trimeter, with odd lines being longer and even lines being shorter. Here are the first two lines scanned:

**I** could | **bring** You | **Jewels**—had | **I** a | **mind** to—
**But** You | **have** e- | **nough** of | **those**—

The second line is catalectic, meaning that it's missing the final unstressed foot. This allows it to land more emphatically on "those," as if the speaker is wryly poking fun at her friend's bounty of "Jewels."

### LINES 3-4

*I could bring You Odors from St. Domingo—*
*Colors—from Vera Cruz—*

The speaker lists other potential gifts: "Odors" (or fragrances) "from St. Domingo," "Colors" (dyes or colorful fabrics) "from Vera Cruz," or "Berries of Bahamas." Notice the use of anaphora and more general parallelism, which connect lines 1 ("I could bring You Jewels") with lines 3-4:

**I could bring You** Odors **from** St. Domingo—
Colors—**from** Vera Cruz—

The repetition of "I could bring You" creates rhythm while also stressing that the things the speaker is listing are *possibilities* rather than realities. That is, she is well aware of all the expensive, beautiful gifts she might procure for her friend, but "could" subtly implies that none of these are quite what she is looking for. Likewise, the parallel place names—"from St. Domingo" and "from Vera Cruz"—suggest just how far and wide she is theoretically willing to search.

Sonic devices fill these lines with lively music. Listen to the crisp alliteration of "**c**ould," "**C**olors," and **C**ruz" and the round assonance/thudding /d/ consonance of "**O**dors from St. **D**omingo." The rich sounds of the lines at once make those potential gifts seem all the more lustrous and exciting while also making the poem feel more playful in general.

### LINES 5-8

*Berries of Bahamas—have I—*
*But this little Blaze*
*Flickering to itself—in the Meadow—*
*Suits Me—more than those—*

The speaker continues the list of possible presents for this friend in line 5, saying that she already has "Berries of Bahamas." The bouncy /b/ alliteration of this phrase keeps up the poem's playful feel. The mention of another distant island, meanwhile, sets up a striking contrast with the following line, where the speaker introduces a gift much closer to home: a

"little Blaze / Flickering to itself—in the Meadow." In other words, the speaker spots a flame-colored flower waving about in a field.

The continued /b/ alliteration in this metaphor ("But," "Blaze") emphasizes the juxtaposition between those Bahamanian berries and the humble flower, which the speaker declares "Suits" (or pleases) her better than all the previously mentioned gift options.

Maybe this is because the speaker sees something of herself in the flower, whose solitude and fiery hue suggest both introspection and passionate love. The flower is also local, perhaps from the speaker's own backyard or favorite walking spot. The flower might seem like a humble gift in comparison to expensive jewels and rare fragrances, but there's also something wonderfully personal about it.

### LINES 9-12

*Never a Fellow matched this Topaz—*
*And his Emerald Swing—*
*Dower itself—for Bobadilo—*
*Better—Could I bring?*

The speaker praises the little flower she found by declaring that no "Fellow" has ever been able to compete with "this Topaz." The word topaz can refer to both a precious gemstone and to that stone's amber color. In calling the flower "this Topaz," the speaker is essentially declaring it a gemstone of unparalleled beauty and vibrancy. To the speaker, this metaphor implies, the flower is as lovely as any "Jewel."

The speaker next compares the flower's stem and leaves to an "Emerald Swing." Again, the word emerald can be both a noun and an adjective; it refers to a precious gemstone and to that stone's rich green hue. The image is charming, the speaker comparing this stem to a "swing" atop which sits the flower's bloom. The speaker also personifies the flower in line 10 by referring to "his Emerald Swing." This adds more whimsy to the image as well.

So lovely and precious is this flower, the speaker continues, that it would be a worthy gift for "Bobadilo." ("Dower" can be used interchangeably with "dowry," a word referring to the money or goods traditionally paid to a husband by his wife's family upon marriage; the word can also simply mean to endow or present.) "Bobadilo" might refer to a town in Spain or in El Salvador, or it might refer to a former governor of Santo Domingo. Overall, this line means that the flower has made itself an undeniably attractive gift, fit for even the most decorated aristocrat!

The speaker ends the poem by asking what "Better" gift she could possibly offer her friend. This rhetorical question suggests that there isn't any better fit: she has found exactly the thing she was looking for to express how much she cares for this person. More bouncy /b/ alliteration ("Bobadilo," "Better," "bring") playfully emphasizes this happy conclusion. It turns out the speaker didn't need to travel far and wide or spend money in order to gift her friend something meaningful and lovely: all she had to do was open her eyes to the beauty all around her.

## SYMBOLS

### THE FLOWER

The speaker decides to send her friend a little flame-colored flower from a nearby meadow as a token of her affection. In addition to representing the speaker's deep love, this flower becomes a symbol of the striking beauty of the everyday—the loveliness that exists all around people, if only they'd take a moment to stop and look.

Upon seeing this little flower "Flickering" to itself, the speaker knows that she's stumbled upon the perfect gift for her friend. The flower might not be as exotic as "Berries of the Bahamas" or as expensive as "Jewels," but, to the speaker, its beauty is nevertheless unmatched. It "Suits" the speaker, serving as a better representation of her feelings than a more impressive but less personal gift. Its vibrant color might represent the speaker's passion, while its solitude perhaps reflects the speaker's own humility and introversion.

**Where this symbol appears in the poem:**

- **Lines 6-12:** "But this little Blaze / Flickering to itself—in the Meadow— / Suits Me—more than those— / Never a Fellow matched this Topaz— / And his Emerald Swing— / Dower itself—for Bobadilo— / Better—Could I bring?"

## POETIC DEVICES

### PARALLELISM

Parallelism adds memorable music to the poem, particularly in its opening stanza:

I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—
But You have enough—of those—
I could bring You Odors from St. Domingo—
Colors—from Vera Cruz—

"I could bring You Jewels" and "I could bring You Odors" are grammatically identical phrases, as are "from St. Domingo" and "from Vera Cruz." All this repetitive language suggests that the speaker could go on and on listing potential gifts. Asyndeton, or the lack of any conjunctions between the items on this list, adds to the effect; it sounds as though there is no end to the number of extravagant things that the speaker could obtain for her friend if she wanted to.

Parallelism also conveys that "Jewels," "Odors," and "Colors" are essentially just variations of the *same thing*. Each is an expensive, exotic item meant to express the speaker's love for her friend.

The repetition of "I could bring you" is also an example of the specific type of parallelism known as anaphora. The repetition of "could" also suggests that while everything on this list of decadent presents is within the speaker's reach, she is actually listing things she *doesn't* plan to give her friend because they simply don't feel special—or personal—enough.

**Where Parallelism appears in the poem:**

- **Line 1:** "I could bring You Jewels"
- **Line 3:** "I could bring You Odors," "from St. Domingo"
- **Line 4:** "Colors," "from Vera Cruz"
- **Line 5:** "Berries of Bahamas"

## ALLITERATION

Alliteration makes the poem more musical and memorable while also calling readers' attention to certain words and images.

In line 4, for example, the speaker says that she could bring her friend "Colors—from Vera Cruz." The crisp /c/ alliteration makes the phrase pop, granting readers a sense of these colors vibrancy (the speaker might be talking about various dyes or fabrics).

The next stanza begins with a string of bold, bouncy /b/ alliteration:

> Berries of Bahamas—have I—
> But this little Blaze

The poem sounds playful and lighthearted, which makes sense; it is about giving a loved one a present, after all! The alliteration also subtly highlights the juxtaposition between those exotic "Berries" and the "little Blaze," or flame-colored flower, that the speaker finds in her very own "Meadow."

Softer /m/ alliteration appears in lines 7-8:

> Flickering to itself—in the Meadow—
> Suits me—more than those—

The gentle, humming /m/ sounds evoke the quiet pleasure the speaker takes in choosing a humble flower from a nearby field rather than trying to hunt down the most extravagant gift she can find.

Finally, more /b/ alliteration appears in the poem's final moments:

> Dower itself—for Bobadilo—
> Better—Could I bring?

The emphatic /b/ sounds suggest that the speaker hasn't sacrificed any beauty or charm by choosing this small, local source of beauty for her friend—this flower is every bit as lovely as anything she could have sent for or traveled in search of!

**Where Alliteration appears in the poem:**

- **Line 4:** "Colors," "Cruz"
- **Line 5:** "Berries," "Bahamas"
- **Line 6:** "But," "Blaze"
- **Line 7:** "Meadow"
- **Line 8:** "Me," "more"
- **Line 11:** "Bobadilo"
- **Line 12:** "Better," "bring"

## METAPHOR

The speaker's metaphors illustrate that the humble flower she finds in a nearby meadow is just as lovely as any jewel.

First, the speaker compares this flower to a "little Blaze / Flickering to itself—in the Meadow." This metaphor is also a lovely bit of imagery: readers can envision a vibrant, orange-hued flower wavering back and forth in the breeze, looking like a small, flickering flame.

But the metaphor doesn't just convey the way the *flower* looks—it also says something about the speaker, since the speaker says that this flower "Suits" her more than the other gifts. It's almost as if the speaker sees *herself* in the flower's humble beauty and solitude. The metaphorical "Blaze" also suggests that this flower encapsulates the speaker's love for her friend (fire is often associated with passion).

The speaker uses a second metaphor in the third stanza:

> Never a Fellow matched this Topaz—
> And his Emerald Swing—

Here, the speaker compares the flower to a "Topaz," a precious gemstone that is often amber in color (just like a flame). This metaphor echoes the poem's opening line, when the speaker says that she could bring her friend "Jewels" if she wanted to. By comparing the flower to topaz, the speaker suggests that it is every bit as beautiful and valuable as any gemstone. She also compares the flower's stem to an "Emerald Swing"—emerald being a bright green gemstone. The metaphor is both visually evocative and playful: the flower's stem is like a "Swing" a child plays on. This perhaps suggests that there's no need to take this gift-giving business too seriously; it can be fun and playful and still convey the speaker's feelings.

**Where Metaphor appears in the poem:**

- **Lines 6-7:** "But this little Blaze / Flickering to itself—in the Meadow—"
- **Lines 9-10:** "Never a Fellow matched this Topaz— / And his Emerald Swing—"

### CAESURA

This poem, like most of Dickinson's, contains lots of dashes in place of more conventional punctuation. Many of these dashes create striking caesuras, resulting in dramatic, emotive pauses throughout the poem.

In the first two lines, for example, the speaker says,

> I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—
> But You have enough—of those—

The pause created by the dash evokes the speaker's mind in motion. It's as if she's thinking out loud, vacillating between whether or not to go with those jewels after all. The pause also results in emphasis falling before the dash, so that the words "Jewels" and "enough" stand out even more to the reader's ear. The caesura in line 4 works similarly:

> Colors—from Vera Cruz—

It's as if the speaker is just casting around for the most extravagant gifts she can think of; the pauses indicate when the speaker is thinking or reaching for something, and therefore the poem's images feel spontaneous, as though the speaker just thought of them this very instant.

In lines 7-8, caesura again helps emphasize certain words:

> Flickering to itself—in the Meadow—
> Suits Me—more than those—

Here, caesura helps emphasize the relationship between the flower and the speaker, revealing that the speaker sees herself in the way it "Flicker[s] to itself." The reader gets the feeling that the speaker, too, is a solitary creature who takes pleasure in her own company.

There is more caesura in the last two lines of the poem:

> Dower itself—for Bobadilo—
> Better—could I bring?

The pauses created by the dashes feel loaded with feeling, as if the speaker is just over the moon with this delightful gift she's discovered for her friend.

**Where Caesura appears in the poem:**

- **Line 1:** "Jewels—had"
- **Line 2:** "enough—of"
- **Line 4:** "Colors—from"
- **Line 5:** "Bahamas—have"
- **Line 7:** "itself—in"
- **Line 8:** "Me—more"
- **Line 11:** "itself—for"
- **Line 12:** "Better—Could"

## VOCABULARY

**Had I a mind to** (Line 1) - If I wanted to.

**Odors** (Line 3) - Scents or perfumes.

**St. Domingo** (Line 3) - The capital city of the Dominican Republic.

**Colors** (Line 4) - Likely a reference to dyes.

**Vera Cruz** (Line 4) - A city and state on the Gulf of Mexico.

**Topaz** (Line 9) - A precious gemstone, typically amber or pale blue in color.

**Emerald Swing** (Line 10) - An emerald is a bright green gemstone, while "swing" here refers to the flower's stem.

**Dower** (Line 11) - *Dower* has a few different meanings that might apply here. It can be used interchangeably with "dowry," which was the sum traditionally paid to a husband by the wife's family upon marriage. It can also be used as a verb meaning to endow or present.

**Bobadilo** (Line 11) - *Bobadilo* might refer to a town in Spain or a town in El Salvador. It also might refer to a former governor of Santo Domingo. Broadly, Dickinson is using the word to refer to a wealthy leader or aristocrat.

## FORM, METER, & RHYME

### FORM

The poem's 12 lines are divided into three quatrains, or four-line stanzas. It swings back and forth between longer and shorter lines; most of those long lines contain four poetic feet, while most of the short lines contain three. The poem also uses an ABCB rhyme scheme. As such, it can be considered a riff on the ballad—the same form that Dickinson turns to often in her poetry. (Note that, unlike true ballads, the main foot here is not an iamb. More on that in the Meter section of this guide.)

The poem's comparatively loose rhythm captures some of the playfulness and informality of a close friendship. The brevity of the poem also reflects the smallness and simplicity of the gift the speaker chooses for her friend: a single flower rather than expensive "Jewels."

## METER

The poem uses a rough mixture of trochaic tetrameter and trimeter. This means that the majority of the poem's feet are trochees: poetic units consisting of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable (DA-dum). Trochees create a strong, propulsive rhythm. The odd-numbered lines are also all longer than the even-numbered lines, creating a swinging, see-sawing sensation.

The poem is very irregular, however. Take a look at the first two lines:

> I could | bring You | Jewels—had | I a | mind to—
> But You | have e- | nough of | those—

The first line is actually in trochaic *pentameter*, meaning it's made up of *five* trochees instead of four (the exact scansion is also a bit ambiguous; readers might hear things differently, for example placing emphasis on the word "had"). The second line is in trochaic tetrameter, meaning there are four trochees, but the last foot is catalectic (the final unstressed syllable is missing). This results in the line ending on a stressed syllable ("those"), making it sound more emphatic—the speaker really doesn't think her friend needs any more *stuff*.

In fact, note that all the even-numbered end with stressed beats. After the first stanza, they're also all catalectic trochaic *trimeter* rather than tetrameter. This means they have *three* trochees (the last of which is *missing* its final unstressed syllable):

> But this | lit tle | Blaze
> Suits Me— | more than | those—
> And his | Em erald | Swing—
> Bet ter— | Could I | bring?

The odd-numbered lines, meanwhile, mostly end with unstressed beats ("Do mingo," "Mead ow," "Bo badilo"). They're a little more irregular, but the main foot here is again the trochee and most (but not all) of them have four feet (making them trochaic tetrameter). There are also dactyls (DA-dum-dum), anapests (da-da-DUM), and iambs (da-DUM).

Check out some examples below:

> Ber ries of | Ba ha- | mas—have I—
> Flick ering | to itself— | in the | Mead ow—
> Nev er a | Fel low | matched this | To paz—
> Dow er it- | self—for | Bo ba- | di lo—

Though the meter isn't perfect, there's clearly a pattern. Overall, the poem's meter is regular enough to create a pleasing, propulsive rhythm, but irregular enough to evoke the informal, intimate relationship between the speaker and her friend.

## RHYME SCHEME

At first, the poem seems to follow the typical rhyme scheme of a ballad:

> ABCB

The second and fourth lines of each stanza rhyme, while the first and third do not. But there's a twist here: the "C" rhyme sound above ("those"/"Cruz") actually appears *again* in the second stanza, where it forms a slant rhyme with "Blaze" and an identical rhyme with "those." "Domingo"/"Meadow"/ "Bobadilo" are all subtle slant rhymes as well.

As such, the full rhyme scheme looks more like this:

> ABCB DBCB EFCF

The general *pattern* is the same in each stanza, but certain rhyme *sounds* echo throughout the entire poem. Because these rhymes are all slant, the effect is subtle. Only the poem's final rhyme between "Swing" and "bring" is perfect, reflecting, perhaps, that by the end of the poem the speaker has settled on the perfect gift for her friend.

## SPEAKER

The speaker is someone contemplating what gift they want to present to a friend. Apparently, the speaker has plenty of money and access to exotic goods; they consider "Jewels," "Odors" (or perfumes), "Colors" (or dyes), and "Berries" from faraway locales. Ultimately, however, the speaker decides that none of these things are quite right (in part because this friend already has "enough" luxuries). The speaker chooses something much closer to home: a simple flower plucked from a nearby field. The speaker says this flower "Suits" her better than any of the other, more luxurious gifts, perhaps because the speaker herself is rather like the "little Blaze." She, too, may be solitary and humble yet bursting with a fiery passion, and thus prefers to express her love with this simple gift.

It's possible that there's no real distance between the speaker of the poem and the poet herself. Emily Dickinson wrote often about the spectacular beauty of her natural surroundings, and she was also famously reclusive, rarely traveling far from home. The speaker's tastes thus certainly seem to mirror the poet's, and we've used female pronouns in this guide for clarity's sake. That said, the poem never offers up any specific identifying information (age, gender, etc.) about the speaker or the recipient of this gift.

## SETTING

The poem only gives the slightest glimpse of where it takes place. Though the speaker imagines giving her friend a gift from

some faraway locale—"St. Domingo" or "Vera Cruz"—she ultimately turns to a nearby "Meadow." There, she finds a bright little flower, flickering like a flame in the grass and seeming more beautiful than any gemstone.

The speaker doesn't go into any further detail about her surroundings, but the fact that she was able to just go outside and pick this flower suggests that she lives in a place of abundant natural beauty (though, perhaps, that beauty is often overlooked). Readers might envision Dickinson herself writing this poem while staring out her own window at her garden or wandering in the fields near her home in Amherst, Massachusetts.

## CONTEXT

### LITERARY CONTEXT

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) published almost nothing during her lifetime, and after 1865 she rarely even left her family home in Amherst, Massachusetts. But from within her circumscribed world, she explored the heights and depths of human experience through her groundbreaking poetry.

No one else sounds quite like Dickinson. Her poems use simple, folky forms—ballad stanzas, for instance—to explore profound philosophical questions, passionate loves, and the mysteries of nature. She was also often an immensely playful poet, as readers can see in the witty, whimsical imagery of "I could bring You Jewels." ("A Murmur in the Trees—to note—" is another fanciful, light-hearted Dickinson poem.)

While Dickinson didn't get too involved in the literary world of her time, she was still part of a swell of 19th-century American innovation. Her contemporary Walt Whitman (who became as famous as Dickinson was obscure) was similarly developing an unprecedented and unique poetic voice, and the Transcendentalists (like Emerson and Thoreau) shared her deep belief in the spiritual power of nature. The speaker's firm belief that a little wildflower in a nearby "Meadow" is every bit as precious as any jewel also echoes the concerns of earlier English Romantics like William Wordsworth, who emphasized the beauty and importance of the natural world.

Unknown during her lifetime, Dickinson led a very private life but became one of the world's most famous and beloved poets after her death, when her sister discovered and published a secret stash of her poems. Later artists of all stripes claim Dickinson as an influence, and not just writers: artists from the composer Samuel Barber to the director Jane Campion have responded to Dickinson's poetry in their work.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Dickinson's appreciation for nature's beauty fits in with a broader artistic backlash to the Industrial Revolution. This period saw rapid technological innovations emerge alongside destructive mining and logging, merciless working conditions in newly-built factories, and choking pollution as many people abandoned rural lifestyles to seek new opportunities in cities. Goods were becoming cheaper and more readily available than ever before, while imperialism and foreign trade led to rapid globalization.

Many artists of this era foresaw that such rapid production and consumption would come at a great cost to the natural world. Though it focuses on the delight of finding the perfect gift for a friend, "I could bring You Jewels—had I a mind to—" subtly suggests that people don't really need so much *stuff*, nor do they have to travel far to find something precious. Instead, the poem illustrates that there is no shortage of natural beauty right at home (and that such beauty deserves to be appreciated).

## MORE RESOURCES

### EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- The Poem in Dickinson's Own Hand — Peruse Emily Dickinson's handwritten manuscripts at the Emily Dickinson Archive. (https://www.edickinson.org/editions/1/image_sets/12175604)
- The Poet's Life and Work — Read a Poetry Foundation biography of Emily Dickinson. (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/emily-dickinson)
- The Poet's Family and Friends — Read about some of the people to whom Dickinson was closest (and, perhaps, who may have received a "little Blaze" from the poet). (https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/emily-dickinson/biography/family-friends/)
- Listen to the Poem Out Loud — A reading of "I could bring You Jewels." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWokdIFlQWY)
- "How Emily Dickinson Grew Her Genius in Her Family's Backyard" — This Slate article discusses the ways Dickinson's fascination with nature fueled her poetry. (http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/books/2016/05/every_single_living_creature_in_emily_dickinson_s_complete_wo

### LITCHARTS ON OTHER EMILY DICKINSON POEMS

- A Bird, came down the Walk
- After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
- A Light exists in Spring
- A Murmur in the Trees—to note—
- A narrow Fellow in the Grass
- An awful Tempest mashed the air—
- As imperceptibly as grief
- Because I could not stop for Death —

## HOW TO CITE

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