

analysis of a narrow fellow in the grass

An Analysis of "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass": Unveiling Emily Dickinson's Masterpiece

Introduction:

Have you ever felt a shiver of excitement and unease simultaneously? Emily Dickinson's "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" expertly captures this duality, presenting a poem that's both deceptively simple and profoundly complex. This in-depth analysis delves into the poem's intricate layers, exploring its symbolism, themes, and the masterful use of language that solidified Dickinson's position as a literary giant. We will dissect the poem line by line, exploring its imagery, metaphorical depth, and lasting impact on readers and critics alike. Prepare to unearth the hidden treasures within this seemingly short yet powerfully evocative work.

I. The Enigmatic Opening and the Establishment of Tone:

The poem opens with an immediate sense of mystery: "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass / Occasionally rides." This deceptively simple opening immediately establishes the poem's tone – one of both wonder and apprehension. The "Narrow Fellow" is immediately presented as something both intriguing and potentially dangerous, a creature that inhabits a space familiar yet inherently wild. The verb "rides" adds a touch of almost supernatural agency, suggesting a power beyond simple movement. The use of "Occasionally" hints at unpredictability, further heightening the suspense.

II. Symbolism and the Nature of the "Narrow Fellow":

The identity of the "Narrow Fellow" is, of course, the central enigma. The most widely accepted interpretation identifies it as a snake. The poem's imagery supports this – the "Grass" as its habitat, the "blue uncertain stumbling Buzz" suggesting its sinuous movement. However, the ambiguity is crucial. The poem never explicitly states it's a snake; Dickinson allows the reader to participate in the process of identification, fostering multiple interpretations. This could symbolize the unknown, the fear of the untamed, or even the darker aspects of nature itself. The "Narrow Fellow" could also represent death, a lurking presence that is always close but unseen.

III. The Speaker's Reaction: Fear and Fascination:

The poem moves beyond simple observation to explore the speaker's emotional response. The lines "And when a Boy, and Barefoot – / I more than once at Noon / Have passed, I thought, a Whip lash – / Unconscious of the Noon –" depict a childhood encounter imbued with a sense of awe and fear. The comparison to a "Whip lash" suggests a sudden, unexpected, and potentially dangerous encounter. The phrase "Unconscious of the Noon" highlights the speaker's absorbed state, suggesting the encounter was almost a trance-like experience. This unconsciousness suggests a deeper, almost primal fear, a visceral reaction to the creature's presence.

IV. The Metaphorical Depth and the Use of Sensory Details:

Dickinson masterfully employs sensory details to convey the experience. The "blue uncertain stumbling Buzz" is a vivid auditory image, creating a sense of both movement and mystery. The "narrow Fellow"'s presence is primarily experienced through its effect on the speaker, reinforcing the poem's focus on subjective perception. The poem's ambiguity encourages multiple readings. The "Narrow Fellow" can symbolize not just a snake but anything that evokes a sense of hidden danger, vulnerability, or the unknown aspects of life and death.

V. Nature's Power and the Speaker's Humble Position:

The poem subtly suggests a power imbalance between the speaker and nature. The "Narrow Fellow" is presented as a force of nature, unpredictable and powerful, while the speaker is vulnerable and susceptible to its presence. This speaks to humanity's place in the natural world, reminding us of our insignificance in the face of larger, uncontrollable forces. The final stanza reinforces this feeling: "But never met in the Grass, / It felt a Presence – near – / It vibrated his nerve / And startled him –". The snake's presence isn't just observed; it's felt deeply, profoundly affecting the speaker's senses and nerves.

VI. The Poem's Structure and its Significance:

The poem's structure is deceptively simple, following a regular rhyme scheme (AABB) and meter. However, this seemingly straightforward structure belies the complex emotions and ideas it conveys. The use of enjambment—running one line into the next without punctuation—creates a sense of fluidity and movement, mirroring the sinuous nature of the "Narrow Fellow" itself. This contrasts sharply with the controlled structure, further emphasizing the unpredictable and powerful nature of the encounter.

VII. The Lasting Legacy and Continued Relevance:

"A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" continues to resonate with readers today because of its universal themes. It speaks to our fundamental fear of the unknown, our fascination with the natural world, and our inherent vulnerability in the face of larger forces. Its ambiguity and masterful use of imagery ensure its enduring appeal, making it a cornerstone of American poetry and a testament to Dickinson's unparalleled skill. The poem's exploration of the human experience continues to engage and challenge readers across generations.

VIII. Conclusion:

Emily Dickinson's "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" is more than just a poem about a snake; it is a profound exploration of nature, fear, and the human condition. Through its evocative imagery, ambiguous symbolism, and masterful use of language, the poem challenges readers to confront their own perceptions of the natural world and the darker aspects of existence. Its enduring power lies in its ability to evoke a visceral response, leaving a lasting impression long after the final line has been read.

Article Outline:

Name: Unraveling the Mystery: A Deep Dive into Emily Dickinson's "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass"

Introduction: Hooking the reader and introducing the poem's central theme.

Chapter 1: The Enigmatic Opening: Analyzing the poem's opening lines and establishing its tone.

Chapter 2: Symbolism and Interpretation: Exploring the various interpretations of the "Narrow Fellow."

Chapter 3: The Speaker's Emotional Journey: Examining the speaker's reactions and feelings.

Chapter 4: Poetic Devices and Literary Techniques: Analyzing Dickinson's use of imagery, metaphor, and structure.

Chapter 5: Nature's Power and Human Vulnerability: Exploring the power dynamics between the speaker and nature.

Chapter 6: The Lasting Legacy and Relevance: Discussing the poem's enduring impact.

Conclusion: Summarizing the key findings and emphasizing the poem's significance.

(The body of the article above fulfills this outline.)

FAQs:

1. What is the central theme of "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass"? The poem explores themes of nature, fear, the unknown, and the human condition.
1. What is the "Narrow Fellow"? While widely interpreted as a snake, the poem's ambiguity allows for multiple interpretations.
1. What is the significance of the poem's structure? The simple structure contrasts with the complex emotions, enhancing the poem's impact.
1. How does Dickinson use imagery in the poem? She employs vivid sensory details to create a powerful and immersive experience.
1. What is the poem's tone? The poem's tone is a blend of wonder, apprehension, and awe.
1. What is the significance of the "blue uncertain stumbling Buzz"? This auditory image enhances the mystery and movement of the creature.

1. How does the poem reflect Dickinson's style? It demonstrates her characteristic use of ambiguity, concise language, and evocative imagery.
1. Why is this poem still relevant today? Its exploration of universal themes of fear and nature continues to resonate with readers.
1. What makes "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" a masterpiece? Its masterful use of language, evocative imagery, and ambiguous symbolism make it a literary triumph.

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analysis of a narrow fellow in the grass: *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* Judith FARR, Louise Carter, 2009-06-30 In this first substantial study of Emily Dickinson's devotion to flowers and

gardening, Judith Farr seeks to join both poet and gardener in one creative personality. She casts new light on Dickinson's temperament, her aesthetic sensibility, and her vision of the relationship between art and nature, revealing that the successful gardener's intimate understanding of horticulture helped shape the poet's choice of metaphors for every experience: love and hate, wickedness and virtue, death and immortality. Gardening, Farr demonstrates, was Dickinson's other vocation, more public than the making of poems but analogous and closely related to it. Over a third of Dickinson's poems and nearly half of her letters allude with passionate intensity to her favorite wildflowers, to traditional blooms like the daisy or gentian, and to the exotic gardenias and jasmines of her conservatory. Each flower was assigned specific connotations by the nineteenth century floral dictionaries she knew; thus, Dickinson's association of various flowers with friends, family, and lovers, like the tropes and scenarios presented in her poems, establishes her participation in the literary and painterly culture of her day. A chapter, *Gardening with Emily Dickinson* by Louise Carter, cites family letters and memoirs to conjecture the kinds of flowers contained in the poet's indoor and outdoor gardens. Carter hypothesizes Dickinson's methods of gardening, explaining how one might grow her flowers today. Beautifully illustrated and written with verve, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* will provide pleasure and insight to a wide audience of scholars, admirers of Dickinson's poetry, and garden lovers everywhere. Table of Contents: Introduction 1. Gardening in Eden 2. The Woodland Garden 3. The Enclosed Garden 4. The Garden in the Brain 5. Gardening with Emily Dickinson Louise Carter Epilogue: The Gardener in Her Seasons Appendix: Flowers and Plants Grown by Emily Dickinson Abbreviations Notes Acknowledgments Index of Poems Cited Index

Reviews of this book: In this first major study of our beloved poet Dickinson's devotion to gardening, Farr shows us that like poetry, gardening was her daily passion, her spiritual sustenance, and her literary inspiration...Rather than speaking generally about Dickinson's gardening habits, as other articles on the subject have done, Farr immerses the reader in a stimulating and detailed discussion of the flowers Dickinson grew, collected, and eulogized...The result is an intimate study of Dickinson that invites readers to imagine the floral landscapes that she saw, both in and out of doors, and to re-create those landscapes by growing the same flowers (the final chapter is chock-full of practical gardening tips). --Maria Kochis, *Library Journal*

Reviews of this book: This is a beautiful book on heavy white paper with rich reproductions of Emily Dickinson's favorite flowers, including sheets from the herbarium she kept as a young girl. But which came first, the flowers or the poems? So intertwined are Dickinson's verses with her life in flowers that they seem to be the lens through which she saw the world. In her day (1830-86), many people spoke 'the language of flowers.' Judith Farr shows how closely the poet linked certain flowers with her few and beloved friends: jasmine with editor Samuel Bowles, Crown Imperial with Susan Gilbert, heliotrope with Judge Otis Lord and day lilies with her image of herself. The Belle of Amherst, Mass., spent most of her life on 14 acres behind her father's house on Main Street. Her gardens were full of scented flowers and blossoming trees. She sent notes with nosegays and bouquets to neighbors instead of appearing in the flesh. Flowers were her messengers. Resisting digressions into the world of Dickinson scholarship, Farr stays true to her purpose, even offering a guide to the flowers the poet grew and how to replicate her gardens. --Susan Salter Reynolds, *Los Angeles Times*

Cuttings from the book: The pansy, like the anemone, was a favorite of Emily Dickinson because it came up early, announcing the longed-for spring, and, as a type of bravery, could withstand cold and even an April snow flurry or two in her Amherst garden. In her poem the pansy announces itself boldly, telling her it has been 'resoluter' than the 'Coward Bumble Bee' that loiters by a warm hearth waiting for May. She spoke of the written word as a flower, telling Emily Fowler Ford, for example, 'thank you for writing me, one precious little forget-me-not to bloom along my way.' She often spoke of a flower when she meant herself: 'You failed to keep your appointment with the apple-blossoms,' she reproached her friend Maria Whitney in June 1883, meaning that Maria had not visited her . . . Sometimes she marked the day or season by alluding to flowers that had or had not bloomed: 'I said I should send some flowers this week . . . [but] my Vale Lily asked me to wait for her.' People were also associated with flowers . . . Thus, her loyal, brisk, homemaking sister Lavinia is mentioned in Dickinson's letters in concert

with sweet apple blossoms and sturdy chrysanthemums . . . Emily's vivid, ambitious sister-in-law Susan Dickinson is mentioned in the company of cardinal flowers and of that grand member of the fritillaria family, the Crown Imperial.

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Virginia Woolf's playful exploration of a satirical »Oxbridge« became one of the world's most groundbreaking writings on women, writing, fiction, and gender. *A Room of One's Own* [1929] can be read as one or as six different essays, narrated from an intimate first-person perspective. Actual history blends with narrative and memoir. But perhaps most revolutionary was its address: the book is written by a woman for women. Male readers are compelled to read through women's eyes in a total inversion of the traditional male gaze. VIRGINIA WOOLF [1882-1941] was an English author. With novels like *Jacob's Room* [1922], *Mrs Dalloway* [1925], *To the Lighthouse* [1927], and *Orlando* [1928], she became a leading figure of modernism and is considered one of the most important English-language authors of the 20th century. As a thinker, with essays like *A Room of One's Own* [1929], Woolf has influenced the women's movement in many countries.

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Lost in a book? There's a map for that. This incredibly wide-ranging collection of maps—all inspired by literary classics—offers readers a new way of looking at their favorite fictional worlds. Andrew DeGraff's stunningly detailed artwork takes readers deep into the landscapes from *The Odyssey*, *Hamlet*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Invisible Man*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Watership Down*, *Moby Dick*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Waiting for Godot*, and more. Sure to reignite a love for old favorites and spark fresh interest in more recent works as well, *Plotted* provides a unique new way of appreciating the lands of the human imagination. A unique, display-ready volume of great allure and pleasure.—starred, Booklist [A] rewarding excursion across the literary landscape that will be cherished by map enthusiasts as well as bibliophiles.—starred, Publishers Weekly

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'No voice, no low, no howl is heard; the chief sound of life here is a hiss.' Stories and poems by Herman Melville drawn from his years at sea
Introducing Little Black Classics: 80 books for Penguin's 80th birthday. Little Black Classics celebrate the huge range and diversity of Penguin Classics, with books from around the world and across many centuries. They take us from a balloon ride over Victorian London to a garden of blossom in Japan, from *Tierra del Fuego* to 16th century California and the Russian steppe. Here are stories lyrical and savage; poems epic and intimate; essays satirical and inspirational; and ideas that have shaped the lives of millions. Herman Melville (1819-1891). Melville's works available in Penguin Classics are *Moby-Dick*, *Pierre*, *The Confidence-Man*, *Omoo*, *Redburn*, *Israel Potter* and *Billy Budd*, *Sailor* and *Other Stories*.

analysis of a narrow fellow in the grass: *The Seductions of Emily Dickinson* Robert McClure Smith, 1996
What makes Emily Dickinson such a fascinating poet? Although she left no personal poetics, she did define her own response to poetry as an immediate sensual reaction: If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever 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 (L. 342a). Presumably, her own poetry is most significant not in what it communicates to a reader but in what it does to a reader. Is the continued popular success of that poetry not conclusive evidence of its capacity to elicit a similarly spontaneous, visceral response from its readers? And is Dickinson's critical reception not the visible proof of the perpetuation of a powerful (and uncanny) reading seduction? Relocating Dickinson within her own culture reveals the genesis of her rhetoric of seduction. But the consequences of the rhetorical seduction of antebellum readers still impact readers today. Why do critical studies of the poet so often identify her as the classic analysand, the female hysteric? Because transference is frequently the engine of analysis, misshaping the reader's relationship with the text by introducing a past scene of seduction into a present interpretive context. Recent critical interpretations of Dickinson's poetry exhibit a distinct homology between the interpreters' own prevailing fascinations and the apparent thematic concerns of the poetic text they analyze. These

interpretations suggest that to analyze this poet is to put oneself under analysis: to attempt her seduction is to be oneself seduced.--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

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The basic message is clear. The key to a long, healthy life lies in three things: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

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analysis of a narrow fellow in the grass: Rowing in Eden Martha Nell Smith, 2010-07-05 Emily Dickinson wrote a letter to the world and left it lying in her drawer more than a century ago. This widely admired epistle was her poems, which were never conventionally published in book form during her lifetime. Since the posthumous discovery of her work, general readers and literary scholars alike have puzzled over this paradox of wanting to communicate widely and yet apparently refusing to publish. In this pathbreaking study, Martha Nell Smith unravels the paradox by boldly recasting two of the oldest and still most frequently asked questions about Emily Dickinson: Why didn't she publish more poems while she was alive? and Who was her most important contemporary audience? Regarding the question of publication, Smith urges a reconception of the act of publication itself. She argues that Dickinson did publish her work in letters and in forty manuscript books that circulated among a cultured network of correspondents, most important of whom was her sister-in-law, Susan Huntington Gilbert Dickinson. Rather than considering this material unpublished because unprinted, Smith views its alternative publication as a conscious strategy on the poet's part, a daring poetic experiment that also included Dickinson's unusual punctuation, line breaks, stanza divisions, calligraphic orthography, and bookmaking—all the characteristics that later editors tried to standardize or eliminate in preparing the poems for printing. Dickinson's relationship with her most important reader, Sue Dickinson, has also been lost or distorted by multiple levels of censorship, Smith finds. Emphasizing the poet-sustaining aspects of the passionate bonds between the two women, Smith shows that their relationship was both textual and sexual. Based on study of the actual holograph poems, Smith reveals the extent of Sue Dickinson's collaboration in the production of poems, most notably *Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers*. This finding will surely challenge the popular conception of the isolated, withdrawn Emily Dickinson. Well-versed in poststructuralist, feminist, and new textual criticism, *Rowing in Eden* uncovers the process by which the conventional portrait of Emily Dickinson was drawn and offers readers a chance to go back to original letters and poems and look at the poet and her work through new eyes. It will be of great interest to a wide audience in literary and feminist studies.

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