**Study Guide**

**Emily Dickinson**

**In addition to reading the poems on this Study Guide, also read the Dickinson introduction in your textbook and the one on the handout you are given.**

**“ ‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers (*Conversations in Am Lit* p. 834-5)**

1. What is the extended metaphor in this poem?

What is “Hope” portrayed as?

What is the “soul” portrayed as?

What is the purpose of the “storm” in the poem?

2. Taken as a whole, how does the poem portray “Hope”?

3. How does this poem relate to some of what you studied in tenth grade English about the Holocaust?

**“The Soul selects her own society—” (*Conversations in Am Lit* p. 835)**

1. What does “The Soul selects her own Society” say about the way we choose friends?

2. Do you believe that this is true? Why or why not?

3. In what way does this poem convey the same message that Emerson conveyed about relationships in “Self-Reliance”?

4. In what way is the message perhaps different from Emerson's?

**“Wild Nights! Wild Nights!” (reprint handout)**

1. Complete the extended metaphors in “Wild Nights”:

relationship =\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

port = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ship=\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

sea =\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do the lines “Done with the Compass —/ Done with the Chart!” probably mean?

3. If Walt Whitman were to write on the same subject that this poem addresses, how would his poem differ from Dickinson’s?

Which poem do you think you would prefer? Why?

**“I’m Nobody! Who are you?” (Reprint Handout)**

1. What do the people in this poem have in common with those in Whitman’s “Native Moments” (p. 143 of Whitman book)?

2. What does this poem have to say about fame? What may public life do to us?

How does this compare to what Whitman wrote in “When I Heard at the Close of the Day” (p. 155 in Whitman book)?

Why do you suppose Dickinson felt this way about fame?

**“Much Madness is divinest Sense—” (Reprint Handout)**

1. What is Dickinson saying here about people who express views different from those of the majority? Are such people mostly sane or insane in Dickinson’s view?

Are such people mostly sane or insane in society’s view?

How does society often treat these people?

2. How do Dickinson’s comments compare to those of Thoreau in “Civil Disobedience”?

How do they compare to Emerson’s in “Self Reliance”?