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**AFTER EMILY**

***Two Remarkable Women and the Legacy of America’s Greatest Poet***

**By Julie Dobrow**

“[M]esmerizing . . . If you’re interested in “America’s greatest poet,” intellectual property issues or juicy behind-the-scenes literary history, “After Emily” is your book.”

—***The Washington Post***

“[A] long overdue study . . . At the end of her book, Ms. Dobrow wonders what Mabel and Millicent would think of her good work. Doubtless, they’d be very pleased.”

**—*The Wall Street Journal***

“An elegant recovery of the two women without whom ‘Because I could not stop for Death’ likely wouldn’t be required reading for American high school students. . . . The author sensitively explores the (much-criticized) editorial choices Todd made and the question of who was responsible for the ‘legend’ of Emily-the-recluse-in-white. . . . [A] fresh, remarkable account.”

—***Kirkus Reviews*, starred review**

“[A]stonishing new research . . . Dobrow’s chronicle will draw readers back to Dickinson, whom Dobrow rightly names as American’s greatest poet.”

—***Booklist*, starred review**

“The biographical material related to Emily Dickinson’s legacy is the work’s driving force, but Dobrow’s skillful account of Mabel’s and Millicent’s lives makes this page-turner a must-read for the poet’s most ardent fans.”

—***Library Journal*, starred review**

“Dobrow chronicles the lives of two of Emily Dickinson’s earliest champions and editors. . . . Impeccably researched using more than 700 boxes of the Todds’ personal documents, Dobrow’s narrative gives a fascinating glimpse into the lives of two tireless advocates for Dickinson’s work, demonstrating how poet and editors alike were ‘all women pushing up against the boundaries of their times.’”

—***Publishers Weekly***

“This narrative of Todd’s and Bingham’s lives is elegantly and movingly told . . . [Dobrow] has done an admirable job sifting through the detritus to distill the essence of these women, their work and the world they inhabited.”

—***BookPage***

“Julie Dobrow, a senior lecturer at Tufts University, serves as a kind of fiercely clever detective in stitching together [Mabel Loomis] Todd’s remarkable influence and all the other little intrigues behind the marketing of Dickinson and her legacy.”

—***The American Scholar***

“Dobrow’s portrayal of both women is insightful, generous, careful, and absolutely wonderful to read . . . *After Emily* is an essential contribution not just to Dickinsonian scholarship but to understanding the forces of a hundred years of American history, forces that shaped the lives of women even as they were shaping the world around them. Dobrow’s beautiful prose is a joy to the ear, her thoughtful relationship to her subjects is delightfully captured, and the peeks throughout into the mind of Emily Dickinson are a revelation, even as her exploration of her two main characters is a valuable addition to women’s biography that will offer much to scholars and pleasure readers alike.”

***—Femmeliterate***

When Emily Dickinson died in 1886, she was unknown outside the small circle of her family and friends. Her sister, Lavinia, promised she would burn all of Emily’s papers once she was gone. But Lavinia could not bring herself to destroy the remarkable cache of nearly 1,800 poems she discovered after Emily’s death. Instead she sought an editor, a person who knew and loved Emily, who could decipher the confusing manuscripts and put them into publishable form. Mabel Loomis Todd was that person. Though Emily and Mabel never met face-to-face, the friendship they had built through correspondence afforded Mabel the insight she would need as she and her daughter Millicent Todd Bingham built Emily’s literary legacy.

For decades the story of Mabel and Millicent’s lives and their integral role in editing and publicizing Emily Dickinson’s poems and shaping the myth of the so-called “Belle of Amherst” has been waiting in the archives. Now, in **AFTER EMILY: Two Remarkable Women and the Legacy of America’s Greatest Poet** [W. W. Norton & Company; October 30, 2018; $27.95 hardcover] the full story behind Mabel and Millicent’s work is finally revealed.

Author Julie Dobrow, a journalist and a professor at Tufts University, first became interested in Emily Dickinson when she was in college and routinely walked past the Dickinson homes in Amherst, Massachusetts. She devoured biographies of Emily and grew curious about Mabel, known only for her role as one of Emily’s first editors or as the lover of Austin Dickinson, Emily’s older brother. Dobrow began to work in the enormous archives of Mabel and Millicent’s papers at Yale University—neither woman ever threw out a scrap of paper—and the project began to grow.

The result is **AFTER EMILY**, a new biography that weaves together the stories of Emily, Mabel, and Millicent using hundreds of primary source materials, many of which have never before been quoted in published works. Dobrow pored over hidden diaries, long-lost letters, and rarely seen documents. Her work allows readers to hear the thoughts, hopes, and sorrows of these women in their own words—from the unforgettable feuds between Mabel and members of the Dickinson family, to Millicent’s struggles growing up steeped in her mother’s obsession with editing Dickinson’s works, to their own close but complicated connection.

**AFTER EMILY** reveals how these fraught relationships affected the introduction of Emily Dickinson’s work to the world. Dobrow describes the struggles Mabel faced to get these poems that defied every convention of nineteenth-century verse published. Through a close reading of Mabel’s writings, Dobrow reveals both how Mabel’s own life influenced her interpretation of the poetry and how Mabel’s considerable efforts to market the poetry yielded the image of the reclusive, white-clad poet we still see today.

But with the success of the poems, tensions between the Dickinson and Todd families grew over the ownership of Emily’s work and the right to shape her legacy. This culminated in a sensational lawsuit, which ultimately prompted Mabel to lock the remaining poems in a chest for decades, only opening it near the end of her life with her daughter. Determined to ensure Emily’s legacy, Millicent abruptly changed her professional course and edited and published the remaining poems. But carrying on her mother’s work haunted Millicent for the rest of her life.

Though both Mabel and Millicent were devoted to Emily Dickinson’s work, Dobrow shows how neither woman can be reduced to mere stock characters in Dickinson’s story. By unearthing the fascinating details of Mabel and Millicent’s lives, and their passions for writing, conservation, and travel, Dobrow produces a full, nuanced twinned biography of this mother-daughter pair, and in so doing, helps to elucidate the story of Emily Dickinson’s poetry in new ways.

**AFTER EMILY**contains over 50 photographs, many of which have never before been published. It is an unmissable work for any Dickinson fan, and for any reader eager for an unforgettable story of two remarkable women “pushing up against the boundaries of their times.”

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Julie Dobrow** is a professor with appointments in the department of Child Study and Human Development and the Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University and serves as director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. Her writing has appeared in *Boston Globe Magazine*and the *Huffington Post*, among other publications. She lives outside of Boston.

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