

# my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson

**My life had stood a loaded gun Emily Dickinson** — these words encapsulate the profound depth and complexity of Emily Dickinson's poetry, particularly her poem "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun." This poem reveals the nuances of identity, power, dependency, and the intricate relationship between the speaker and the subject, often interpreted as a metaphor for Dickinson's own life and her views on existence. In this article, we explore the meaning behind the poem "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun," its themes, literary devices, and its significance within Dickinson's body of work, offering a comprehensive understanding for both new readers and seasoned scholars.

## Understanding the Poem "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun"

### Overview of the Poem

Emily Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" is a compact yet profound lyric poem that employs metaphor and personification to explore themes of power, identity, and dependence. The poem reads:

> My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—  
> In Corners—Till a Needle's Eye—  
> Had beckoned—It—through Pictures—  
> And I—had gone—until My Speech—  
> Was Out—  
> And I—had come to Know—  
> The Owner—Of the Gun—

This vivid imagery invites readers to interpret the speaker's life as both powerful and restrained, suggesting a relationship with an external force or person who controls or influences her existence.

### Historical and Literary Context

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was known for her innovative poetic style, characterized by slant rhymes, irregular meter, and profound themes. Living in isolation in Amherst, Massachusetts, Dickinson's poetry often grapples with themes of mortality, identity, and the nature of the self. This poem, like many others, reflects her introspective worldview and fascination with the interplay between agency and surrender.

### Key Themes in "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun"

## **Power and Control**

The metaphor of a "loaded gun" underscores the themes of latent power and potential energy. The speaker describes her life as a weapon—ready and capable but dormant until activated by an external force. This raises questions about autonomy and whether individuals are inherently powerful or if their strength depends on external circumstances.

## **Identity and Dependence**

The poem explores the fluidity of identity, emphasizing a sense of dependence on another person, the "Owner" of the gun. The speaker's life is intertwined with this figure, suggesting a dynamic of submission or partnership that defines her sense of self.

## **Relationship and Partnership**

The lines "And I—had come to Know—The Owner—Of the Gun—" imply an intimate relationship, possibly romantic or spiritual, where the speaker's purpose and existence are tied to another. This could reflect Dickinson's own contemplation of her relationships with others or her internal dialogue about selfhood.

## **Literary Devices Used in the Poem**

### **Metaphor**

The entire poem revolves around the extended metaphor of a loaded gun representing the speaker's life, power, and potential. This metaphor allows Dickinson to explore complex ideas about strength and vulnerability.

### **Personification**

Dickinson personifies the gun, suggesting it has agency and intent. The gun "stood" and "was beckoned," giving life to inanimate objects and emphasizing the relationship between the speaker and her own power.

### **Imagery**

The poem employs vivid imagery such as "Corners," "Needle's Eye," and "Pictures" to evoke a sense of waiting, invitation, and discovery. These images contribute to the unfolding narrative of awakening and realization.

### **Ambiguity and Enjambment**

Dickinson's use of ambiguous language and enjambed lines invites multiple interpretations. For example, "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—" leaves open whether the gun is active or dormant,

powerful or restrained.

## **Interpreting the Poem: Different Perspectives**

### **Feminist Interpretation**

Some scholars interpret the poem through a feminist lens, viewing it as a commentary on female agency and societal roles. The loaded gun could symbolize a woman's latent power, suppressed or waiting to be unleashed through external validation or relationships.

### **Spiritual and Religious Readings**

Others see the poem as a spiritual allegory, with the "Owner" representing divine presence or spiritual awakening. The act of "coming to know" the Owner parallels enlightenment or divine revelation.

### **Autobiographical Insights**

Given Dickinson's reclusive nature and introspective personality, some believe the poem reflects her own feelings of inner strength and dependence on unseen forces—perhaps her faith, intellect, or creative muse.

## **The Significance of "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" in Dickinson's Work**

### **Recurrent Themes**

This poem exemplifies Dickinson's recurring themes of power, identity, and the search for meaning. Her ability to distill complex human experiences into concise, potent images makes her poetry timeless.

### **Innovative Style**

The poem showcases Dickinson's distinctive style—short lines, slant rhymes, and irregular capitalization—highlighting her innovative approach to poetic form and her desire to challenge conventional expectations.

### **Influence and Legacy**

"My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" influences countless poets and continues to be studied for its

layered symbolism and mastery of metaphor. It exemplifies Dickinson's ability to explore profound themes with brevity and intensity.

## **How to Approach Reading and Analyzing the Poem**

### **Step 1: Consider the Metaphor**

Reflect on what the loaded gun might symbolize—power, potential, vulnerability, or agency—and how this metaphor relates to the speaker's life.

### **Step 2: Examine the Relationship Dynamics**

Analyze the significance of the "Owner" and the act of "coming to know." Think about whether this relationship is voluntary, involuntary, spiritual, or metaphorical.

### **Step 3: Explore the Poem's Ambiguity**

Recognize that Dickinson intentionally leaves aspects open to interpretation. Allow yourself to consider multiple meanings and personal connections.

### **Step 4: Connect to Broader Themes**

Relate the poem to larger ideas such as self-identity, empowerment, dependence, and human vulnerability.

## **Conclusion: The Enduring Power of Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun"**

Emily Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" remains a powerful exploration of the human condition—embodying themes of strength, vulnerability, and relational identity. Through masterful use of metaphor, personification, and imagery, Dickinson invites readers to ponder the nature of power within and the relationships that shape us. Whether viewed as a reflection of her personal experiences or as a universal meditation on existence, the poem endures as a testament to her poetic genius and her ability to convey complex ideas in just a few lines. For those seeking to deepen their understanding of Dickinson's work, this poem offers a compelling entry point into her rich and layered poetic universe.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun, poetry analysis, literary themes, metaphor, power and control, identity, symbolism in poetry, Dickinson's poetry, poetic devices, interpretation

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the main theme of Emily Dickinson's poem 'My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun'?**

The poem explores themes of power, identity, and the relationship between the speaker and a commanding figure, often interpreted as a metaphor for divine or personal authority and the potential for both destruction and service.

### **How does Emily Dickinson use the metaphor of a loaded gun in the poem?**

The loaded gun symbolizes strength, potential, and readiness. It reflects the speaker's sense of having a powerful, yet possibly dangerous, inner force that can be wielded or activated by another, emphasizing themes of dependence and latent power.

### **What does the line 'My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun' suggest about the speaker's self-perception?**

It suggests that the speaker perceives themselves as possessing immense inner strength and potential, possibly feeling confined or waiting for someone to unlock or utilize their power.

### **How does the poem illustrate the relationship between the speaker and an external figure?**

The poem portrays a relationship where the speaker is both powerful and submissive, with the external figure commanding or guiding the speaker's energy, akin to a master wielding a loaded gun.

## Additional Resources

"My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" by Emily Dickinson: An In-Depth Analysis

Emily Dickinson's poetry continues to captivate readers with its enigmatic imagery, profound themes, and innovative style. Among her numerous works, "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" stands out as a compelling exploration of identity, power, dependence, and self-awareness. This analysis aims to dissect the poem's layers, examining its language, themes, and literary significance—much like a detailed product review or expert feature.

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## Introduction to the Poem and Its Context

"My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" is one of Dickinson's most intriguing and frequently analyzed poems, often cited for its complex metaphors and ambiguous tone. Composed around 1863, during the peak of Dickinson's poetic experimentation, the poem reflects her unique approach to language—compressed, metaphor-rich, and open to interpretation.

Dickinson's work frequently grapples with themes of mortality, self-identity, and the human condition. This particular poem appears to operate as a metaphor for the poet's own sense of self—possibly her relationship with her inner power, her dependence on others, or her engagement with the world.

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## Structural Breakdown and Literary Devices

### Form and Style

Dickinson's poem is written in quatrains with a consistent rhyme scheme, often employing slant rhymes that lend a subtle dissonance, enhancing the poem's layered meaning. The language is economical yet dense, characteristic of Dickinson's style, where every word carries weight. The poem's meter is flexible, emphasizing its conversational tone and fostering an intimate connection with the reader.

Key stylistic features include:

- Hyphenation: Dickinson's frequent use of hyphens introduces pauses, mimicking natural speech and inviting reflection.
- Capitalization: Certain words are capitalized to emphasize their importance and to personify abstract concepts.
- Metaphor and Personification: The loaded gun symbolizes power, agency, and perhaps danger, while the speaker's identification with the gun creates a personified dynamic.

### Literary Devices and Their Effects

- Metaphor: The central metaphor compares the speaker's life to a "loaded gun," implying potential, power, and perhaps latent violence or danger.
- Personification: The gun is described as "mine" and capable of being "taken out" and "used," suggesting a relationship between the speaker and her own power or agency.
- Imagery: Vivid images evoke a sense of latent energy and readiness, emphasizing themes of potential and vulnerability.

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# Thematic Exploration

## Power and Agency

At its core, the poem explores the concept of personal power. The loaded gun symbolizes an individual's capacity for action, influence, or destruction. The speaker's assertion that her life "had stood" as a loaded gun suggests a dormant or restrained power—something that could be wielded or activated under the right circumstances.

Implications include:

- The tension between potential and action.
- The possibility of self-assertion or self-destruction.
- An internal conflict about control and vulnerability.

Expert insight: Dickinson may be contemplating her own sense of agency—whether she perceives herself as powerful yet restrained, or whether her power is dependent on external forces.

## Identity and Dependence

The poem also delves into the complex relationship between the individual and others. The line "And I was a Keeper of the Key" indicates a role of responsibility or guardianship, possibly over her own identity or over her inner power.

Key points:

- The speaker's identity is intertwined with the gun—her life and her power are inseparable.
- The idea of someone else "taking out" the gun hints at external influence or control.
- The poem raises questions about autonomy—whether the individual is the master of her power or subject to others' commands.

## Trust and Vulnerability

The poem's tone suggests a delicate balance between trust and vulnerability. The gun, loaded and ready, could be a symbol of trust in one's own strength or a warning about the dangers of unchecked power.

Possible interpretations:

- The speaker's trust in herself or others to wield her power.
- The vulnerability inherent in holding such potential.
- The risk of misuse or harm if the power is not carefully managed.

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# Symbolism and Interpretive Layers

## The Loaded Gun as a Multifaceted Symbol

The loaded gun functions as a rich symbol, open to multiple interpretations:

- Personal Power: It embodies the speaker's internal strength or agency.
- Potential for Violence: It hints at destructive capacity, possibly reflecting emotional or psychological tension.
- Dependence and Submission: The relationship with the "Keeper of the Key" suggests dependence on external authority or influence.

## Interpersonal Dynamics

The poem hints at a dynamic between the speaker and another entity—perhaps a lover, a friend, or even societal forces. The act of "taking out" the gun could symbolize:

- External control or influence over the speaker's life.
- A desire to be understood or acknowledged.
- An ongoing negotiation of power and vulnerability.

## The Self as Weapon and Protector

Dickinson's metaphor invites reflection on the dual nature of self-identity:

- Weapon: The potential for action or harm.
- Protector: The capacity to defend oneself or maintain integrity.

This duality prompts readers to consider how individuals manage their inner strength and the risks involved.

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## Historical and Biographical Significance

While Dickinson was famously reclusive, her poetry often reflects intense internal dialogues. The poem's themes of power, dependence, and self-awareness resonate with her personal experiences of isolation, self-exploration, and the desire for agency within societal constraints.

Historical context:

- Written during the American Civil War era, a time of upheaval and conflict, which may influence



the poem's themes of latent violence and internal struggle.

- Dickinson's own life as a woman navigating societal expectations likely informs her exploration of power dynamics.

Biographical insight:

- Dickinson's frequent use of metaphors related to weapons and defense suggests a preoccupation with inner strength and vulnerability.
- Her reclusive nature and refusal to conform may mirror the poem's themes of contained power and guarded identity.

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## Critical Reception and Legacy

"My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" has been widely analyzed by scholars for its layered symbolism and innovative poetic form. Critics often interpret it as a meditation on the nature of selfhood—an exploration of how individuals perceive their own power and vulnerability.

Key points from critical discourse:

- The poem exemplifies Dickinson's mastery in blending everyday language with profound metaphysical themes.
- It challenges readers to consider their own relationship with power—whether they see themselves as wielders or victims of their potential.
- Its ambiguous tone and open-ended symbolism invite multiple interpretations, ensuring its relevance across generations.

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## Conclusion: A Masterpiece of Ambiguity and Depth

Emily Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" is a testament to her poetic genius—combining economy of language with profound thematic complexity. Its metaphor of the loaded gun encapsulates questions about power, identity, dependence, and vulnerability that remain universally resonant.

As an "expert review," this poem stands out as a quintessential Dickinson piece—compact yet expansive, enigmatic yet deeply personal. Whether read as a reflection on personal agency, a commentary on societal roles, or an exploration of inner conflict, it continues to challenge and inspire readers, securing its place as a landmark in American poetry.

Final thoughts: If you're seeking poetry that combines vivid imagery with philosophical depth, Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun" offers a compelling, thought-provoking experience—much like a finely crafted instrument that, when examined closely, reveals layers of complexity beneath its unassuming exterior.

## **My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun Emily Dickinson**

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun** Emily Dickinson, 2016-03-03 'It's coming - the postponeless Creature' Electrifying poems of isolation, beauty, death and eternity from a reclusive genius and one of America's greatest writers. One of 46 new books in the bestselling Little Black Classics series, to celebrate the first ever Penguin Classic in 1946. Each book gives readers a taste of the Classics' huge range and diversity, with works from around the world and across the centuries - including fables, decadence, heartbreak, tall tales, satire, ghosts, battles and elephants.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: The Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson** Wendy Martin, 2002-09-05 Emily Dickinson, one of the most important American poets of the nineteenth century, remains an intriguing and fascinating writer. The Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson includes eleven new essays by accomplished Dickinson scholars. They cover Dickinson's biography, publication history, poetic themes and strategies, and her historical and cultural contexts. As a woman poet, Dickinson's literary persona has become incredibly resonant in the popular imagination. She has been portrayed as singular, enigmatic, and even eccentric. At the same time, Dickinson is widely acknowledged as one of the founders of American poetry, an innovative pre-modernist poet as well as a rebellious and courageous woman. This volume introduces new and practised readers to a variety of critical responses to Dickinson's poetry and life, and provides several valuable tools for students, including a chronology and suggestions for further reading.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: Emily Dickinson** Elizabeth Phillips, 1988-01-01 Giving us a new sense of Dickinson's ways of being in her world, this book traces the perceptions of that world in the poetry and contributes to our pleasure in the performance of a virtuoso. Elizabeth Phillips shows the imaginative uses the poet made of her own life but also the verifiable use of her responses to others—personal friends and relatives, historical and literary figures, and “nature's people”—in the play of language that registered her insights. The book is not a biography; it considers, instead, evidence of the poet's character and her character as a poet. Dickinson emerges as less self-enclosed and enigmatic than she is frequently assumed to be. Phillips is among those who reject the view of the poet as a psychologically disabled, perhaps mad woman who withdrew into herself because of some devastating emotional experience, presumably love that went wrong. She questions the common desire to connect the texts with a trauma for which the center is missing. While Dickinson pursued the vocation of a poet, she was actively engaged in much else that required stamina and resourcefulness. A woman in a 19th-century household, for instance, was not a woman of leisure; Dickinson bore a heavy share of domestic duties and familial responsibilities throughout most of her life. The crisis she experienced during the early 1860s, in a cluster of responses to the Civil War, coincided with the onset of her difficulties with her eyes. Suffering from exotropia and photophobia, she never fully recovered and gradually withdrew into the less severe light of the house in Amherst. She continued to care for those close to her and to write both letters and verse. From the perspective of Dickinson's maturity and resilience, we also see her gift for depicting and dramatizing episodes in a manner that gives the illusion of their being autobiographical whether they are or not. Dickinson was, however, an actress who changed roles and points of view as readily as she experimented with poetic genres. Analyses of her various personae (or “supposed persons”) for dramatic monologues in the Browning tradition—which enabled the poet to represent a range of experiences different from her own—serve to dispel much of the confusion that has surrounded her in the last century. Rather than searching for an illusive absent center, Phillips scrutinizes in a most revealing way the poet's reading, appropriation, and command of materials from the Brontës, George Eliot, Hawthorne, the Brownings, Shakespeare, and the Southey for personae that introduce us to a Dickinson heretofore hardly glimpsed. A central vision of the study is the poet as a biographer of souls.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** Bloom's How to Write about Emily Dickinson Anna Priddy, 2009 Offers advice on writing essays about the works of Emily Dickinson and lists sample topics for twenty of her poems.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *Emily Dickinson, a Poet's Grammar* Cristanne Miller, 1987 In this inventive work on Emily Dickinson's poetry, Cristanne Miller traces the roots of Dickinson's unusual, compressed, ungrammatical, and richly ambiguous style, finding them in sources as different as the New Testament and the daily patterns of women's speech. Dickinson writes as she does both because she is steeped in the great patriarchal texts of her culture, from the Bible and hymns to Herbert's poetry and Emerson's prose, and because she is conscious of writing as a woman in an age and culture that assume great and serious poets are male. Miller observes that Dickinson's language deviates from normal construction along definable and consistent lines; consequently it lends itself to the categorical analysis of an interpretive grammar such as the one she has constructed in this book. In order to facilitate the reading of Dickinson's poems and to reveal the values and assumptions behind the poet's manipulations of language, Miller examines in this grammar how specific elements of the poet's style tend to function in various contexts. Because many, especially modernist, poets use some of the same techniques, the grammar throws light on the poetic syntax of other writers as well. In the course of her analysis, Miller draws not only on traditional historical and linguistic sources but also on current sociolinguistic studies of gender and speech and on feminist descriptions of women's writing. Dickinson's language, she concludes, could almost have been designed as a model for twentieth-century theories of what a women's language might be. As a critical examination of the relationship between linguistic style and literary identity in America's greatest woman poet, *Emily Dickinson: A Poet's Grammar* provides a significant addition to feminist literary studies.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: Critical Companion to Emily Dickinson** Sharon Leiter, 2007 *Critical Companion to Emily Dickinson* is an encyclopedic guide to the life and works of Emily Dickinson, one of the most famous and widely studied American poets of the 19th century.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory* Mary Loeffelholz, 1991 Poetry written by the gifted recluse Emily Dickinson has remained fresh and enigmatic for longer than works by her male Transcendentalist counterparts. Here Mary Loeffelholz reads Dickinson's poetry and career in the double context of nineteenth-century literary tradition and twentieth-century feminist literary theory. Mary Loeffelholz has written a book that actually performs what it promises. . . . It illuminates our understanding of Emily Dickinson with readings both elegant and useful, and as importantly suggests modified direction for feminist-psychoanalytic theory. -- Diana Hume George, author of *Oedipus Anne: The Poetry of Anne Sexton*

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: Emily Dickinson** Ann Beebe, 2022-03-18 The public is familiar with the Emily Dickinson stereotype--an eccentric spinster in a white dress flitting about her father's house, hiding from visitors. But these associations are misguided and should be dismantled. This work aims to remove some of the distorted myths about Dickinson in order to clear a path to her poetry. The entries and short essays should open avenues of debate and individual critical analysis. This companion gives both instructors and readers multiple avenues for study. The entries and charts are intended to prompt ideas for classroom discussion and syllabus planning. Whether the reader is first encountering Dickinson's poems or returning to them, this book aims to inspire interpretative opportunities. The entries and charts make connections between Dickinson poems, ponder the significance of literary, artistic, historical, political or social contexts, and question the interpretations offered by others as they enter the never-ending debates between Dickinson scholars.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: A Loaded Gun** Jerome Charyn, 2016-02-22 PEN/ Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography Longlist O, The Oprah Magazine "Best Books of Summer" selection "Magnetic nonfiction." —O, The Oprah Magazine "Remarkable insight . . . [a]

unique meditation/investigation. . . . Jerome Charyn the unpredictable, elusive, and enigmatic is a natural match for Emily Dickinson, the quintessence of these.” —Joyce Carol Oates, author of *Wild Nights!* and *The Lost Landscape* We think we know Emily Dickinson: the Belle of Amherst, virginal, reclusive, and possibly mad. But in *A Loaded Gun*, Jerome Charyn introduces us to a different Emily Dickinson: the fierce, brilliant, and sexually charged poet who wrote: *My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun— ... Though I than He— may longer live He longer must—than I— For I have but the power to kill, Without—the power to die—* Through interviews with contemporary scholars, close readings of Dickinson’s correspondence and handwritten manuscripts, and a suggestive, newly discovered photograph that is purported to show Dickinson with her lover, Charyn’s literary sleuthing reveals the great poet in ways that have only been hinted at previously: as a woman who was deeply philosophical, intensely engaged with the world, attracted to members of both sexes, and able to write poetry that disturbs and delights us today. Jerome Charyn is the author of, most recently, *Bitter Bronx: Thirteen Stories*, *I Am Abraham: A Novel of Lincoln and the Civil War*, and *The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson: A Novel*. He lives in New York.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun* Theo Padnos, 2004-01-28 The 33-year-old author shares his experiences teaching a literature class inside a locked prison room at the Woodstock Correctional Facility in Vermont--guiding his students to discover themselves and each other through the power of the written word.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *Literary Theories in Praxis* Shirley F. Staton, 1987 *Literary Theories in Praxis* analyzes the ways in which critical theories are transformed into literary criticism and methodology. To demonstrate the application of this analysis, critical writings of Roland Barthes, Harold Bloom, Cleanth Brooks, Jacques Derrida, Northrop Frye, Norman Holland, Barbara Johnson, Jacques Lacan, Adrienne Rich, and Robert Scholes are examined in terms of the primary critical stance each author employs—New Critical, phenomenological, archetypal, structuralist/semiotic, sociological, psychoanalytic, reader-response, deconstructionist, or humanist. The book is divided into nine sections, each with a prefatory essay explaining the critical stance taken in the selections that follow and describing how theory becomes literary criticism. In a headnote to each selection, Staton analyzes how the critic applies his or her critical methodology to the subject literary work. Shirley F. Staton's introduction sketches the overall philosophical positions and relationships among the various critical modes.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *The Value of Emily Dickinson* Mary Loeffelholz, 2016-06-23 This is the first compact introduction to Emily Dickinson to focus principally on her poems and their significance to readers. It addresses the question of literary value, considering current controversies over whether Dickinson's writings are best appreciated as visual works or as rhymed and metered poems intended for the ear.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads* Antonio Barcelona, 2003 *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads* is a collection of essays, most of them written from a cognitive linguistics standpoint by leading specialists in the fields of conceptual metaphor and metonymy, and conceptual integration (blending). The book has two main goals. One of them is to discuss in new, provocative ways the nature of these conceptual mappings in English and their interaction. The other goal is to explore by means of several detailed case studies the central role of these mappings in English. The studies are, thus, concerned with the operation of metaphor and metonymy in discourse, including literary discourse or with the effect of metaphorical and/or metonymic mappings on some aspects of linguistic structure, be it polysemy or grammar. The book is of interest to students and researchers in English and linguistics, English literature, cognitive psychology and cognitive science.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** *Rebound* Michael Hinds, Stephen Matterson, 2004 This pioneering collection of new essays challenges established modes of reading American lyric poetry, by orientating interpretation so that it incorporates an awareness of the book context in which individual poems are embedded. These essays critically explore individual books by Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, William Carlos Williams,

Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Adrienne Rich, Susan Howe, Lyn Hejinian and Jorie Graham, and consider the book as a restrictive, binding concept for Emily Dickinson and some contemporary American poets. *Rebound* both provides innovative readings of supposedly familiar poets and books, and also generates critical strategies for renewed engagement with American poetry traditions. As a speaking whole *Rebound* addresses a rich variety of topics: intentionality as hermeneutic; the architecture and artefacture of the book; gender identity and the book; the positioning of the book in postmodern poetics; the consequences of textual history for interpretation and reception; and the American poetry book as metonym for nation. Contributors: Domhnall Mitchell, Eldrid Herrington, Charles Altieri, Stephen Matterson, Stephen Wilson, Maria Irene Ramalho De Sousa Santos, Ron Callan, Michael Hinds, Gareth Reeves, Lucy Collins, Justin Quinn, Nerys Williams and Nick Selby. Charles Bernstein's *The Book as Architecture* is reprinted as an Afterword.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: From Motherhood to Mothering** Andrea O'Reilly, 2012-02-01 In the years since the publication of Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, the topic of motherhood has emerged as a central issue in feminist scholarship. Arguably still the best feminist book on mothering and motherhood, *Of Woman Born* is not only a wide-ranging, far-reaching meditation on the meaning and experience of motherhood that draws from the disciplines of anthropology, feminist theory, psychology, and literature, but it also narrates Rich's personal reflections on her experiences of mothering. Andrea O'Reilly gathers feminist scholars from diverse disciplines such as literature, women's studies, law, sociology, anthropology, creative writing, and critical theory and examines how *Of Woman Born* has informed and influenced the way feminist scholarship thinks and talks about motherhood. The contributors explore the many ways in which Rich provides the analytical tools to study and report upon the meaning and experience of motherhood.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: Walt Whitman of Mickle Street** Geoffrey M. Sill, 1994

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: Problems for Feminist Criticism (RLE Feminist Theory)** Sally Minogue, 2012-11-12 Feminist criticism has come a long way in the last twenty years. Its development has been rapid, its snowball progress picking up elements of structuralism, deconstruction and psychoanalytic criticism; just as rapidly it has been shedding its own early theories and methodologies. Now it is a critical orthodoxy with its own established canonical texts. Now is the time, then, to begin to question that orthodoxy. In *Problems for Feminist Criticism* five women critics seek to do that, in a spirit of enquiry whose central point of focus is the literature for which feminist critics have offered a re-reading. By reference to a wide range of writers, from Milton to the contemporary poet, with a strong emphasis on the nineteenth-century novel, the contributors ask what we may be losing from literature by adopting the feminist orthodoxy. Each chapter provides a survey of feminist critical approaches to its subject and highlights the inherent problems. The book frees the way forward for critics who have found much that is stimulating and revealing in feminist approaches to literature, but who find its proscriptiveness potentially reductive. It shows how literature may have the flexibility to absorb and benefit from new critical approaches, whilst still retaining its own life, never quite to be contained in criticism's theories and methodologies.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: The Cambridge Companion to American Poets** Mark Richardson, 2015-10-14 The *Cambridge Companion to American Poets* brings together thirty-one essays on some fifty-four American poets, spanning nearly 400 years, from Anne Bradstreet to contemporary performance poetry. This book also examines such movements in American poetry as modernism, the Harlem (or New Negro) Renaissance, 'confessional' poetry, the Black Mountain School, the New York School, the Beats, and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry. Its reputable host of contributors approach American poetry from perspectives as diverse as the poetry itself. The result is a *Companion* concise enough to be read with pleasure yet expansive enough to do justice to the many traditions American poets have modified, inaugurated, and made their own.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson: *Exceptional Violence and the Crisis of***

*Classic American Literature* Joseph Fichtelberg, 2022-08-24 This book is an interdisciplinary study of antebellum American literature and the problem of political emergency. Arguing that the United States endured sustained conflicts over the nature and operation of sovereignty in the unsettled era from the Founding to the Civil War, the book presents two forms of governance: local and regional control, and national governance. The period's states of exception arose from these clashing imperatives, creating contests over land, finance, and, above all, slavery, that drove national politics. Extensively employing the political and cultural insights of Walter Benjamin, this book surveys antebellum American writers to understand how they situated themselves and their work in relation to these episodes, specifically focusing on the experience of violence. Exploring the work of Edgar Allan Poe, ex-slave narrators like Moses Roper and Henry Bibb, Herman Melville and Emily Dickinson, the book applies some central aspects of Walter Benjamin's literary and cultural criticism to the deep investment in pain in antebellum politics and culture.

**my life had stood a loaded gun emily dickinson:** Ingardeniana III Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, 2012-12-06 In the footsteps of Ingardeniana II, this volume marks the 20th anniversary of Roman Ingarden's death, partly focusing upon his thought, partly bringing his aesthetics into the present-day framework of research. It might have appeared puzzling to the followers of our *Analecta Husserliana* why within the original horizon encircled by the research work of our International Society of Phenomenology and Literature - whose research work is devised in a diametrically opposed direction to that of Roman Ingarden - there is steadfastly running through our discussions a line of Ingardenian reflection. The reason, as I have pointed out in the introduction to *Ingardeniana II*, expertly edited by Hans Rudnik, is clear: Ingarden's analysis of the intentional structures of works of art offers in its distinct and clear-cut forms an 'objective' correlate - as well as a point of reference - to the vast conundrum of issues concerning the creative endeavor of the writer, poet, artist in their struggle to endow life with its specifically human significance; a conundrum that in our research we are trying to disentangle - elucidating its mysterious ramifications, their sources and dynamic virtualities. As a matter of fact, Ingarden's thought, newly interpreted and originally expanded, occupies a legitimate place in the present collection. We find here, in the first place, an original expansion of Ingarden's aesthetic theory in the monograph of Iadwiga Smith followed by the essays of Władysław Osadnik, Yushiro Takei and Charles Rzepka.

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