



A Loaded Gun: Emily Dickinson for the 21st Century

Jerome Charyn

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“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.

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