

Which Emily Dickinson in Translation?

ANN-MARIE VINDE
Stockholm University

Abstract

“Which Emily Dickinson in Translation” discusses the choice of source text/s for translations of poems by Emily Dickinson into Swedish, mainly from the point of view of line division. Should translators use source texts with conventional layouts or opt for trying to reproduce also the less conventional ones found in Dickinson’s manuscripts as today shown on the Internet or in R.W. Franklin’s facsimile edition (1981), as poet Ann Jäderlund does in her 2012 translations? What are the consequences of choosing one or the other? Five poems from about 1860 to about 1884 in a number of different translations illustrate the discussion, which concludes that the former is to be preferred, for the sake of syntactical and metrical clarity.

Key words: Emily Dickinson; translation; source text/s; manuscripts; space; rhythm; metrical lines; run-on lines; carry-over lines; line breaks; broken syntactical phrases

The question posed in the headline, “Which Emily Dickinson in Translation?”, is induced by the latest collection of poems by the American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) published in Swedish, *Gång på gång är skogarna rosa* (2012), translated by the poet Ann Jäderlund, born in 1955. It comprises 98 poems composed between the early 1860s and the 1880s and is unique in that Jäderlund has chosen to base her translations on the facsimile edition of the somewhat more than 1100 of Dickinson’s poems found in *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson* (MB; 1981), edited by R.W. Franklin. This has implications both for how the poems appear on the page and for how they might be perceived by somebody reciting them. Even though the facsimile edition was published in 1981, no other translator since has chosen to use it. In the afterword (pp. 125-129), Jäderlund sets out her aims:

...Compared to earlier translations of her poems, mine are more near-sighted and awkward. But it has been more important to me to preserve the grammatical and semantic features of a poem than try to maintain its more formal/decorative properties. ...

In spite of these difficulties [interpreting the holographs in MB (1981)], I have chosen to try to be more faithful to the original manuscripts than what has been usual...

I have chosen to keep capital letters where there are any. ... But as I see it they often carry a certain semantic meaning.

I have also tried to divide lines more according to the original manuscripts ... To begin with I interpreted her line breaks as caused by lack of space. But as time went by, I saw examples of the same poem, where there were several versions, being divided in the same or similar way. And began to try to follow that myself. I have not gone through all, about 1800 poems [in Franklin 1998], or looked into this systematically. But the longer I worked the more interesting I found her divisions. And that there is a wilder, more liberating breathing in them. And that in an interesting way, they are near the poetry of our time. I

cannot help thinking that her method – which I understand as developing over time, and also comprises a freer stanza division – has to do with her own "inner thinking".¹

It is above all the consequences of the fact that in about 1861 Dickinson's manuscripts begin to take on another look that is the concern of this paper. Earlier the poems were written out in a neat, concise hand, and arranged in conventional quatrains or octets, most often with lines of 8/6/8/6 syllables and rhyming abcb, with full or slant rhymes. What is new is that the handwriting becomes larger and takes up more space on the page so that some poetic/metrical lines have to be divided and carried over to a new line.

When Dickinson died in 1886, ten of her poems had appeared, anonymously, in publications in New England between 1858 and 1878. As far as we know, she had had no hand in their editing. Selections of her almost 1800 poems were edited and published between 1890 and 1945, mostly by people who had a personal stake in the enterprise and who naturally adhered to the editorial conventions of the time. At the end of the 1940s, Dickinson's manuscripts, which had been privately owned and spread on several hands, came to be owned by institutions like Amherst College, Harvard University, and the Houghton Library in Massachusetts, and thus available for research.

The first comprehensive scholarly edition, which took the special qualities of Dickinson's manuscripts into consideration, appeared in the middle of the 1950s. Still, the versions presented to the general public looked like the ones we are used to, and like the ones Dickinson herself wrote out from the end of the 1850s. MB (1981) was the first edition where one could view a majority of the poems in facsimile, both the conventionally arranged ones and the others. These two heavy volumes, comprising 1442 pages, were however not for everybody, so readers continued to make the acquaintance of Dickinson in the forms that researchers Johnson and later Franklin (1998) from their close study of her manuscripts had concluded were the optimal ones. It should be added that after their three-volume variorum editions both published handier reading editions.

It is against this background that readers familiar with Dickinson's poems in the original or in translation, as well as those who have never read her, approach Jäderlund's Swedish versions. The first eleven poems raise no eyebrows, but some of the twelfth one, *You love me – you are sure* (J 156/Fr 218), does: like the facsimile of the original, it features unexpected line breaks.

In the following I will show and comment on different versions of five of the poems in Jäderlund (2012), including originals and translations of the same by others than Jäderlund.²

First, quite an early poem, which is arranged the traditional way, as are about 20 per cent of those in Jäderlund's book:

¹ My translation and my brackets.

² The poems chosen have no titles. They are referred to in the same way as in Franklin (1998). Dickinson's dashes vary in length. I only use short dashes in this article. Jäderlund (2012) and Franklin (1998) have very short ones, the length of hyphens.

Surgeons must be very careful
When they take the knife!
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the Culprit – *Life!*

J 108/Fr 156; MB (1981:122); from about early 1860; printed 1891. The rhythm of this quatrain of 8/5/8/5 spoken syllables is trochaic, which is rare in Dickinson. It rhymes abcb, with a perfect rhyme, another quite rare feature in Dickinson.

Below is Jäderlund's translation, which adheres to the punctuation, Dickinson's habit of beginning each metrical line with a capital letter, and the layout with whole metrical lines, as shown in MB (1981).

Kirurger måste vara mycket försiktiga
När de tar till kniven!
Under deras fina snitt
Rör sig den skyldige – *Livet!*
Ann Jäderlund (2012)

There is one other translation into Swedish, by the poet Erik Blomberg, who in 1931 was the first one to translate Dickinson into Swedish with one of her most frequently anthologized poems, *I never saw a moor* (J 1052/ Fr 800), published as UTAN KARTA (Without a Map), even though the original does not have a title.

Kirurger bör akta sig noga,
då de skär med sin kniv.
Under det fina snittet
rör sig rebellen Liv.
Erik Blomberg (1949 (1948)).

Blomberg's source text seems to have been Dickinson (1937) although he did away with its exclamation marks and the long dash before "Life!".

The next example is a poem of quite a different kind, both as to tone and manuscript layout.

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading – treading – till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum –
Kept beating – beating – till I thought
My mind was going numb –

And then I heard them lift a Box
And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,

Ann-Marie Vinde – "Which Emily Dickinson in translation?"

Then Space – began to toll,
As all the heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some strange race
Wrecked, solitary, here –
And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down –
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing – then –

J 280/fr 340, from about summer 1862; first printed 1896

The fifth stanza did not appear in print until 1947; the five iambic quatrains hold 8/6/8/6 spoken syllables ("Funeral" is dissyllabic here) and are rhymed abcb, with slant rhymes in stanzas 1 and 5, full ones in stanzas 2, 3, and 4.

Here is the same poem, with line breaks as shown in the facsimile of Dickinson's manuscript in MB (1981).

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading – treading – till
it seemed
That Sense was breaking through –

And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum –
Kept beating – beating – till
I thought
My mind was going numb –

And then I heard them
lift a Box
And creak across my
Soul
With those same Boots of
Lead, again,
Then Space – began to toll,

As all the heavens were
a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some
strange race
Wrecked, solitary, here –
And then a Plank in
Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and
down –
And hit a World, at every
plunge,
And Finished knowing – then –

New page in MS.

New stanza in MS.

This manuscript was written in a flowing hand with much larger letters than Dickinson used earlier on, so for lack of space a number of metrical lines had to be broken in places unfortunate from a syntactic point of view, for instance line 3 of the third stanza; line 1 of stanza 4, where the copula "were" is separated from its complement, "a Bell"; line 3 of the same stanza "some | strange race"; line 1 of the 5th stanza: "a Plank in | Reason"; line 3 of the last stanza: "at every | plunge". The second metrical line of the third stanza became a run-on line with a carry-over only after Dickinson crossed out the last word: "And creak across my ~~Brain~~" and replaced it with "Soul", which did not go in. Dickinson gives alternatives to two words in lines 19 and 20; for "Plunge," there is 'Crash -' and for "Finished" there is 'Got through -'.

Here is Jäderlund's translation:

Det var en Begravning i min Hjärna,
Och Sörjande som fram och åter
Trampade – och trampade – tills
det var
Som Sinnet bröt igenom –

Och när de alla satt sig ner,
En Mässa, likt en Trumma –
Slog – och slog – till dess
jag trodde
Min Tanke skulle domna –

Och då hörde jag dem
lyfta en Kista
Och gnida mot min
Själ
Med samma skor av
Bly, igen,
Då började Rymden klämta,

Som alla Himlar vore
en Klocka,
Och att Vara – blott ett Öra är,
Och jag och Tystnaden, ett
underligt Släkte
Skeppsbrutna, avskilda, här –
Och då – en Planka i
Förnuftet, brast,
Och jag föll ner, och
ner –
Och slog emot en Värld, i varje
Duns,
Och upphörde att veta – då –
Krasch – Bröt jag
Igenom –
Ann Jäderlund (2012)

Jäderlund's note (p. 134) says that Johnson (1960) and Franklin (1998) have omitted the last line. This is not so, but, unlike Jäderlund, they have not included the alternatives "Crash –" and "Got through –" in the poem.

There are four earlier translations of this poem, based on different originals owing to what source texts were available to the translators at the time. Below are their versions of the last stanza; three of them have a full rhyme whereas Dickinson has a slant one.

Då splittrades en planka i förståndet
och stötande en värld vid varje kast
allt djupare och djupare jag föll
– medvetandet nu brast –
Alarik Roos (In Hufvudstadsbladet 1967: 9 December)

Och då brast förnuftets sista spång
och jag föll och föll djupt ner –
och slog mot en värld vid varje språng
och slutade veta – något mer –
Sven Christer Swahn (1986)

Förnuftets Planka bräcktes,
och jag föll ner, och ner –
och fann en Värld, vid vart nytt fall,
och visste inte mer –
P.O. Valdén (1994) (In Engelsk poesi C-D. Kristianstad: Anglia förlag)

Då brast en planka i förnuftet –
jag föll och föll mot botten –
slog i en värld vid varje ras
och visste intet – sedan –
Ann-Marie Vinde (2010)

The following poem is one of the few in Jäderlund's selection whose layout is discussed in the Dickinson literature. See p. 122 below.

Heaven is so far of the Mind
That were the Mind dissolved –
The Site – of it – by Architect
Could not again be proved –

'Tis Vast – as our Capacity –
As fair – as our idea –
To Him of adequate desire
No further 'tis, than Here –

J 370/Fr 413; MB (1981:454)

There is one Dickinson manuscript, from about autumn 1862, in the booklet that when edited and re-edited by others eventually became Fascicle 20; the poem was first printed in *Further Poems* (1929). This version is arranged as two typical

Dickinson stanzas of four metrical lines, with 8/6/8/6 spoken syllables, rhymed abcb. The rhyme in the first stanza is slant, in this case consonantal: "[dis]solved" – "proved"; the one in the second stanza is full: "idea-here". ("here" was not pronounced with a final *r* in Dickinson's New England variety of English.)

There are two Swedish translations, the first one by Lennart Nyberg (1993):

Så långt är himlen en tanke
att om tanken försvann bort –
kunde inte ens Arkitekten
bevisa var den stått –

Väldig – som vår förmåga –
vacker – som bilden vi bär –
har man sinne för proportioner
är den inte längre bort än här –
Lennart Nyberg (1993)

Nyberg's source may have been Johnson (1955/1960) or Franklin (1981). If the latter, he chose to regularize the layout.

Then there is Jäderlund's, whose source text, MB (1981:454), is laid out as follows:

Heaven is so far of the
Mind
That were the Mind dissolved –
The Site – of it – by Architect
Could not again be proved –
'Tis Vast – as our Capacity –
As fair – as our idea –
To Him of adequate
desire
No further 'tis, than Here –

The poem is the only one on the page and written with large letters and more than ordinary space between the words. The facsimile clearly shows that there was not room for "Mind" or "desire" in lines 1 and 7.

Himlen är så långt från
Tanken
Att om Tanken löstes upp –
Kunde inte – dess Plats – på nytt –
Av Upphovsmannen – bevisas –

Den är Vid – som vår Förmåga –
Så klar – som vår idé –
För Den som lagom
begär

Är den ej längre bort,
än Här –

Ann Jäderlund (2012). (Note 43 says, 'Here I have divided the last line.'³)

A translator set on following the manuscript lineation of the first line of *Heaven is so far of the mind* gets into trouble, at least one translating into Swedish, where in this case the definite article will be enclitic. Were the translator to be wholly faithful to the manuscript, s/he should render "the | Mind" as 'Tank- | en', but this would confuse most readers, including one reciting the poem; they would stop at the word, wondering at the division and what it means. Although Jäderlund's aim is to mirror the layout of the facsimiles in Franklin (1981), she here wisely desists from such a break and places "Tanken" ("the Mind") in line 2.

Mitchell (2005:260) presents several arguments for why line 1, "Heaven is so far of the | Mind", and 7, "To Him of adequate | desire", each is meant to be one:

...Dickinson's rhyme structures rely on odd lines being dissonant and on even lines forming a congruence of sound; if this structural regularity is disrupted or delayed, the timing of the poem is slightly thrown. And again, one wonders at the possible redundancy in isolating words that already receive such strong emphasis from their position as the final accented units in the longest elements of the poem's metrical pattern (with "Mind" already highlighted by being capitalized).

Mitchell's most important argument, however, is that the space to the right of "Mind" is 10.3 cm and the one to the right of "desire" 9.6 cm, which to him clearly indicates that those words belong to the lines preceding them. I agree with Mitchell about Dickinson's rhyme structures making the reading of manuscript lines 1+2 and 8+ 9, respectively, as four separate lines unlikely. However, of those, lines 8 and 9 are the more likely metrical lines, being regular iambic lines with expected last stressed syllables ("[ade]quate") and ("[de]sire"), whereas lines 1 and 2 are not; 1 ends in an unstressed syllable ("the") and 2 only holds one stressed syllable ("Mind"). I will return to Mitchell when summing up.

Then another "Mind" poem with some more conspicuous line divisions:

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind –
As if my Brain had split –
I tried to match it – Seam by Seam –
But could not make them fit –

The thought behind, I strove to join
Unto the thought before –
But Sequence ravelled out of Sound –
Like Balls – opon a Floor –

J 937/Fr 867B; from about early 1864; first printed 1896, as "The Lost Thought"; another poem with two iambic quatrains of 8/6/8/6 syllables and rhymed abcb, this time with full rhymes. Line 8: the spelling *opon* for UPON was current 1200-1600, but is the one most

³ My translation.

often found in Dickinson; not in Webster 1828 or 1844, the dictionary Dickinson used.

Here is the same poem with the line breaks shown in MB (1981:1012), i.e. Jäderlund's source text.

I felt a Cleaving in
my Mind –
As if my Brain had
split –
I tried to match it –
Seam by Seam –
But could not make
them fit –

The thought behind, I
strove to join
Unto the thought before –
But Sequence ravelled
out of Sound –
Like Balls – opon a
Floor –

The poem was written out with such large letters and wide spaces between the words that five metrical lines had to be broken in syntactically unexpected places: 1 ("in | my Mind –"; 2 ("As if my Brain had | split –"; 4 ("could not make | them fit –"); 7 ("...Sequence ravelled | out of Sound –"); 8 ("opon a | Floor –"). Line 7: According to Webster 1844, the intransitive "ravelled" is synonymous with 'unraveled', 'was unwoven/unknot/untwisted'.

And Jäderlund's version of the above:

Jag kände hur min Tanke
Klövs –
Som om min Hjärna
delats –
Försökte – Söm för Söm –
få samman den –
Men fick dem inte
att passa

Tanken efter,
försökte jag
Förena med den innan –
Men Räckan repades
upp ur Ljudet –
Som kulor – på ett
Golv –
Ann Jäderlund (2012)

Here Jäderlund has successfully replaced the noun phrase in line 1, "a Cleaving in my Mind –", with a subordinate clause, "hur min Tanke | Klövs –" ('how my

thought/thinking was cleft/cloven'), but why the carried over verb form "klövs" (the past tense of the passive "klyvas") is written with an initial capital is hard to understand. Is it because of Dickinson's capitalized noun, "a Cleaving"?

Thanks to the possibility of omitting the auxiliary of a verb phrase in Swedish subordinate clauses, a split verb phrase like the one in lines 3 and 4 of the manuscript could be avoided so that there is only "delats" (the passive past participle of 'dela') in Jäderlund's line 4.

In the last line but one, however, Jäderlund has chosen to render the striking break between the indefinite article and the head of the noun phrase "a Floor".

In Jäderlund's last line, two principles collide: the line is carried over, so should begin with a lower-case letter, but Jäderlund subscribes to following Dickinson when it comes to frequently using initial capital letters with certain words, mainly nouns, so for "Floor" we get "Golv".

There are two other translations, both traditionally laid out, and with full rhymes, except for a slant one in Bruno's second stanza.

Jag kände en klyvnad i sinnet –
som om hjärnan fläkts itu –
jag sökte foga den – söm vid söm
men den ville inte passa nu

Jag sökte länka den första tanken
vid den som sedan kom –
men samklangen repade upp sig
som nystan – på ett golv
Eva Bruno (In Bonniers litterära magasin, 1983 (4): 248-249)

Jag erfor klyvning i mitt sinn
som om hjärnan brast itu –
Jag ville laga, styng för styng –
men inget hjälpte nu.

Tanken bakom skulle fogas
till tanken som gått förut –
men sammanhang för ur hörhåll
likt nystan som stjälpes ut.
Sven Christer Swahn (1986).

My last examples are both from Dickinson's later years. First, a playful one, very different in tone from the previous ones:

This dirty – little – Heart
Is freely mine.
I won it with a Bun –
A Freckled shrine –

But eligibly fair
To him who sees
The Visage of the Soul

And not the knees.

J 1311/Fr 1378; from about 1875; first printed 1945.

This poem's meter is different from that of the previous ones, with two iambic quatrains of 6/4/6/4 syllables, each with a full rhyme. There is enjambment across the stanzas: line 4: "[It is] a Freckled shrine – / line 5: but [it is] eligibly fair"..., a feature that is quite common in Dickinson.

Here is the same poem with the line breaks shown in the facsimile of Dickinson's holograph from about 1875, in MB (1981: 1364):

This dirty – little –
Heart
Is freely mine –
I won it with
a Bun –
A Freckled shrine –

But eligibly fair
To him who sees
The Visage of
the Soul
And not the
knees.

The poem is written out with very large letters and plenty of space between the few, short, words, which necessitates the four run-on lines, which almost meet the right-hand margin; "shrine" in row 6 is even so close to the margin that the dash after it has had to be placed below its final 'e'. See my summing up for more about the visual impression of this poem.

Then Jäderlund's rendering of the above:

Det här lumpna – lilla –
Hjärtat
Är villigt mitt –
Jag vann det med
en Hårknut –
Ett Fräknigt helgonskrin –

Men Passande vän
För honom som ser
Själens
Anlete
Och inte
Knän.
Ann Jäderlund (2012)

Franklin (1998) transcribes "eligibly" and "knees" as beginning with lower-case letters, Jäderlund with capitals: "Passande" and "Knän". Jäderlund mirrors the line

breaks in MB (1981), by having a broken initial noun phrase "Det här lumpna – lilla – | Hjärtat", the following prepositional phrase as "med | en Hårknut –", "Själens | Anlete" ('the Soul's Visage') for the genitive/prepositional phrase "The Visage of the Soul". The final broken noun phrase, "the | knees." is rendered as "Knän" ('Knees'), which is the correct translation of the head of the Swedish genitive phrase. It should be added that "a Bun" is more likely 'en bulle' (a roll of sweet wheat bread) than "en Hårknut" (a tight roll of hair), and the dirty little heart won by the poem's *I* rather 'den kära lilla smutsgrisen' than "Det här lumpna – lilla – Hjärtat", even though it would be difficult to fit so many syllables into the meter. "Vän" in the first line of stanza 2 is the adjective "vän" [vɛ:n], meaning 'pretty', 'pleasant'. The form 'vänt' would however have been expected as it is the complement of the neutral noun "helgonskrin".

The last of my examples is a late poem, dated about 1884, whose manuscript is not in MB (1981). The reason is that it was written out in pencil on the back of a fragment of stationery. On the other side there is a letter Dickinson had begun to one of her aunts; the poem was first printed in 1890, four years after her death, in the first edition of her poems; then as an octet titled "Death and Life", under the heading NATURE; it was later transcribed as two quatrains in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1937).

Apparently with no surprise
To any happy Flower
The Frost beheads it at it's play –
In accidental power –
The blonde Assassin passes on –
The Sun proceeds unmoved
To measure off another Day
For an Approving God –

J 1624/Fr 1668; line 3: *it's* is the old-fashioned way Dickinson most often spells the possessive pronoun *its*.

In all editions except MB (1981), the poem is arranged according to the pattern/the meter Dickinson most often used, two iambic four-line stanzas, with lines of 8/6/8/6 spoken syllables with end stress, rhymed abcb. Lines 2 and 4 feature a full rhyme, "Flower – power", whereas lines 6 and 8 have a consonantal slant rhyme, "[un]moved" – "God".

Below is the same poem but reproduced with the line breaks in Dickinson's manuscript, except that there the word "God" is written vertically on the right hand side of the paper, beginning between the line ending in "Approving" and the one above and stretching upwards. A reproduction of the manuscript can be viewed on the Internet (see References).

Apparently with no
surprise
To any happy

Flower
The Frost beheads
it at it's play –
In accidental
power –
The blonde Assassin
passes on –
The Sun proceeds
unmoved
To measure off
another Day
For an Approving
God –

There are four broken noun phrases, all parts of prepositional phrases: "no | surprise"; "any happy | Flower"; "accidental | power"; "an Approving | God", and two verb phrases with transitive verbs with complements: "beheads | it"; "[To] measure off | another Day".

That the carry-over lines belong, metrically and syntactically, to the preceding line is obvious, not only if one recites the poem, but also from the fact that they are written with lower-case letters, "Flower" and "God" excepted. Dickinson is not consistent in her use of initial capitals in individual words as can be seen from "surprise", "play", and "power", and from her writing an adjectival word like "Approving" with a capital initial, something she rarely does.

There are two Swedish translations, an early one by Erik Blomberg (cf. p. 117 above), whose source text seems to have been the one in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1937):

Till synes utan häpnad
för någon blomma alls
slår frostén, blint despotisk,
för ro skull av dess hals.

Den bleke bödeln smyger bort
och solen går sin rond
och mäter av ännu en dag
åt en rättfärdig Gud.
Erik Blomberg (1949)

Jäderlund's translation naturally looks quite different. There is no facsimile of the manuscript in MB (1981) because it was not bound into a booklet or written on one of the loose sheets that were sorted into so-called sets by scholars Johnson and Franklin. However, Franklin (1998) accounts for the divisions in the manuscript, and it is these that Jäderlund aims at transferring in her translation. That she ends up with 17 lines instead of the manuscript's 16 is due to the fact that lines 9-10, "The blonde Assassin | passes on –" take up three lines in Jäderlund.

Utan förvåning
helt uppenbart
För vilken lycklig
Blomma som helst
Halshugger Frosten
den i sin lek –
Med oavsiktlig
kraft –
Passerar den
blonde Mördaren
vidare –
Solen fortsätter
oberörd
Att mäta upp
ännu en Dag
Inför en Samtyckande
Gud –
Ann Jäderlund (2012)

Conclusion

Now that we have seen examples of translations of Dickinson into Swedish based on different source texts, it is time to try to answer the main question of this article: Which Dickinson should translators of her poems into other languages base their work on? Is it the Dickinson we meet in transcript into print in well-researched editions, such as Franklin's 1998 variorum edition, his reading edition from the following year, or the Dickinson of the facsimiles of her handwritten manuscripts it is possible to meet in *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson* (1981), and to an increasing degree these days on the web sites of the *Emily Dickinson Archive* or Amherst College, Massachusetts?

It must be clear from what I have written so far that I opt for the former: to present the poems laid out the way printed poetry was usually laid out in Dickinson's lifetime. There are several reasons for my stance.

One is that we know next to nothing about the circumstances in which the manuscripts were created and nothing about why Dickinson's handwriting changed, which it did quite a few times, or why she stopped writing out the poems in ink on fine stationery and took to writing, often in pencil, on a variety of odd pieces of paper, mostly very small. This ignorance on our part, I think, makes it presumptuous to attach compositional meaning to these physical changes, which however a number of Dickinson scholars and admirers do. Among the first to do so were Smith (1992) and Howe (1993). In their view, Dickinson is not only a great poet who wrote a number of emotionally and intellectually amazing poems dressed in skilfully handled language, but also a great visual artist whose every stroke of the pen or pencil, and placing of text on paper were deliberate manifestations of artistic intention.

We can draw very few conclusions about Dickinson's intentions when it comes to a possible early public appearance of her poems. The only record we have of her ever mentioning the composition or layout of any of her poems is the

correspondence from 1859 in which she discussed the poem *Safe in their alabaster chambers* (J 216/Fr 124) with her close friend and sister-in-law Susan Dickinson; a letter to the editor of the cultural magazine *Atlantic Monthly*, T.W. Higginson, in August 1862 (L 1958:271), where she asks whether the poems she is enclosing are more orderly than the ones she had sent before, and another letter to him (L 1958:316), where she comments on the way the first stanza of her poem *A narrow fellow in the grass* (J 986/Fr 1096) had been printed when it was published in the local newspaper.

In the correspondence between the two sisters-in-law about *Safe in their alabaster chambers*, there was no mention of the layout of the poem, neither the way it looked when printed in a traditional way in the *Springfield Daily Republican* on 1 March 1862 nor in the copies Susan Dickinson received in 1859 and 1861. It was the content of the second stanza that was under review.

By the time Dickinson asks Higginson, "Are these more orderly? I thank for the Truth –", she had been corresponding with him for four months and already sent him twelve poems, among them a copy of *Safe in their alabaster chambers*, with lines that were differently broken from those in the copies to Susan Dickinson. As far as I can make out, his "Truth" and her question did not concern the way the poems were written down but the style and the content: From the line division point of view, the two poems she sent on this occasion, *Before I got my eye put out* (J327/Fr 336) and *I cannot dance upon my toes* (J 326/Fr 381), are as disorderly as the twelve previous ones.

Then there are the famous lines to Higginson where on 17 March 1866 Dickinson complains that *A narrow fellow in the grass* "was robbed of me – defeated too of the third line by the punctuation. The third and fourth were one –". What she meant was that it was not she who had handed over the manuscript to the newspaper and that the editor had got the punctuation wrong so that the relation between lines 3 and 4 had been lost.

When she mentioned it to Higginson, the poem had been published twice the previous month, titled *The Snake*, first in the *Springfield Daily Republican* on 14 February 1866, with the first four lines looking like this:

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him—did you not,
His notice sudden is,

When it appeared in the *Springfield Weekly Republican* on 17 February, the punctuation of line 3 was different:

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him—did you not?
His notice sudden is,

The copy Dickinson had written out on a loose sheet of stationery and saved the previous autumn (MB 981:1137-1139) looks like this in transcript:

A narrow Fellow in
the Grass
Occasionally rides –
You may have met Him –
did you not
His notice sudden is –

In Dickinson it has two broken metrical lines, the 8-syllable first line "A narrow Fellow in | the Grass" and the likewise 8-syllable third one, "You may have met Him – | did you not", but she is only concerned about the faulty punctuation, not about the metrical lines being conventionally laid out on the page.

Keeping the above in mind and that she herself, as far as we know, never supervised the editing of a text for the print, I cannot believe that Dickinson, who was so aware of the power of language, would have wished her poems to have appeared in print with the lines divided as in her manuscripts, with broken noun phrases, prepositional phrases, and verb phrases.

Presenting a poem with such line divisions not only makes it look strange – Mitchell (2005:330, n. 37) points out that this way of transcribing the poems make them look long and thin on the page, which they do not on the manuscript pages, where the metrical lines almost always fill the space available between the left and the right margins – but also makes it more difficult to read out, in my view, both in English and in translation into Swedish. The latter is particularly relevant because the inconsistent appearance of capital letters and lower-case ones at the beginning of lines is confusing to Swedish readers and others who are not used to metrical lines beginning with capitals.

To Mitchell's remark I would like to add that once a poem by Dickinson has been translated from manuscript into print, the need for breaking metrical lines is gone, for the simple reason that the print requires much less space than her handwriting, at least that after about 1860.

Apart from Mitchell (2005) I would like to mention Cristanne Miller (2012:98-105), who has studied the rhythm and meter of all the 1,789 poems in Franklin 1998. She makes a detailed analysis of the way *Safe in their alabaster chambers* (J216/Fr 124), *A toad can die of light* (J583/Fr 419), and *You'll know it as you know 'tis noon* (J 420/Fr 429) are written out in Dickinson's manuscripts and concludes that in spite of there being a number of split and broken metrical lines, Dickinson never loses her grip on syntactical structures. I think that this could be used as an argument both *for* reproducing Dickinson's line divisions when printing them in English, and *for not* doing so, but Miller never once advocates the former.

Finally, to return to the Jäderlund version (2012), which does not feature the originals in one form or the other, the translator is clear about what her source texts are. In my opinion however, those who read it and are not familiar with

the various representations of Dickinson can easily get the impression that she was a poet who anticipated the birth of modernistic poetry at least fifty years before its day by breaking basic syntactic rules, when she was not. Even though the register of her vocabulary and syntax is broad and complex, Dickinson was quite conservative when it came to form. She was for instance fond of certain old-fashioned spellings and grammatical features, such as the subjunctive or uninflected verb forms, and uses traditional meter more often than not.

There are probably several reasons why Jäderlund chose to mirror the line divisions in Dickinson's manuscripts, even when they are illogical from a metrical, syntactical, and aesthetical point of view. One may have been that presenting Dickinson in Swedish this way has not been done before; another the wish to make visible her impression that Dickinson's poems are "near the poetry of our time."

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The manuscripts of all the poems referred to in the article, except *I felt a funeral in my brain*, can now be accessed at www.edickinson.org, *The Emily Dickinson Archive*.

Lists of all known translations, almost 700 of about 450 poems by Emily Dickinson into Swedish, both in books and newspapers/magazines, may be viewed at www.edl.byu.edu/essay.php. Compiled by Ann-Marie Vinde; last updated January 2013.