[My life closed twice before its close]

My life closed twice before its close –
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

[“Hope” is the thing with feathers]

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

[My period had come for Prayer]

My period had come for Prayer –
No other Art – would do –
My Tactics missed a rudiment –
Creator – Was it you?

God grows above – so those who pray
Horizons – must ascend –
And so I stepped upon the North
To see this Curious Friend –

His House was not – no sign had He –
By Chimney – nor by Door
Could I infer his Residence –
Vast Prairies of Air

Unbroken by a Settler –
Were all that I could see –
Infinitude – Had’st Thou no Face
That I might look on Thee?

The Silence condescended –
Creation stopped – for Me –
But awed beyond my errand –
I worshipped – did not "pray" –
[So much of Heaven has gone from Earth]

So much of Heaven has gone from Earth
That there must be a Heaven
If only to enclose the Saints
To Affidavit given.

The Missionary to the Mole
Must prove there is a Sky
Location doubtless he would plead
But what excuse have I?

Too much of Proof affronts Belief
The Turtle will not try
Unless you leave him – then return
And he has hauled away.

[Tell all the Truth but tell it slant]

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant –
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth’s superb surprise

As lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind –

[Wonder – is not precisely Knowing]

Wonder – is not precisely Knowing
And not precisely Knowing not –
A beautiful but bleak condition
He has not lived who has not felt

Suspense – is his mature Sister –
Whether Adult Delight is Pain
Or of itself a new misgiving –
This is the Gnat that mangles men –

[I dwell in Possibility]

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –

Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of Eye –
And for an Everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky –

Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise –