

Emily Dickinson, “I Started Early—Took my Dog” (poem 656)

1 I started Early – Took my Dog –
2 And visited the Sea –
3 The Mermaids in the Basement
4 Came out to look at me –

5 And Frigates – in the Upper Floor
6 Extended Hempen Hands –
7 Presuming Me to be a Mouse –
8 Aground – upon the Sands –

9 But no Man moved Me – till the Tide
10 Went past my simple Shoe –
11 And past my Apron – and my Belt
12 And past my Bodice – too –

13 And made as He would eat me up –
14 As wholly as a Dew
15 Upon a Dandelion's Sleeve –
16 And then – I started – too –

17 And He – He followed – close behind –
18 I felt His Silver Heel
19 Upon my Ankle – Then My Shoes
20 Would overflow with Pearl –

21 Until We met the Solid Town –
22 No One He seemed to know –
23 And bowing – with a Mighty look –
24 At me – The Sea withdrew –