



Maxine Kumin

(1925-2014)

After the Poetry Reading (1996)

for Marie Howe

If Emily Dickinson lived in the 1990s
and let herself have sex appeal
she'd grow her hair wild and electric
down to her buttocks, you said. She'd wear
magenta tights, black ankle socks
and tiny pointed paddock boots.

Intrigued, I saw how Emily'd
master Microsoft, how she'd
fax the versicles that Higginson
advised her not to print to MS.
APR and Thirteenth Moon.

She'd read aloud at benefits
address the weavers' guild
the garden club, the anarchists
Catholics for free choice
welfare moms, the Wouldbegoods
and the Temple Sinai sisterhood.

Thinking the same thing, silent
we see Emily flamboyant.
Her words for the century to come
are pithy, oxymoronic.
Her fly buzzes me all the way home.