

Do you remember that I told you the story of Pandora's Box and how, after the box was opened and loads of bad things came out, that the only thing left in the box was Hope? Now that we have a bit of hope of the lockdown coming to an end, and Premier League football coming back, I thought I could show you today EMILY DICKINSON's poem "'Hope" is the thing with feathers' where she compares hope with a little bird (the thing with feathers). Emily Dickinson was an American poet who died in 1886 at the age of 56. A pretty good age for that time, but almost all of those years after she became an adult were spent at her family home - in a way, she locked herself down and didn't go out very much. Instead, she poured herself into writing poems - but it was only after she died that her family discovered just how many poems she had written: almost 2,000 poems. Only about ten of them were published in her lifetime. Nowadays Emily Dickinson is regarded as one of the greatest poets of all time - and this is one of her best known poems.



### "HOPE" IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
The 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.

'abash' means make someone ashamed of themselves so they don't want to speak up, or embarrass them into being quiet. So she is saying that even in the worst conditions, hope never dies or asks anything in return, and is actually sweetest in really difficult times, like in a gale (a very strong wind). But what do you think Emily Dickinson hoped for, tucked up in her bed at her family home? She never married, so maybe she hoped for someone to sweep her off her feet and take her away. What do you hope for? What does the little bird inside you sing about?