

Christina Goggin
8316 E. Dublin Pike
Cambridge City, IN
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November 14, 2004

Dear Emily Dickinson,

Hanging in my grandparents' house are many pictures and paintings collected from over the years. Mounted next to a doorway in a spare bedroom is one of your poems. When I was a small child, going to my grandparent's house was a treat. I can remember looking up to read your poem from the time I first learned to read, and as I got older, that poem stuck with me. I've never forgotten it. Your poem makes me wonder, makes me examine myself. "If I can stop one heart from breaking" are the words that make up the first line.

Through the years, your poem has made me think, "Do I live in vain? My day is so full of chances to put others in front of me, but do I?" I realize that life is pointless if I live it for only me. I would live in vain. I also notice the people who give sacrifices, both big and small, for another person, and I see that many people succeed in helping others without looking for strokes and rewards. Now, through my day, I try to look for chances for me to give, not chances to make **me** important.

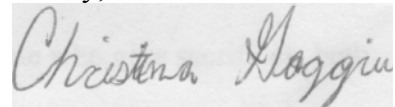
Even though many people are helping and giving without asking, so many times people (myself included) do not care about the "fainting robin" who needs help finding his way. Instead, we tend to find a way not to see the problems we could change. We focus on celebrities, fads, or the next game cube...things we don't need in life. Our world would be so much better if instead of looking out for our own glory we could look out for

each other.

Imagine for just a little bit what our world would be like if no one ever thought of others. It is a really scary image. Now imagine what our world would be like if everyone read your poem, thought the same way you do, and cared for each other. I don't think we can ever achieve what I just described, total harmony. Some people will work against it, but we can strive toward it with those small sacrifices and by "cooling pains."

Sometimes people remember the little deeds someone does for them the most: carrying their groceries or a short time to sit down and talk. I try to see the little things I can do to help. Those little deeds keep me from living my life in vain. Emily, this poem means a lot to me. I don't know if this poem was hard for you to write or it was just a little thing, but I can tell you that ever since I read it as a little girl, I have been trying to help you keep one heart from breaking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina Goggin". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

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