

Mutilation Odes

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safe
do you think it safe?
it is not safe
is very safe
said

my intention is to carry sail during the night
is not the same
the same as
on a bank of sand and shells

saturday morning
expected to be saved

saw the
sea ran so high
seems a
like I have not seen

sent

sent ashore
severally
shaken

she waits

there is good shelter

Love is its own rescue, for we — at our supremest, are but its trembling Emblems

Emily Dickinson, L522

keep a good look
out

look out

mine
but just on loan

not much
not more

suppose
have you any reason to suppose?
it is supposed
I am not sure
I am sure

a considerable surf
the surf is so high in the swash

swim from the vessel

have not time to talk just now

It is always by favour of nature that one knows something.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 505

is he prepared?

upon a bad principle
upon a good principle
private accounts

it is probable
it is not probable

a new project
has promised to

see *prove*

there is not proof
what proof is there of?
property
cannot purchase her anchor
put in, in distress

put into

put to sea

there is no reason
there is reason to think
what is the reason

What I put into words is no longer my possession.

Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson* (1985)

close to the
cloudy weather

upon the coast
her colours are

where did you come from?
concealed on board

what course does she steer?
with the current

how many day's sail?

deeply laden
there has been great delay

name unknown
I do not know the name

nature
what is the nature of?

need
neither more nor less
neither seen nor heard

next accounts
no danger
no doubt
no hopes
no more
no time
no loss
no gain

nor
notice
the stranger's number is

number of
what number of?

*Nature is a Haunted House — but Art — a House
that tries to be haunted.*

Emily Dickinson, L459

must there?
name unknown

no time
no loss
no gain

none
far enough off
has offered

obscured by
obstacles

occasions
off the land

are you going on shore
at what place?

in what place
are you prepared?

sorrow
all sorts

have you tried for soundings?
spoke the
spring
to the cable
you are standing into danger
standing in
standing out

straits of

vessel stranded near
struck by a sea and carried away her

perhaps he
perhaps it
perhaps she
perhaps the

perhaps we

spanish colours
we spoke the
spoke the
was spoken on the

is the standard
steering to the

see *gale*

black streak
red streak

the coast is strewed with wrecks
has struck upon
by the sun

hence
hesitation
high water

I saw him
hindered
hoisted forward
homeward
above the horizon

in an hour
hove short

a strange sail hovering about

how many?
dreadful
hurries

*instinctive human supposition that any word
may mean its opposite*

Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson* (1985)

there is only
we have only
opportunities
our
selves
out of

more than.
more time is necessary.
most of the.
the most.
without any motive.

ask your questions.

sent in quest of

have you any questions to ask

I have some questions to ask

quick passage

quite impossible

ask if

ask the

ask them

assorted numbers

assorted qualities

are any of these words, mine?

few words

send word

list of

list of articles.

literally very

little very

little to say.

“As your questions” ex Plato, *The Phaedrus*

afterword

Most of the language in these essays is taken from Henry J Rogers, *The Telegraph Dictionary and Seamen's Signal Book* (1845). One rule governed the taking: expressions could be skipped, but all expressions were taken moving forward, not back up the alphabetical entries.

Rogers's *Telegraph Dictionary* was an early, pre-commercial code for use with Morse's Electro-Magnetic Telegraph, which had gone into service only the year before. Like subsequent commercial cable codes, it is arranged much like a thesaurus, in which expressions are grouped around key words. All plaintext expressions in books of this nature were selected for their utility in specific activities.

Such codes offered secrecy and – most importantly – data compression.

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