

## Emily Shore 1819-1839

### The Handsome Family

She'd been coughing up blood since the dogwoods bloomed.  
Seventeen that spring and confined to her room.  
At night her heart pounded holes in her chest.  
Death, like a bird, was building its nest.  
She'd laughed at the graveyard on one sip of wine and  
kept a pet duck till the cat crushed its spine.  
But, waltzing one night in a red velvet dress, she  
noticed a whistling down in her chest.  
Propped up on pillows, she watched the snow fall, trying  
to picture an end to it all.  
By spring there'd be picnics and merry-go-rounds, but  
she'd be nothing but bones in the ground.  
And so, on the last day of her short life, Emily called  
for her father's penknife. She sawed at her head till the  
floor pooled with hair and braided a watch chain for  
father (mother) to wear.