

Tell All the Truth

by Emily Dickinson

Tell all the truth but tell it slant¹-----
Success in Circuit lies²
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind³
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind⁴-----

¹ Perhaps the use of italics here would suggest and underscore the movement that is suggested by the word slant, eg.: Tell all the truth but tell it *slant*---

² Where there is light there is shadow. A particular vantage point will enable me to see some of a reality, while always leaving other parts of that reality in the dark, in the shadows. Cf. The Hindu fable about the five blind men describing an elephant that they are touching at different locations, eg, the tail, the ear, the trunk, a tusk, the torso...

³ I am not as clear as I'd like to be with this portion of the poem; however "Lily's Vigil" (below) comes to mind. Perhaps Dickinson is trying to provide a context within which terrifying flash-bang of lighting-thunder can be somewhat befriended as a necessary contributor to one's personal human development.

⁴ The goal is to become able through grace to participate in the Beatific Vision; however, given human nature, this must take place gradually, developmentally, incrementally...

LILY'S VIGIL

"I was afraid of lightning storms when I was a little girl.
If one came in the night, I'd go get into bed with my Mama.
I'd wait for a flash of lightning to show me the way
to her room.

I still remember the strange feeling of
standing there in the dark,
waiting for the thing I was afraid of.

Sometimes it's the things that scare us the most
that get us to a place where we are safe.

But knowing that doesn't make things any easier."

- A comment by Lily Harper, a character in the TV Show *I'll Fly Away*, at the conclusion of the episode titled "Slow Coming Dark."

Cf.: Psalm 139: 14 "I give you thanks (O Lord) that I am **fearfully** made..."

Cf.: At the Easter Vigil Christians stand in the dark waiting for the arrival of Light. Then, holding a small piece of that light, they proceed slowly to journey through the darkness. In daily life, the Christian's experience of "having light by which to proceed" is often more like an irregular and uncontrolled flash than a constant flame.
