

Actress channels
Emily Dickinson
at Norwalk Library

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Actress Ginger Grace portrays Emily Dickinson Sunday at the auditorium in the Norwalk Public Library, telling the story of Dickinson's poetry, her life and interacting with the audience. Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

Actress Ginger Grace channels Emily Dickinson for interactive performance at Norwalk Library

By FRANCIS CARR Jr.
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — Actress Ginger Grace channeled Emily Dickinson for a presentation at Norwalk Public Library Sunday.

"Inside Emily Dickinson: Her Poetry and Her Life" was part of the library's ongoing National Poetry Month programming.

Dressed in period garb, Grace impersonated Dickinson to deliver a first-person account of the life of the prolific Massachusetts poet, pausing at times for audience participation.

Dickinson, Grace explained, spent the last 30 years of her life writing poetry in seclusion at her family's Amherst estate.

"Pretend this is the great big trunk where she kept her poems, all 1,775 of them," said Grace, holding up a wooden box during her introduction of the performance. "Pretty good for recluse."

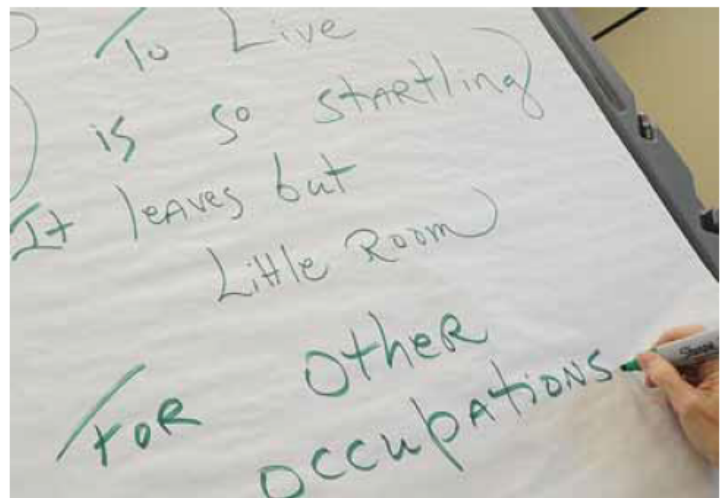
The performance drew on Dickinson's letters as well as her work, chronicling a childhood spent among Amherst's affluent classes.

"There is no frigate like a book to take us lands away," Grace said, quoting a well-known Dickinson poem.

At times Grace solicited poetry from her audience, asking spectators to contribute descriptive language.

Asked for words to describe a

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special memory, the audience offered words like "cataclysmic," "thrilling" and "invigorating," which Grace copied onto an easel.

Spectators were also asked to participate in free-writing exercises and to condense the results into two-line poems.

Much of Grace's acting work involves United States history.

In another single-actor show, "the First Ladies Coalition", Grace plays Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson and Mary Todd Lincoln, as well as an immigrant character named Colleen McCracken.

Grace has toured nationally alongside famed celebrity impressionist Rich Little's "The Presidents", playing First Ladies from Jackie Kennedy to Hillary Clinton.

Grace has also played Emily Dickinson in the one-actor play "The Bell of Amherst", by William Luce.