

Because i could not stop for death

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Because I could not stop for Death, written by Emily Dickinson in 1862, portrays the concept of death in a very non-confrontational manner. The poet's view on death somewhat differs from what we are generally exposed to - associating it with fear and pain. In this poem, the journey of death is conveyed by the voice of a woman who has been dead for centuries. From the bed of her grave, she reflects on how Death, personified as a gentleman, brings her, on a carriage, to her final resting place where her soul still remains. Irony is used here because the speaker is not sure whether or not Death has tricked her into going from a busy life, to a peaceful death.

Dickinson splits the poem into quatrains. Stanzas 1, 2, 3 and 5 use the same meter patterns. The first and third line of the stanzas has 8 syllables or 4 feet. Each foot represents two syllables, one unstressed the other stressed. A meter that is iambic is one that is common in the English language; so the poem could be said naturally. There are 4 feet so the meter is iambic tetrameter, tetra meaning 4. be CAUSE/ i COULD/ not STOP/ for DEATH The second and fourth lines in the stanzas only have 3 feet so they follow iambic trimeter pattern, tri meaning 3. Stanza 4 is a special one. There is no particular pattern to it. Stanza 6 is slightly altered by the last line, which has 7 syllables. Otherwise it follows the same rules as the previous stanzas. In stanza one, Dickinson introduces the character of Death without hesitation. Here, Death gives us with the impression that he is a gentleman or a gentle suitor who kindly leads the speaker and encourages her to embark on the journey of death. The tone is peaceful and the speaker appears passive and is co-operative with his decision. Dickinson uses symbolism to depict the journey of death. This is apparent when she uses a carriage in line 3 to

transport the speaker, Death and Immortality to the graveyard. Line 4 shows that "Immortality" is also on the carriage, meaning that the start of the journey to "Death" is also the start of a journey towards immortality. In Stanza 2, the narrator starts her journey slowly. She has started dying and is not struggling against all the pains; and has also given up all the joys of life, "and I had put away My labor and my leisure too." Death is also described as being civil, "His Civility." Stanza 3 uses anaphora. "We passed" is repeated to give off the effect that she is watching as life goes by.

Alliteration is also used in lines 11 and 12, "Gazing Grain" and "Setting Sun."

"The setting sun is also symbolic; it represents the end of life. Stanza 4 gives us some eerie imagery. Line 13 suggests that it was the sun that actually passed her. "Dews" means the dew of the night so "The Dews drew quivering and chill" means that the speaker is feeling the coldness of the night. This might suggest that she is already nearing the end of her journey towards death. After, she explains why she is cold. She is wearing a gown and it is described as being "Gossamer;" a light and thin material. Then she tells us she is also wearing a "Tippet" made of "Tulle." A tippet is an old-fashioned shoulder cape and tulle is a thin silky material. Definitely not the clothes you would wear on a cold chilly night. The speaker tells us about her gravestone in stanza 5. Symbolism is used again in line 17; "House" represents the gravestone. We are shown here that the gravestone is just poking out of the ground and that it looks like a cornice. Now, we move into the future. It is also revealed that the narrator has been dead for centuries "'tis Centuries." Paradox is used here because the speaker says that these few hundred years feel shorter than that day she died. She also

realised that when she died, it would mean going into eternal life; " the Horse's Heads Were toward Eternity. " Dickinson has described, quite clearly, her views about death. She suggests that the afterlife means another life, one that is eternal. While some would disagree with her, she has made a statement that has lasted centuries. The poem is metaphorical, she has used some everyday things to portray one of the scariest things in life: death.