

Emily dickinson's exploration of death essay example

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Emily Dickinson is well-known for writing on a variety of themes, death being major contender among them. "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," "After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes," and "I Heard a Fly Buzz" are three strong examples of poems with death as their overarching theme. While three poems differ in detail, they all portray death and loss in unique ways. Death and mortality are the key themes for "Because I Could Not Stop for Death." It explores the narrator's opinion on her death and what the day in which she died was like for her. Dickinson portrays the day in a way which seems fairly commonplace and uneventful. The narrator does not seem afraid of death, and appears to accept her demise easily.

"I Heard a Fly Buzz" depicts the setting and the mood at the instant when a person dies. The narrator begins by talking about the hum of a fly, which interrupts the dense, hushed spaces surrounding her deathbed. In the second stanza, the speaker begins to describe the room in which, her death is taking place. She tells the reader of the individuals with her, who are coolly getting ready for her last breath. The fly seems like an impostor, a strange and superfluous bug, imposing on her moment of death. Perhaps the most interesting element of this poem is that it begins as a fairly standard death scene, but then a fly enters and alters the whole atmosphere.

The fly is first introduced in line one, when the reader is informed that its buzz is audible. The fly is then not mentioned again until line twelve, when, "There interposed a fly" (Dickinson, b). The fly is interrupting the death scene and the poem. It is, arguably, stealing the dying woman's thunder. It is unclean, uncontrollable and loud, while all else is silent and tranquil. The fly becomes more of a presence and, indeed, more annoying as the lines go on

from this point. In line fourteen, the fly puts itself between the narrator and the light: " Between the light - and me -." (Dickinson b). This is where the dying woman is most irritated by the fly as it is getting in the way of her death.

" After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes," is, as the title suggests, about the feelings following a painful experience. Several of the lines use words which suggest that the painful experience is bereavement; an example of this is " tombs" (Dickinson c). Again, this poem could be said to have the association of death at its centre. Through a variety of techniques, such as alliteration and personification, Dickinson portrays the subject in a unique, gripping way.

" Because I Could Not Stop for Death," " After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes," and " I Heard a Fly Buzz" are poems with death at their core. The major similarity between them is that they both explore death as a commonplace, fearless occurrence. Despite death being popular in poetry, Dickinson has managed to make both of these poems unique in their angles so that readers experience the theme from a fresh perspective. These pieces provide an excellent sample of the author's style and skill at casting new light on already familiar subject matters.

Works Cited

Dickinson, E. (a) " Because I Could Not Stop for Death." Poem Hunter. Web. Feb 2013. [http://www. poemhunter. com/poem/because-i-could-not-stop-for-death-712/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/because-i-could-not-stop-for-death-712/)

Dickinson, E. (b) " I Heard a Fly Buzz." Poem Hunter. Web. Feb 2013. [http://www. poemhunter. com/poem/i-heard-a-fly-buzz-when-i-died/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/i-heard-a-fly-buzz-when-i-died/)

<https://assignbuster.com/emily-dickinsons-exploration-of-death-essay-example/>

Dickinson, E. (c) “ After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes.” Poem Hunter. Web. Feb 23. [http://www. poemhunter. com/poem/after-great-pain-a-formal-feeling-comes/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/after-great-pain-a-formal-feeling-comes/)