

# I could not stop for death

Literature



The tone and imagery of Emily Dickinson's "I could not stop for Death-" is subdued and soft, and concludes with a positive image. This theme and emotion is developed as the poem progresses. The fact that the poem is broken into stanzas helps to form a sense of time and a continuation of the journey that is described. Langston Hughes' "Theme for English B" does not follow the same structure as Dickinson's poem, but it does develop a sense of the progression. The biggest difference, other than the obvious structure, is that Hughes' poem does not end with the same type of comfortable conclusion.

The tone of Hughes' poem is defiant, and in the beginning presents far more questions than answers. These questions serve the purpose of progress, but in a different way than we see in Dickinson's poetry. The questions are eventually answered, and a sense of acceptance is reached. However, there is no real sense of completion. The two poems do have many similarities, but the differences are what establish the meaning of the poems. Through the use of hyphens, Dickinson shows a sense of continuity and eternal progression.

Hughes, by breaking down each sentence to short phrases, makes the poem choppy. It is clear that Dickinson's poem is full of satisfaction and confidence. The experience is not difficult and seems justified in the way that she describes it. Hughes brings a much different view to the idea of race and America. The broken sentences bring about a sense of disconnect and show the struggle that is experienced. The use of form makes a tremendous difference in how each poem is read and the emotions that are prompted.