

Comparing two poems



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The two poems ' Because I could not stop for death' and ' I heard a fly buzz when I died' by Emily Dickinson are poignant in their depiction of death. The poems portray poet's fascination of death which is inevitable. The different visualizations of death as a final event of life reflect Dickinson's imagery of death both as a contented journey to eternal happiness and at the same time, absolute helplessness of man against it. The universal truth of death is one of the most reluctantly acknowledged facts that are never accepted until death has occurred. Indeed, all emotions and apprehensions associated with death, assume a gigantic and metaphysical aspect because people have to succumb to its cruel intentions when the time arrives. ' Because I could not stop for death' is an allegory that describes death as a pleasant journey through eternity. The death is seen as a gentlemanly act which takes the person on a ' carriage held but just ourselves And Immortality'. The poet has showed death not as a terrifying thing but as an amenable personality that helps the person to attain immortality. The poet's imagery of death as a journey is also an effort to demonstrate that death is a natural culmination of life's various stages. The different phases of one's life are important destinations that are designed to provide the mankind with happiness and fulfillment. Indeed, man's relationship with eternal force is very evident in the poem which eloquently says asserts that ' We passed the fields of gazing grain; We passed the setting sun. Or rather, he passed us;'. Time has no relevance for death because it takes one beyond the limitation of time and space. In total contrast, ' I heard a fly buzz when I died' portrays death as portend of grief and uncertainty. It projects an imagery of death as a fearful event that inculcates a sense of dread and acute helplessness against its finality. The short poem is loaded with powerful emotion that is palpable and

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extremely heartrending in the inevitability of death. The poet has been able to convey the vulnerability of the dying person who is aghast at the stillness and silence that surrounds his body while at the same time, the loved ones are left with extreme grief and anguish. Interestingly it also shows poet's beliefs that people are able to feel death and perhaps acknowledge it as an act of redemption in their last moment. ' For that last onset, when the king; Be witnessed in his power' clearly illustrates poet's beliefs that death provides them with the opportunity to begin a new life where man can be able to interact with God. Indeed, Emily's reference of King can be interpreted as that of God who is able to lead man towards salvation. Indeed, the two poems are stark in their contrasting view of death. The poet's curiosity about the mystery of death highlights its various dimensions and perspectives that influence the human actions and emotions. Indeed it espouses sense of loss accompanied with anguish and misery of the loved ones but it also helps liberate human soul and unite him with his creator. The short poems leave a strong emotional response in the hearts of the readers and compel them to think beyond the precincts of life. (words: 547)

Reference Emily Dickinson. Complete works. Faber and Faber. 1976.