

Death to a new beginning

[Experience](#), [Meaning of Life](#)



Death to a new Beginning All poems have underlined meanings, many are not straightforward, and sometimes what you think is happening, is the exact opposite. Emily Dickinson's poem " Dying, " is a perfect example of this idea. In her poem she talking about the idea of death and what happened before she died. Obviously she is not dead because she wrote the poem. Here in this poem, she uses the idea of actual death to symbolize rebirth; the ending of old way of living and the struggle of creating a new way to life. Ironically, the entire poem is a huge metaphor for a different meaning. This is done by the usage of diction, tone, rhythm, meter, and, most important for a metaphor, imagery; all of which are in a way connected. Imagery is the expression of sense in the form of writing. Visual and auditory are the main types of imagery considering human's strongest senses are sight and sound; this is how everyone understands and explains how they interpret the world. Perception of an image is based on the attitude in which the speaker articulates the thought, this is known as tone. Auditory tone, the way something sounds, shapes the visual image and provides an auditory image. The way something sounds is controlled by the rhythm of which the words are said and the diction of how the words are said. Rhythm is the wave-like sound produced by words; the words either flow in harmony or have discourse and interruptions. Diction has many different subcategories that explains everything between the meaning of a word to sound produced by the combination of different types of syllables. When these different syllables are combined, in pairs of two or three, they make a foot in a line. Different combination of unaccented and accented syllables in a foot gives them their meaning. A meter is the sum of the feet in a line.

Describing the little ideas that are happening in a poem are all connected just like storyline the telling of them. Freytag's triangle is the primary way of outlining a plotline by establishing key points and positions that happen in every story. They all contain exposition, rising action, complication, climax, perception shift, falling action, and resolution. The use of Freytag's triangle will help explain the metaphor Dickinson is portraying. First stage of Freytag's triangle is exposition. The first stanza covers this by establishing the setting of the poem and the initial characters in the poem. The first line introduces the fly, and makes the fly's presence in the poem strong and firm with great use of diction, meter, and rhythm. Dickinson's first line is an iambic tetrameter because the majority of the feet in the meter are iambs, which is the most common way of writing in poetry. An iamb is when the syllables in a foot forms from an unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable. However, Dickinson interrupts the natural flow of the line by inserting a spondee in the middle of the line. Both "buzz" and "when" are strong-accented syllables, when this happens the foot is known as a spondee; thus, separating this foot from the rest of the feet in the line. "Buzz" is also an onomatopoeia; meaning the word's meaning mimics the sounds produced. Dickinson is not through with separating the action of the fly in the first line. By placing a dash in between the words "buzz" and "when" forces the reader to slightly pause, which alters the way the poem is read and the rhythm. Combine this pause with the current foot being a spondee; the reader is drawn into the action of the fly and its importance in the poem. Before this line ends, the tone of the rest of the poem is established when the protagonist of the poem is cited as dead. This is the

first occurrence with the idea of dying in the poem. Dying is very serious in American culture; no one laughs at death or the idea of it. When the speaker of the poem states that she is dead, imagery of the poem's setting becomes serious. The rest of the stanza enforces this tone with imagery in the following lines. Three important aural images outlined are the " Stillness in the Room, " " Stillness in the Air, " and " Between the Heaves of Storm. " Stillness is huge use of connotation in the poem, meaning the word has multiple meaning when used in different ways. Stillness can be known as the lack of action or movement or something being quiet. All of these visual images aid the poem's serious tone by being quiet, dramatic, and/or intense. Comparing the stillness in a room to the stillness in the air can mean many things. Air is only considered still when there is no movement or sound created, meaning the room must be quiet. A heaving storm is big, loud, and violent, but between the crashes and eruptions in a storm, there are brief moments of relief and silence. Labeling this silent air as the moment between outbreaks in a storm draws out the intensity of the quiet-stillness in the air and establishes the setting. Establishing this settling creates the base for the metaphor. Before one notice something needs to change, everything seems normal. Everything is calm and quiet. There is no shift in ideas or the way one perceives things; life as a certain " stillness. " This is the perception of life before the " storm" or the big change. After establishing the setting being a quiet room, the introduction of the next stanza establishes the next phase of Freytag's triangle. Rising action is the increase in tension and conflict facing the protagonist in the poem. Visual imagery in the second stanza is vital to the undertraining plot line of the poem. Eyes are wrung dry,

and breaths are held firm; use these two images remembering the protagonist is about to die. The crying over the soon to be death of the protagonist is over because acceptance of the outcome is present and everyone is trying to appear strong and "firm" while the protagonist is preparing for death or in this case change. The tone is unchanged from being sad and dark from the initial establishment in the first paragraph. Diction during this phase is real deep and slow to build up tension. The lines are long and drawn out with the use of long vowels like "u," "ou," and "ea"; and soft consonants like "wr," "g" and "br." Continuing down the metaphor of death in the poem is the strong prevalence of acceptance. The protagonist in the poem has come to grips with the idea of change and they are ready, just like how a family accepts death of a relative they knew soon to happen. Before one goes through the change, actions seem long and drawn out as the anticipation while the first step is waiting to happen. Suddenly an interruption in the flow of harmonic rhythm, shift in diction, and change in meter occur as the last two lines of the second stanza and the first two lines in the third stanza. Diction in these lines shifts from the way words are shaped in the previous lines. Juncture is part of diction and describes the difficulty of saying a word by the variances in the syllables. The way one's mouth moves to make the sound of each syllable is juncture. The larger the variance in juncture the more difficult the word is to pronounce. Diction is shifted from soft-smooth consonants and vowels to harsh and aggressive consonants. "Onset," "witnessed," "Keepsake," "portion," all of these words have an increased aggressiveness than words used earlier in the poem. From the altering of the diction, the meter begins to change. More

aggressive, accented syllables are used. More spondees occur in these four lines. The shift in meter from being casual to aggressive makes the rhythm of the poem less harmonic. Interestingly, after acceptance comes questioning. Making drastic changes to anything is hard and a struggle usually occurs. One doesn't know what is happening and they cannot seem to fix the problem in a correct way. The protagonist is struggling to make the complete and full change and this is where the discourse in the poem occurs. Eventually, the action in a story peaks and the ultimate obstacle is encountered. Climax. Imagery is the main idea in use here. The protagonist has accepted change and wanting to go through with the action, but now there is this fly. Interposed is the word used in the poem, which takes up an entire foot in this meter. The feet in the line shifted back to being iambic, then this word interrupted the usual meter and along came the fly. The fly is now considered an obstacle called doubt. Just when the protagonist is almost complete with the idea of change, a shift happens. The fly stands in the way. Diction in the word "stumbling" is significant. Stumbling typically means clumsy or the act of tripping up, but flies cannot have this quality. Dickinson uses stumbling here to mean inconsistent. The fly has an inconsistent buzz; one that fades in and out without any type of pattern. Doubts work the same way; an inconsistent thought that comes up in the back of your mind. Something constantly stopping you from doing what you would like to do, a buzz, an annoyance. From here, the poem starts to move fast through the phases. Falling action occurs when the last conflict is stated between the fly and the protagonist. Breaks in rhythm, caused by caesuras in the meter, accents separation between the fly and the protagonist.

There is a deep pause between the two, which clearly states that the protagonist wants to get rid of this separation. Light is imagery for a gateway to something new. The change is almost put into full action, but one thing stands in the way, the fly. There is still the little doubt in the back of the mind. Finally, the wish is granted and one sees resolution. Window and failed has an unusual connotation here. Lots of visual imagery can be drawn from the phrase "Windows failed." The entire descriptions of the events are through the protagonist eyes. Eyes are one's window to the world. Using windows to mean the protagonist vision and sight helps understand the outcome of the poem. Failed has a straightforward and hidden meaning. The windows failed means that they close, but what they really did was close the protagonist from the light. The protagonist could no longer see the change and the spirit that once fueled ambition for change has failed and the doubts had won. Many poems have hidden underneath meaning. However, the way we understand these meanings comes from a strong link between the different interpretations of the English language used in poems. Diction is the foundation for all differences in the meaning of poems and help create the big picture we call imagery.