



Because I could not stop for
Death

Emily Dickinson
1830-1886


READING AND EXPLANATION OF THE POEM



In the poem, a female speaker tells the story of how she was visited by "Death"—personified as a "kindly" gentleman—and taken for a ride in his carriage. This ride appears to take the speaker past symbols of the different stages of life, before coming to a halt at what is most likely her own grave—indeed, it seems she herself is already dead. Much of the poem's power comes from its refusal to offer easy or simplistic answers to life's greatest mystery—what happens when people die!!



Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.
We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –
We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –
Or rather – He passed us –
The Dews drew quivering and chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My Tippet – only Tulle –



We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity –

Discussion


- ▶ The idea of the poem is that death is inevitable and therefore, instead of fearing death one should embrace it as a part of the cycle of events human life is made of.
- ▶ Use of personification
- ▶ Symbols in the poem

Say this City has Ten Million Sould by W.H. Auden

The present poem is a satire on political and religious discrimination. The poet describes the pathetic condition of the outsiders to a country. In this view, such immigrants lead a life below animal level.

Say this city has ten million souls by Auden


Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.
Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.
In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew;
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.
The consul banged the table and said:
'If you've got no passport, you're officially dead';
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.
Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?



Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread';
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of
you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: 'They must die';
We were in his mind, my dear, we were in his mind.
Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't
German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.
Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the
human race.



Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors;
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was
ours.
Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.