

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

–EMILY DICKINSON

COURSE TITLE : AMERICAN LITERATURE

COURSE CODE : 17PENC22

UNIT : I

PRESENTED BY,

S.ANEES FATHIMA,

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Emily Dickinson



Because I Could Not Stop For Death...

QUICK BIO

Emily Dickinson

BIRTH DATE December 10, 1830

DEATH DATE May 15, 1886

DID YOU KNOW? In addition to writing poetry, Emily Dickinson studied botany. She compiled a vast herbarium that is now owned by Harvard University.

EDUCATION Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, Amherst Academy (now Amherst College)

PLACE OF BIRTH Amherst, Massachusetts

PLACE OF DEATH Amherst, Massachusetts

FULL NAME Emily Elizabeth Dickinson

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Analysis of “Because I could not Stop for Death”
- Review of Emily Dickinson ‘s life
- STURCTURE OF A POEM

Emily Dickinson's mansion



Because I could not stop for Death—

One of the perfect poems in
English. One of the greatest in the
English language.

—Allen Tate

Stanza 1 and 2 *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 —

He: death

Civility: politeness; kindness

Stanza 3 and 4

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(薄纱), my Gown –
My Tippet (披肩) – only Tulle , –

Recess: break time Ring: the shape of a ring, in a circle
Gazing Grain: ripe He: the setting sun

Stanza 5 and 6

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 –
House: grave.

Cornice : ornamental moulding in plaster, round the walls of a room, just below the ceiling. (飞檐\檐口)
surmised: guessed

TONE AND THEME

Tone: the tone is changeable with the stanzas develop. First, the tone is light and pleasant. Then, it becomes serious and finally, the tone changes to be meditative.

Theme: Death leads to immortality. Death is an endless journey; It's a journey from life to death, from physical to spiritual, from time to timelessness.

SHORT SUMMARY

“Because I could not stop for death” is an exploration of both the inevitability of death and the uncertainties that surround what happens when people actually die. In the poem, a woman takes a ride with a personified “Death” in his carriage, by all likelihood heading towards her place in the afterlife.

SHORT ANALYSIS

In her poem *Because I could not stop for Death*, [Emily Dickinson](#) depicts a close encounter with Death and Immortality. She uses [personification](#) to portray Death and Immortality as characters. Her familiarity with Death and Immortality at the beginning of the poem causes the reader to feel at ease with the idea of Death. However, as the poem progresses, a sudden shift in tone causes readers to see Death for what it really is, cruel and evil.

STRUCTURE

Form, Rhyme, and Meter :

Dickinson wrote “Because I could not stop for Death” in what is called “common meter,” a poetic form defined by alternating four-beat and three-beat lines. The lines are assembled into quatrains—four line stanzas—with a loose ABAB rhyme scheme.