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EN40SL1

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Ms. Smith

*or The Beauty of Accepting Death in "..."*  
Beauty within the Acceptance of Death in "Because I could not stop for Death"

Death, a fear that occupies everyone's minds at one time or another. In fact, around 151 600 people die every *day*. No matter what, death is almost always peering over one's shoulder, whether it be consciously or not. However, there seems to be a beauty that accompanies the acceptance of death. In "Because I could not stop for Death", Emily Dickinson uses tone, stylistic devices, personification, and symbolism to demonstrate this beauty.

Commonly the arrival of death brings on heavy grief and sadness, but Dickinson writes with a relaxing, calming tone to ease the reader into its presence. The speaker's journey begins in a slow moving carriage, and Death appears to be a kind gentleman suitor (Shmoop Editorial Team) who "knew no haste" (5). This laid-back image soothes the dark, substantial looming of Death and prepares the reader for a change of mindset. There are also words that usher in the sense of relaxation that coexists with being in the midst of beauty. Contradictory to the idea of death, "Immortality" (4) sparks a new concept in the readers mind. Rather than death leading to the cease of existence, it could be "an intensely conscious leave taking" (Winters). Also "Immortality" (4) is characterized, which shows that it is coming with the speaker on her journey with Death (Glenn). Another diction choice that contributes to the beauty of accepting death is "Gazing Grain" (11), which depicts a peaceful image in the readers *mind*. This beautiful image may eliminate hellish, nerve-wracking thoughts and expectations when it comes to death. People

have a tendency to take things quite literally, which is somewhat the opposite of where Dickinson thrives.

Dickinson succeeds at being an artist of the mind, capturing everlasting beauty in accepting death through the use of imagery and metaphors. The reader may be hesitant about believing that beauty is existent within death's realm, so Dickinson pulls out her oil-based paints and goes to work to create a gorgeous scene. The speaker recalls passing a school containing children, and later fields of gazing grain (9-11) during her journey with Death. This depicts the image of a calm evening with the perfect light, temperature, and view. Dickinson adds to the serenity by describing the speaker and Death passing the setting sun (12). In the end, these lines allow the reader to think about a prairie sunset, a distraction from untimely death. Dickinson also digs deep into the world of metaphors to portray death in a beautiful way. The speaker describes pausing "before a House that seemed / A Swelling of the Ground" (17-18). She could have told the reader of a small coffin (Shmoop Editorial Team) or a literal hole in the ground, but she recounts her final resting place as a house. Home is commonly a place where one can find comfort in expressing themselves without judgement from others. The warmth brought with the idea of the speaker's final resting place manages to eliminate the concept of being trapped in the cold, desolate ground. Also, the mere pause at the swell in the ground could suggest that the grave is simply a tavern or hotel for the night (Anderson), and that it is simply one stop in the speaker's journey. Imagery and metaphors both demonstrate beauty to the reader, but Dickinson never falls short in getting the reader to dig deeper for the meanings that were right in front of their eyes.

getting too much into the realm of creative writing here

Many people desire events in life to be straightforward, but it is often what lies underneath the surface that is significant. The personification of broad topics adds several layers

of meaning, and has the ability to change the readers' mind after their contemplation. Oddly enough, Death is not introduced as a concept, nor a black gowned grim reaper, but as a kind gentleman suitor (Shmoop Editorial Team). Throughout the poem Death continues to be courteous and polite, as if he is the type of guy to hold open the door for his date (Shmoop Editorial Team). Death gives the speaker a comforting feel, with the manners of a bellhop working at a five star hotel. This feeling is transferred to the reader, and establishes a high level of comfort as the speaker familiarizes herself with Death. Aside from personification, the symbolism Dickinson uses reveals the true beauty in accepting death, and dismisses any of the dismal imaginations one might have. During the speaker's journey with Death they pass by the school, then the gazing grain, and lastly the setting sun. The school symbolizes the speaker's "morning of life" (Cummings Study Guide), her early childhood and adolescent years. Next, the gazing grain represents her "midday of life" (Cummings Study Guide) which were her adult years, as "Gazing" (11) tells the reader that the grain has reached maturity and is ready to be harvested, since it is simply stagnant and not growing. Lastly the speaker and Death pass the setting sun which is her "evening of life" (Cummings Study Guide), leading to the end of her life. The setting sun is crucial because the light represents her life, and as the light fades to darkness the speaker's life slowly leaves her. Following the sunset the speaker gets chills, due to the warmth of life exiting her physical body (Shmoop). These symbols show that death is not necessarily a bleak, uninviting event, but rather a slow, calm, beautiful process once one allows it to merge with their soul.

Death is almost always feared because of its summoning of horrendous thoughts, but there is also a subtle beauty once one fully accepts their fate. Dickinson's use of tone, imagery, metaphors, personification, and symbolism along with many other stylistic devices aids her in

proving the existence of this beauty. Whether young or old, the fear of dying will cross people's minds at one point or another. Despite that, as Morrie Schwartz once said, "Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live." (Albom 82).

> Can't end w/ direct quote - you need to explain it

## Works Cited ✓

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Day 3

## Explaining Your Writing Variables

Identify the five writing variables you have chosen for your writing task ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

- Central Idea: there is beauty in accepting death
- Form: Expository Essay
- Purpose: to inform people that there is beauty that comes with accepting death
- Public Audience: people dealing with loss, people who are near death
- Context: in a funeral home coping magazine

Explain how your chosen writing variables work together to make your text effective.

5 marks

110

By writing in the form of an expository essay, I will be able to inform people that there is beauty that comes with accepting death. This is due to the several "quotes" and pieces of evidence used from other sources and the poem "Because I could not stop for Death" which prove that I am not alone on my idea. The sheer length of the essay will also allow me to elaborate on my ideas, providing even more support. People who are either dealing with a loss or are near death will find my idea compelling because they all associate death to the same thing, grief. These people will be happy to discover a new view on death and what happens when we die. Also it will provide comfort to know that you will be going somewhere peaceful or that your loved one is currently experiencing this beauty. The context of my essay should intrigue my audience because nine times out of ten people are at funeral homes for a funeral. Often times people try to distract themselves in order to avoid grief, and in these efforts is where people may pick up my essay and find the little pieces of warmth and reassurance that they have been needing.

Formal Outline

I. **Thesis statement** - In "Because I could not stop for death", Emily Dickinson shows the beauty in accepting death.

II. **Topic sentence** - Typically a poem about death would have a dark tone, but Dickinson writes in a rather calming way.

a. Setting

i. Set in a slow moving carriage, with a kind gentleman (Death). Gives a sense of ease.

b. Death

i. "We slowly drove, he knew no haste" "gazing grain" "Immortality"

\***Transition sentence** - What helps set the calm tone is the way Dickinson uses certain stylistic devices.

III. **Topic sentence** - Dickinson uses stylistic devices to portray the ease and beauty in ones journey with death.

a. Imagery

i. "We passed the fields of gazing grain, / We passed the setting sun."

b. Metaphors

i. "We paused before a House that seemed / A swelling of the Ground"  
↳ idea of a grave being a house

\***Transition sentence** - Imagery and metaphors both show the reader beauty, but there is one main stylistic device that especially displays the theme.

IV. **Topic sentence** - Symbolism and personification plays an important role in the ease of accepting death.

a. Death

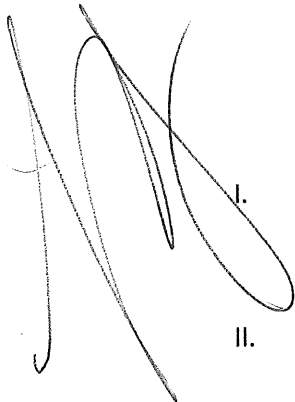
i. Death is represented as a gentleman, rather than the typical grim reaper

b. Sunset

i. The sunset shows the disappearance of light, the light and warmth leaving one's body

\***Concluding sentence** - The many symbols used in "Because I could not stop for death" portray the true beauty in accepting death.

V. **Conclusion** - Death is almost always feared and portrayed in horrendous thoughts, but there may also be a subtle beauty once one fully accepts their fate.



School → morning life  
grain → midday of life  
setting sun → evening of life  
↓  
death