

Theme in Poetry

Directions: Death is a common theme in the poems of Emily Dickinson. Use this chart to analyze what Dickinson is saying about death. In the left column, provide a specific example from a poem. In the middle column, identify the method used (imagery, metaphor, simile, etc.) and analyze and explain the passage. In the right column, write down what Dickinson's poem is saying about death.

Specific Example	Method, Explanation and Analysis	Death Theme
A Death blow is a Life blow to Some Who till they died, did not alive become— Who had they lived, had died but when They died, Vitality begun.	A belief in eternal life affects much of Dickinson's death poetry. In "A Death blow is a life blow to some," Dickinson uses paradox to assert that physical death is the beginning, not the end.	Physical death is not the end.

Theme in Poetry (Answer Key)

Directions: Death is a common theme in the poems of Emily Dickinson. Use this chart to analyze what Dickinson is saying about death. In the left column, provide a specific example from a poem. In the middle column, identify the method used (imagery, metaphor, simile, etc.) and analyze and explain the passage. In the right column, write down what Dickinson’s poem is saying about death.

Specific Example	Method, Explanation and Analysis	Death Theme
A Death blow is a Life blow to Some Who till they died, did not alive become— Who had they lived, had died but when They died, Vitality begun.	A belief in eternal life affects much of Dickinson's death poetry. In "A Death blow is a life blow to some," Dickinson uses paradox to assert that physical death is the beginning, not the end.	Physical death is not the end.
Weeds triumphant ranged, Strangers strolled and spelled At the lone orthography Of the elder dead.	Dickinson uses the central image of a tombstone overgrown with weeds to comment on the shortness of life.	Life is short
Because I could not stop for Death – He kindly stopped for me – The Carriage held but just Ourselves – And Immortality.	Dickinson personifies death as a kind stage coach driver taking its visitor, not to some ghastly abode, but toward eternity with Immortality.	Death is not the end. It can be a welcome intruder.
“t is said, a sinking man Comes up to face the skies...”	Don't let the image of a drowned man floating face up haunt you to the point of missing the paradox in the last four lines: death is an eternal resting place, yet few of us are in a hurry to get there.	Death is not the end.
Each that we lose takes part of us; A crescent still abides, Which like the moon, some turbid night, Is summoned by the tides.	Dickinson's belief that all humans are connected and that when one dies or suffers we all die or suffer is the theme of "Each that we lose takes part of us." She uses the image of the tides, producing an image of the ocean, representing the souls of all flowing in tune with nature.	We are all connected. We all have death in common.

ELA Common Core Lesson Plans

For a complete list of lesson plans, check out the ELA Common
Core Lesson Plans catalogue.

ELA Common Core Lesson Plans

Teacher Ready. Student Ready.