
Because I Could Not Stop for Death
by Emily Dickinson

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, be passed us;
The dewes grew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Name _____

Date _____

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Multiple Choice

1. When does the atmosphere surrounding the ride begin to change? ☐ A when they see the children at recess ☐ B when they see the setting sun ☐ C when they see the fields of grain ☐ D when they see the house	2. At what place is there a pause in the journey? ☐ A by a school ☐ B by a grave ☐ C by a house ☐ D by a barn
3. In what direction are the horses' heads pointed? ☐ A toward the setting sun ☐ B toward the unknown ☐ C toward eternity ☐ D toward the cemetery	4. What does the poet put aside when Death stops by? ☐ A her troubles ☐ B her sewing ☐ C her peace of mind ☐ D her labor and leisure
5. Who is riding in the carriage? ☐ A the poet ☐ B Death and the poet ☐ C the poet and Immortality ☐ D Death, the poet, and Immortality	6. Who does the poet say passes the carriage? ☐ A the farmers from the field ☐ B a funeral procession ☐ C the setting sun ☐ D another carriage
7. What word describes Death in the opening stanzas? ☐ A civil ☐ B reserved ☐ C impatient ☐ D overbearing	8. What image in the poem suggests a person becoming old and dying? ☐ A fields of gazing grain ☐ B swelling ground ☐ C children at recess ☐ D the setting sun

Short Answer Questions

9. The line "Because I could not stop for Death" is the poet's way of saying what? _____
10. Why do you think the carriage is moving slowly? _____
11. How is Death characterized in the poem? _____ _____ _____

12. What effect is created by describing the grave as a house?

Poetic Techniques Short Answer Questions

13. What lines contain a paradox? Explain the paradox.

14. Identify two places in the poem where the tone shifts to create a different mood.

15. In addition to Death, what else is personified in the poem?

16. What euphemism is used for a grave?

17. Find an example of anaphora in the poem.

18. Explain the extended metaphor that is used to describe the process of dying or thinking about death.

19. Find an example of exact rhyme in the poem.

20. Find an example of alliteration in the poem.

21. What is the rhyme scheme used in the poem?

22. Find an example of slant rhyme in the poem.
