

## Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host  
Who took the Flag today  
Can tell the definition  
So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –  
On whose forbidden ear  
The distant strains of triumph  
Burst agonized and clear!

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –  
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –  
The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’  
And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –  
A Wooden way  
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –  
Regardless grown,  
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –  
Remembered, if outlived,  
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –  
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go –

One need not be a chamber to be haunted,  
One need not be a house;  
The brain has corridors surpassing  
Material place.

Far safer, of a midnight meeting  
External ghost,  
Than an interior confronting  
That whiter host.

Far safer through an Abbey gallop,  
The stones achase,  
Than, moonless, one's own self encounter  
In lonesome place.

Ourself, behind ourself concealed,  
Should startle most;  
Assassin, hid in our apartment,  
Be horror's least.

The prudent carries a revolver,  
He bolts the door,  
O'erlooking a superior spectre  
More near.

There's a certain Slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –  
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference –  
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –  
'Tis the seal Despair –  
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –  
Shadows – hold their breath –  
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death –

Much Madness is divinest Sense -  
To a discerning Eye -  
Much Sense - the starkest Madness -  
'Tis the Majority  
In this, as all, prevail -  
Assent - and you are sane -  
Demur - you're straightway dangerous -  
And handled with a Chain -

Wild nights - Wild nights!  
Were I with thee  
Wild nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile - the winds -  
To a Heart in port -  
Done with the Compass -  
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -  
Ah - the Sea!  
Might I but moor - tonight -  
In thee!

She rose to His Requirement—dropt  
The Playthings of Her Life  
To take the honorable Work  
Of Woman, and of Wife—

If ought She missed in Her new Day,  
Of Amplitude, or Awe—  
Or first Prospective—Or the Gold  
In using, wear away,

It lay unmentioned—as the Sea  
Develop Pearl, and Weed,  
But only to Himself—be known  
The Fathoms they abide—