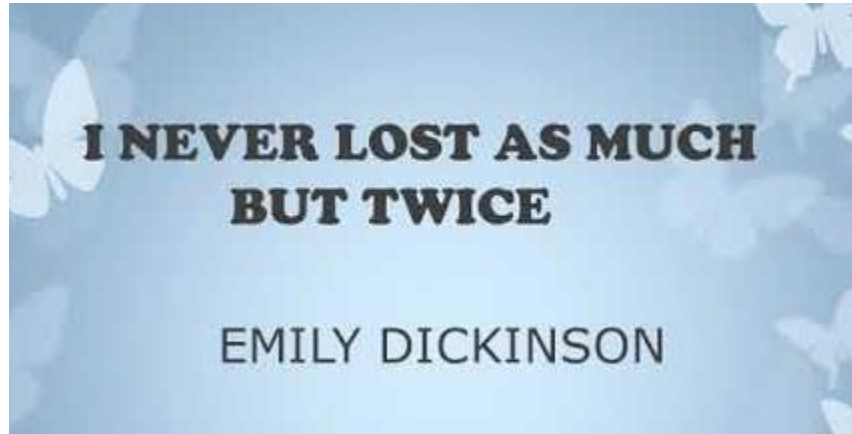


Emily Dickinson Poems (Detailed Poetry) – UNIT - I

1. I never lost as much but twice



I never lost as much but twice
And that was in the sod.
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,
Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

Analysis: Emily Dickinson is one of America's greatest and most original poets of all time. This poem "I never lost as much but twice" closely relates to Dickinson's life and in fact, the poetess speaks of two fundamental losses in her life and presents an anti-puritan attitude towards God.

In this poem, she stands in front of God and begs him, before the door of God. This poem is actually about her loss of two friends when she was younger. She lost them at relatively a young age. So she seems to have blamed God and begged him to return them. But in the end, she realizes that he won't and says, "I am poor once more!"

The poem "I Never Lost as Much but Twice" was written after the death of Leonard Humphrey and Benjamin Newton. It may be possible that the poetess is expressing the loss of their death. "Twice" and "sod" signifies the death of two people.

The second loss may be a betrayal or faithlessness of a friend. In human life, these are the two greatest emotional losses we encounter and Emily makes it clear though this poem. The keynote of the poem is, she leaves it to the readers to identify the loss, as individual losses are deeply personal and may not fit any genre.

This poem is made up of two stanzas with four lines in each. It has the rhyme scheme (which is perfect rhyme) as ABCB. Like many of Dickinson's poems, the first line is longer than the second, and third longer than the fourth. The even number lines in the first stanza have six syllables while the evens in the second stanza have five.

2. SUCCESS.

[Published in "A Masque of Poets" at the request of "H. H.," the author's fellow-townswoman and friend] 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 to-day

Can tell the definition,

So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,

On whose forbidden ear

The distant strains of triumph

Break, agonized and clear.

Analysis: This poem was written by Emily Dickinson, a great American poet. 'Success is Counted Sweetest' is a popular poem because of its themes of success and failure. It was first published in 1864. The poem speaks about the value of success and illustrates that those who have tasted failure can truly feel the real essence of success. The poem also unveils the painful truths of human desire.

As this poem is about success, the speaker explains that failures can understand the meanings of success. She has used the images of soldiers to express her ideas about success. At the outset, she talks about soldiers who have won the war but still do not understand the real meanings of success because they have not experienced the pain of failure. Later, she refers to a dying soldier of the losing side, who can hear the victorious soldiers celebrating their day. Hence, the one who is losing the battle of his life can sense the true spirit of success. What enchants the readers is a stark comparison she has made between winning and losing sides to make clarify her points to the readers.

Major Themes in the poem: Need, success, and defeat are the major themes of this poem. The speaker presents her views about success by narrating various examples. She argues that success is valuable for those who have lost something in life. She adds that people who always win and taste success more often do not comprehend the true colors of success. Instead, it is valued and appreciated by those who experience defeats or failures in life.

The poem is built upon a paradox of success and defeat, the victor and the vanquished. While the victor experiences and basks in the glory of success, the vanquished clearly comprehends and can tell the definition of victory. One experiences its taste and the other knows its meaning. The imagery drawn from war is most appropriate to the paradox and to the theme of the poem.