Emily Dickinson’s Select Poems

Line numbers have been added to facilitate in-text citations when quoting from the poems. For examples on how to cite poetry in-text see, https://irsc.libguides.com/mla/citingpoetry

Poem List:

“The Heart asks Pleasure—first” (536)

“Pain—has an Element of Blank—” (650)

“Because I could not stop for Death—” (712)

“This World is not Conclusion” (501)

“Apparently with no surprise” (1624)

“I’m Nobody! Who are you?” (288)

“Much Madness is divinest Sense—” (435)
“The Heart asks Pleasure—first” (536)

1. The heart asks pleasure first,
2. And then, excuse from pain;
3. And then, those little anodynes
4. That deaden suffering;
5. And then, to go to sleep;
6. And then, if it should be
7. The will of its Inquisitor,
8. The liberty to die.

“Pain—has an Element of Blank—" (650)

1. Pain has an element of blank;
2. It cannot recollect
3. When it began, or if there were
4. A day when it was not.
5. It has no future but itself,
6. Its infinite realms contain
7. Its past, enlightened to perceive
8. New periods of pain.

“Because I could not stop for Death—" (712)

1. Because I could not stop for Death,
2. He kindly stopped for me;
3. The carriage held but just ourselves
4. And Immortality.
5. We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
6. And I had put away
7. My labor, and my leisure too,
8. For his civility.
9. We passed the school where children played,
10. Their lessons scarcely done;
11. We passed the fields of gazing grain,
12. We passed the setting sun.
13. We paused before a house that seemed
14. A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.
This is my letter to the world,
That never wrote to me, —
The simple news that Nature told,
With tender majesty.

Her message is committed
To hands I cannot see;
For love of her, sweet countrymen,
Judge tenderly of me!

“This World is not Conclusion” (501)

This world is not conclusion;
A sequel stands beyond,
Invisible, as music,
But positive, as sound.
It beckons and it baffles;
Philosophies don't know,
And through a riddle, at the last,
Sagacity must go.
To guess it puzzles scholars;
To gain it, men have shown
Contempt of generations,
And crucifixion known.

“Apparently with no surprise” (1624)

Apparently with no surprise
To any happy flower,
The frost beheads it at its play
In accidental power.
The blond assassin passes on,
The sun proceeds unmoved
To measure off another day
For an approving God.
“I’m nobody! Who are you?” (288)

1. I’m nobody! Who are you?
2. Are you nobody, too?
3. Then there’s a pair of us — don’t tell!
4. They’d banish us, you know.

5. How dreary to be somebody!
6. How public, like a frog
7. To tell your name the livelong day
8. To an admiring bog!

“Much Madness is divinest Sense—” (435)

1. Much madness is divinest sense
2. To a discerning eye;
3. Much sense the starkest madness.
4. 'T is the majority
5. In this, as all, prevails.
6. Assent, and you are sane;
7. Demur, — you're straightway dangerous,
8. And handled with a chain.