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## War and Death in the Works of Emily Dickinson

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# War & Death Within The Works of Emily Dickinson

Kenley Kofford - Lexi Melmoth -  
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# Dickinson's use of personifying Death

## Death in "Because I could not stop for Death -"

(Fascicle 23, Sheet 1)

**Faciscles- These are bound groups of poems, that Dickinson wrote, and after her death were assembled based on relevance and similar themes of poems.**

- The use of the pronoun "He"
- Descriptions of Death being kind and polite
  - "He kindly stopped for me -"
- The sense of companionship and the lack of fear
- Human emotions associated with death



# Because I could not stop for Death - and its relationship to the War

- 19th century concerns with the ideas of the afterlife and eternity.
  - Emphasis on the importance of death rituals.
- The Civil War brought more carnage and violence than most people were historically used to.
  - With more violence and death, brought more fear and ambiguity towards afterlife.
- The speaker not being able to stop for death herself.

"I first surmised the Horses' Heads

Were toward Eternity - "

- The emphasis on eternity at the end of the last stanza of this poem leads to the speaker having a lot of ambiguity when coming to the end of her journey with death, encapsulating the same fear and unknown that a lot of soldiers and families were feeling when facing so much death with the war waging around them.

## He fought like those

Who've nought to lose —

Bestowed Himself to Balls

As One who for a further Life

Had not a further Use —

Invited Death — with bold attempt —

But Death was Coy of Him

As Other Men, were Coy of Death.

To Him — to live — was Doom —

His Comrades, shifted like the Flakes

When Gusts reverse the Snow —

But He — was left alive Because

Of Greediness to die —



Frazer Stearns The Dickinson  
Museum

# War and Death Within the Fascicle

## **“Wolfe demanded during Dying”**

- Deaths of Major General James Wolfe and French Marquis de Montcalm
- Major Wolfe dies knowing his troops are victorious as they had “obtain the Day”
- Montcalm dies before the French lost, or had to surrender
- Each death is calm and relaxed

## HARPER'S WEEKLY.

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1861.

### THE WAR.

**T**HE WAR has now begun in earnest. The secession of Virginia, and the attempts of rebels to seize the Arsenal at Harper's Ferry and the Navy-yard at Norfolk; the bombardment of Fort Sumter; the investment of Fort Pickens; the seizure of the *Star of the West* by a Southern privateer; the threatened seizure of the Federal Capital by the rebels; the murder of Massachusetts men in Baltimore, and the refusal of Maryland to permit Northern troops to pass through that city to defend the capital—these facts explain the situation without further comment.

It is not now a question of slavery or anti-slavery. It is not even a question of Union or disunion. The question simply is whether Northern men will fight. Southerners have rebelled and dragged our flag in the dirt, in the belief that, because we won't fight duels or engage in street brawls, therefore we are cowards. The question now is whether or no they are right.

If they are wrong, and if Abraham Lincoln is equal to the position he fills, this war will be over by January, 1862.

At the time we write, after less than a fortnight's notice, nearly 20,000 Northern men have left their homes to defend Washington. In the course of another week as many more will have gone forward from New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. By 15th May, 100,000 Northern men will be in arms for the defense of the capital. By 15th June, this number can be increased, if need be, to 250,000. Any amount of money is at the service of the Government. The whole Northern people are of

# War and Death

- Emily Dickinson had various personal connections to the Civil War
- With the deaths from the war, this left Dickinson to examine the war and the deaths that came with it
- Many magazines at the time were published with images, reports, and poems about the war

# In Conclusion



# Bibliography

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