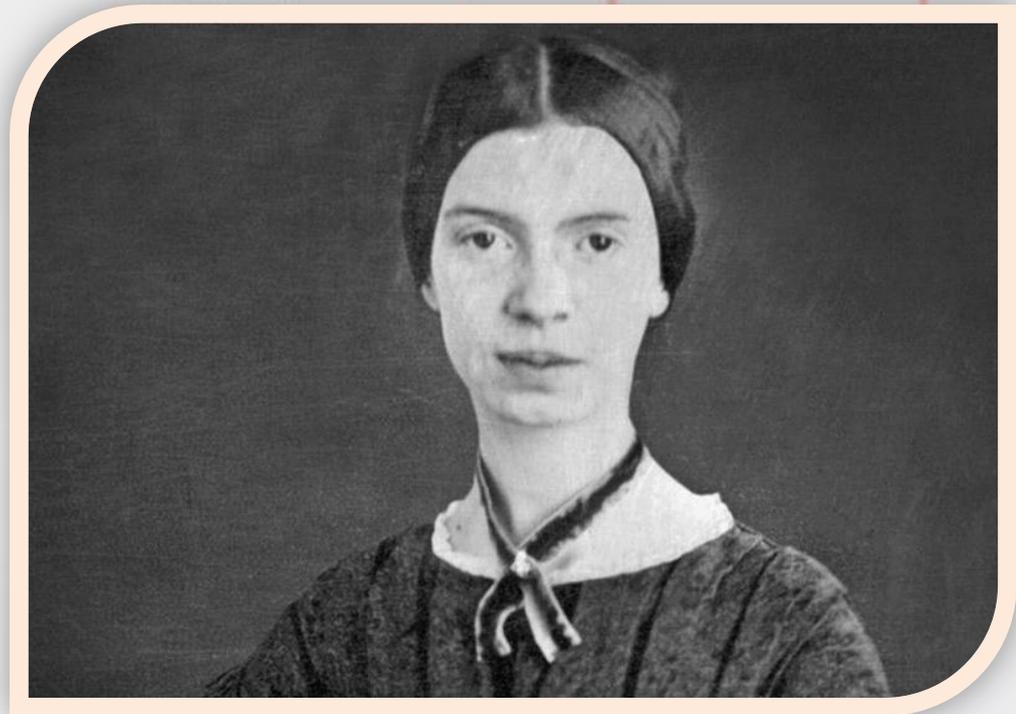
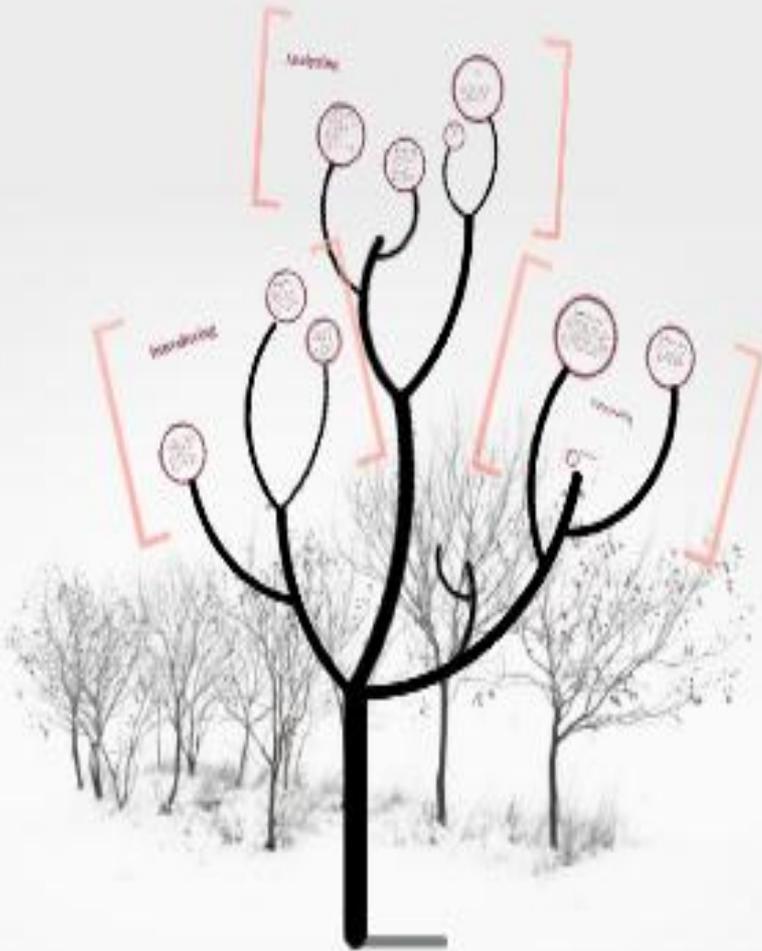


# "Success is Counted Sweetest" by Emily Dickinson



**EMILY DICKINSON**

"Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough."

Emily Dickinson 1830-1886



# POET'S INTRODUCTION

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson (December 10, 1830 – May 15, 1886) was an American poet. Little-known during her life, she has since been regarded as one of the most important figures in American poetry. She is one of America's greatest and most original poets of all time. She experimented with expression in order to free it from conventional restraints.

# POEM'S INTRODUCTION

"Success is counted sweetest" is a lyric poem by Emily Dickinson written in 1859 and published anonymously in 1864. The poem uses the images of a victorious army and one dying warrior to suggest that only one who has suffered defeat can understand success.

In this poem 'Success is Counted Sweetest', the poet says that people who are never able to succeed know the highest value of success. Only someone who desperately requires something truly appreciates what he/she lacks. She goes on to illustrate her point through a striking analogy in the last two stanzas. The soldiers in a victorious army will never be able to express the meaning of a victory as clearly as someone from the defeated army who can hear from a distance the music of the victors as he lies dying on the battlefield.

## **STANZA-I: 'SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST'**

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

The poem “Success is counted sweetest” begins with speaking about the importance of success. It says that success is more valued by those who have never achieved it in their lives. Those who are a failure in their lives know the real significance of success and the true happiness of achieving it. It then says that to understand the sweetness of nectar, there should be an aching lack and one should be really in need of it because to know the actual value of something, the want for it should be strong. It means that something is more desirable to those who do not have it. They can understand the true worth of achieving something when they have been longing for it.

# STANZA-I: 'SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST'



SWEET

SOUR



## **STANZA-II: 'SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST'**

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

The second stanza speaks about the victorious army on a battlefield. It says that those who have won the battle and have got the flag of victory, though they celebrate and enjoy their victory, they cannot define victory so well because the value of success cannot be defined by those who have never experienced failure. So those who are victorious, they have achieved victory but they do not understand its significance. They are the winners but cannot truly appreciate their victory because it seems normal to them and they cannot understand the sweetness of it anymore. They have got it and after that, it has lost its meaning for them.

# DEFEATED ARMY KNOWS THE VALUE OF VICTORY IN THE WAR



**VICTORIOUS  
ARMY**

**DEFEATED  
ARMY**



## **STANZA-III: 'SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST'**

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

**The third stanza says that the cheers and cries of the victorious soldiers celebrating their victory are reaching the ears of a dying soldier, on the defeated side. He hears the victorious soldiers celebrating their victory, though he is defeated, he actually knows the real value of victory because he is going through the pain and agony and knows how significant and sweet the victory is. Though a loser, he understands the value of victory more than the celebrating winners.**

# **THEMES IN 'SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST'**

**FAILURE IS A MOTIVATION FOR SUCCESS**

**TRUE WORTH OF SUCCESS**

**NEED OR LACK OF SOMETHING**