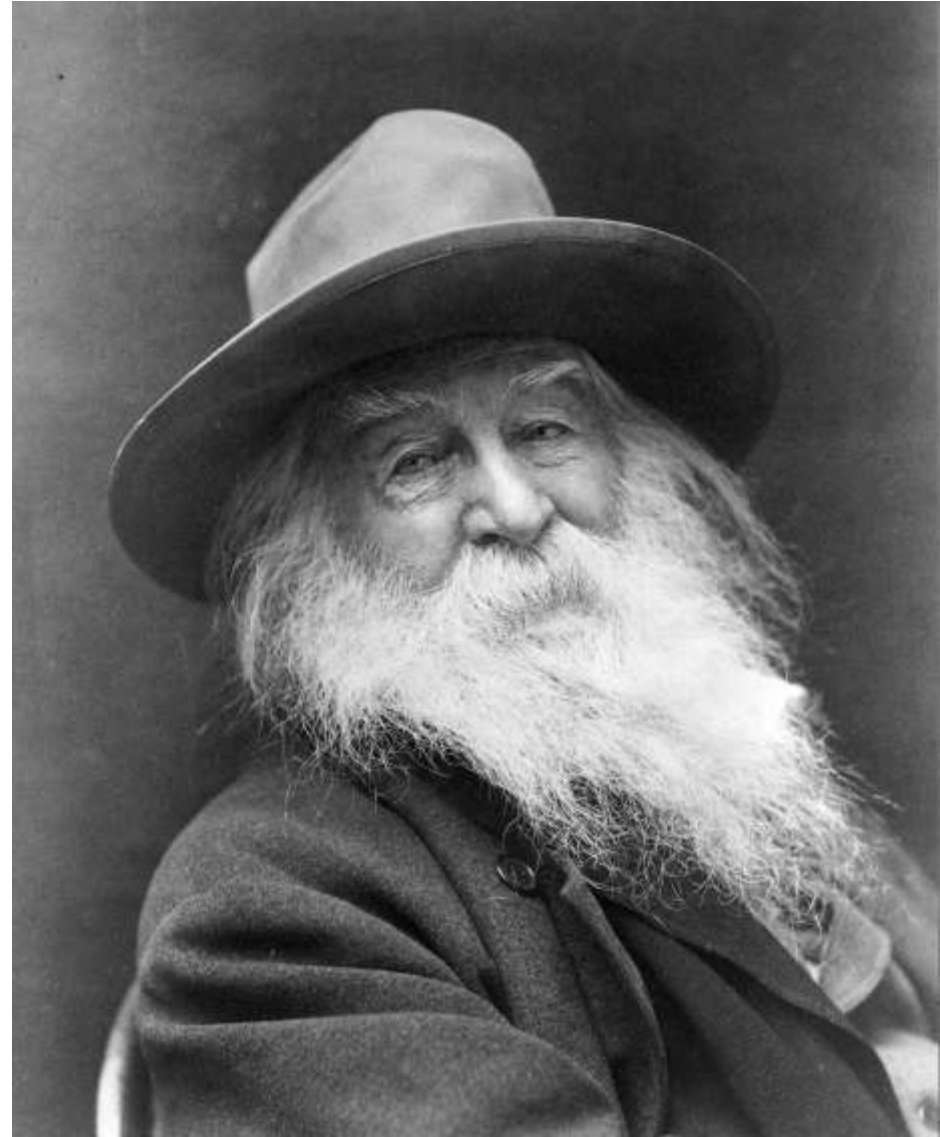


# Bridge Writers



Emily Dickinson  
&  
Walt Whitman



# Emily Dickinson

- A reclusive genius
  - the recluse:
    - would receive friends who traveled long distances by “visiting” (talking) with them through a locked door
    - When dying of Bright’s Disease, she never relented and only allowed her doctor to examine her through a partially closed door
    - After the death of her father in 1874, she rarely ventured beyond the house and garden

# Emily Dickinson

- The genius
  - her work was not published until 20 years after her death (she'd wanted the nearly 2000 poems burned)
  - Twentieth-century critic Harold Bloom has placed her alongside Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, and Hart Crane as a major American poet.
  - She presages the modernist/imagist movement in poetry

# Poetry Terminology

- Rhyme
  - a correspondence of end sounds between two or more words
  - often used in poetry to establish a rhythm or musical quality
  - Internal rhyme- rhyme within a line of poetry
  - End rhyme- rhyme between the ends of two or more lines of poetry
  - Exact rhyme- identical sounds
  - Slant rhyme- similar sounds
- Alliteration
  - repetition of the beginning consonant sound in two or more words in close proximity
- Personification
  - giving human qualities to non-human objects (e.g. tables, animals, ideas, etc.)

# Because I could not stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death—  
He kindly stopped for me—  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves—  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove—he knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor, and my leisure too,  
For his civility—

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess, in the Ring;  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain,  
We passed the Setting Sun.

Or rather, he passed us;  
The dews grew quivering and chill,  
For only gossamer my gown,  
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed  
A swelling of the ground;  
The roof was scarcely visible,  
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each  
Feels shorter than the day  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity.

# Emily Dickinson

Pick 2 other ED poems and answer the following questions:

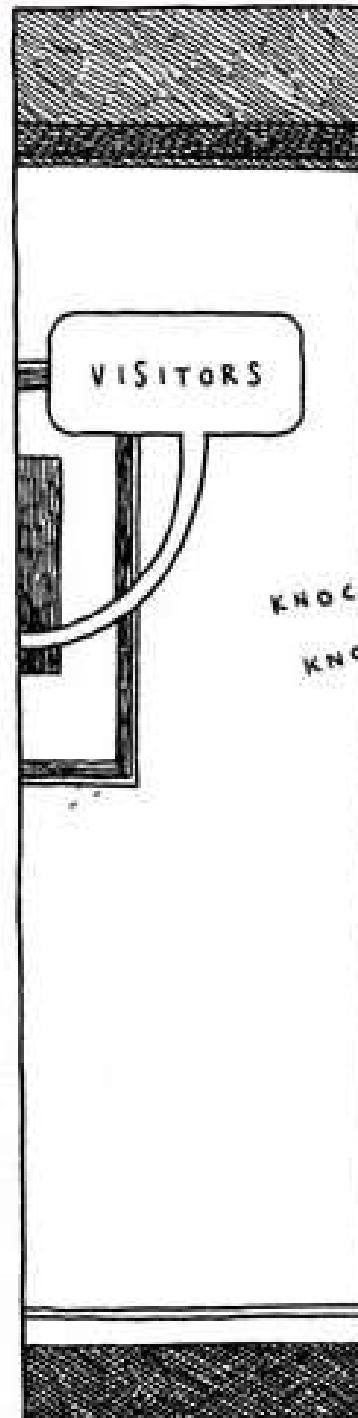
- What is this poem about?
- What is the message of the poem?
- Choose the most significant line in the poem and write it down. Why is this line so significant?

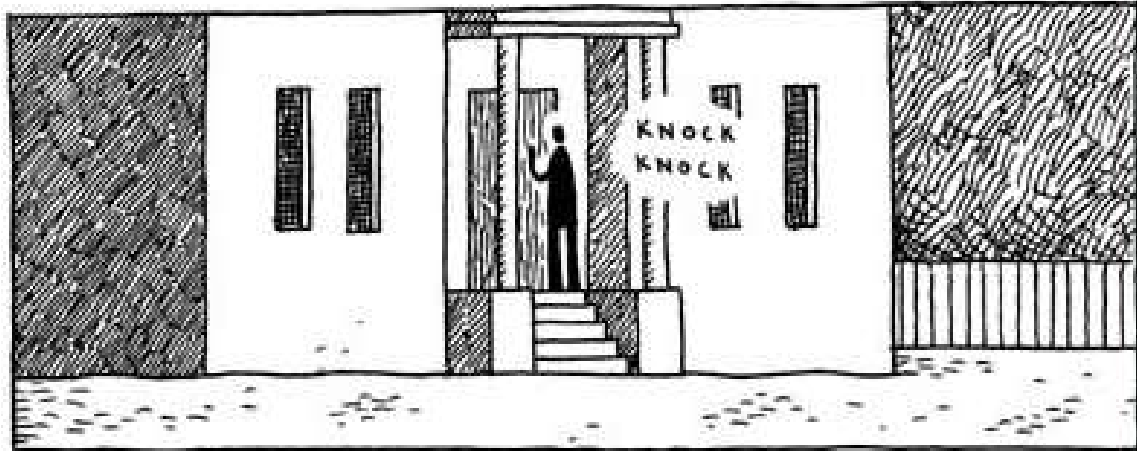
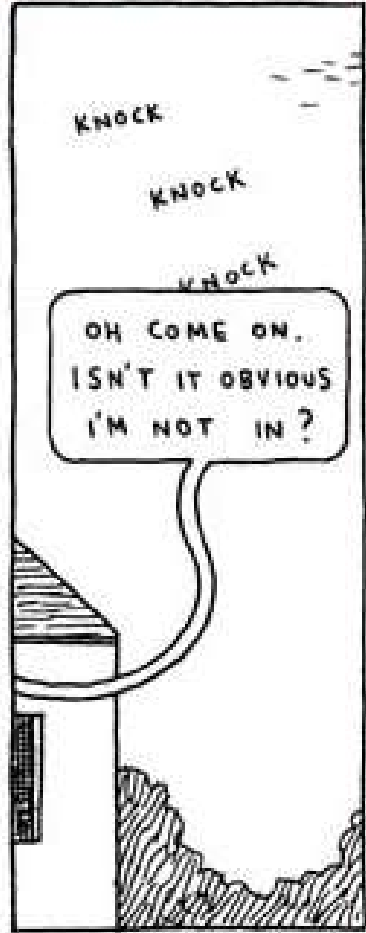
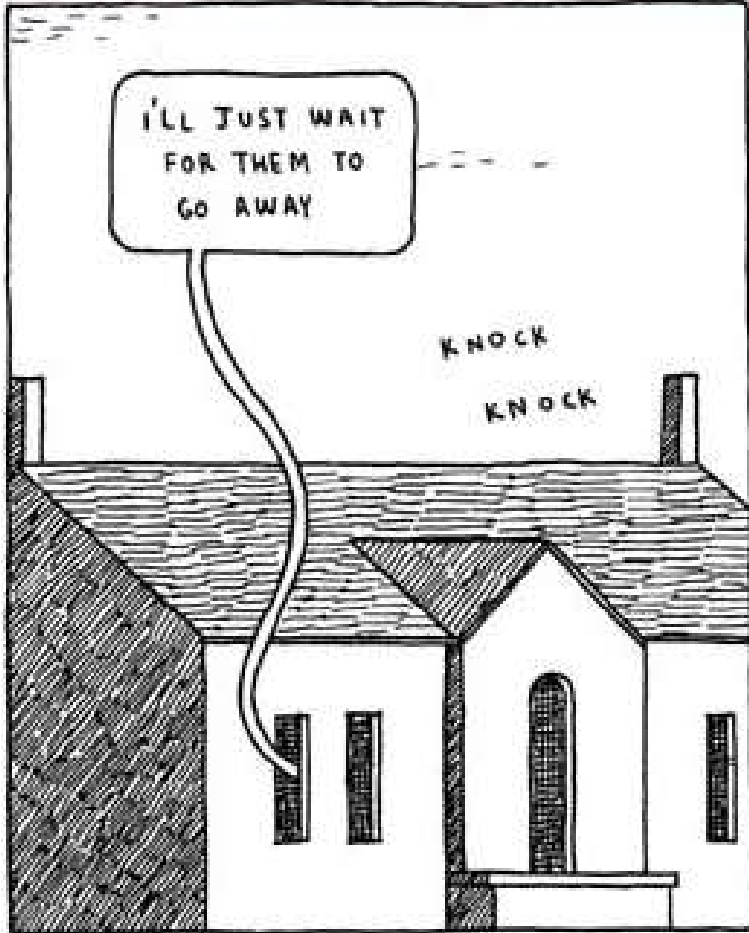
# Emily Dickinson

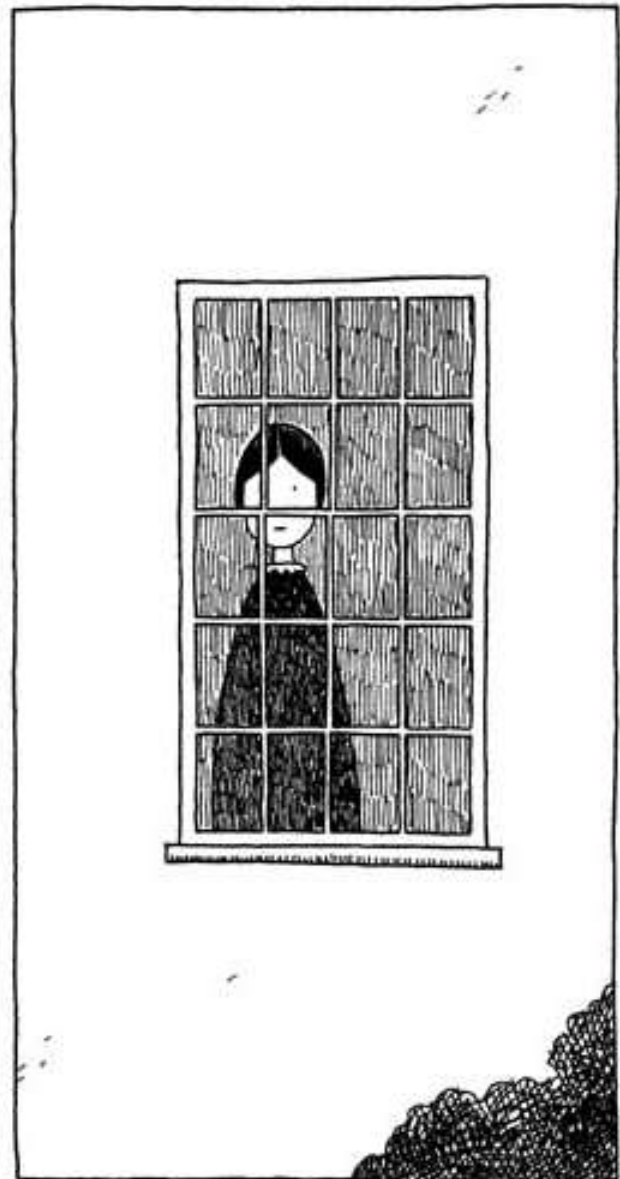
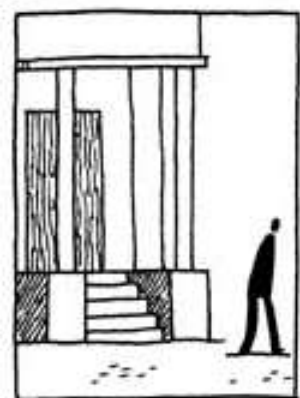
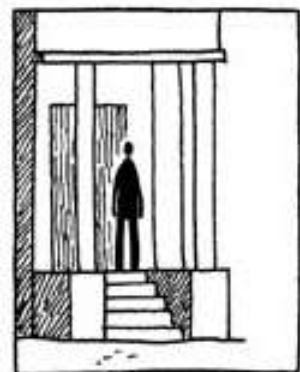
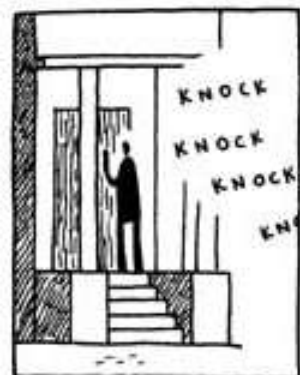
- I heard a fly buzz—when I died
- There's a certain slant of light,
- My life closed twice before its close
- The Soul selects her own Society
- The Brain—is wider than the Sky—
- There is a solitude of space
- Water, is taught by thirst



# 5. EMILY DICKINSON







# I heard a fly buzz—when I died

- The short-short analysis:
  - ED describes the final moments between life and death.
  - A fly, an almost trivial symbol of life, is what the speaker is most aware of before death.

# There's a certain slant of light,

- The short-short analysis:
  - ED describes the unbearable hurt that fills the soul during winter when the world is cold and still. (SAD anyone?)
  - this pain is described as a divine visitation (a punishment) sent to teach humans the meaning of mortality

# My life closed twice before its close

- The short-short analysis:
  - ED uses just 8 lines to convey “the sense of pain that comes from parting [death] of a loved one.”

# The Soul selects her own Society

- The short-short analysis:
  - In this meditation on the nature of the human soul, ED depicts the soul as a feminine entity
    - this soul is separate from & indifferent to her (the physical part) and her claims for attention
  - the soul chooses (for unknowable reasons) a single person to share her “society” or company and rejects all others

# The Brain—is wider than the Sky—

- The short-short analysis:
  - The brain is used as a metaphor for the soul or the imagination
    - the speaker contrasts the qualities of the brain/soul with those of the sky and sea
    - the brain/soul is not like the sky and sea, but infinite... like god
      - and by implication “of god”



# There is a solitude of space

- the short-short analysis:
  - space, sea, death are all finite concepts
  - the soul is infinite, yet limited (how?)
    - the soul limits itself, can choose who to allow in
  - “the strongest solitude is that of inner loneliness”

# Water, is taught by thirst

- The short-short analysis:
  - the speaker suggests that comparison-contrast is one of the strongest ways humans define our lives
    - water vs. thirst
    - land vs. ocean
    - ecstasy vs. pain
    - peace vs. war
    - love vs. death
    - birds vs. snow (?) dark feathers on white snow

# Walt Whitman: the Father of Free Verse

- Free Verse
  - poetry with irregular meter and line lengths
- *Leaves of Grass*
  - self-published volume of poetry
    - 1<sup>st</sup> edition- 95 pages
    - “Death-Bed” edition- 365 pages

# Walt Whitman

## – Song of Myself

- optimistic, energetic,
- feels connected to everyone (over-soul?)

## – I Hear America Singing

- Americans distinguish themselves by their jobs, but Whitman sees that each worker contributes *individually* to the spirit of a proud nation (Go USA!)

## – O Captain! My Captain!

- Whitman uses an extended metaphor (Lincoln as the captain of a ship) to elegize the assassinated president and celebrate his leadership during the Civil War

# Realism

- Reaction against Romanticism
- Pessimistic view of the world
- Awareness of social inequalities and negative effects of industrialization
- Sought to portray life as accurately as possible; confronted harsh realities of 19<sup>th</sup>-century life
- Depicted lives of working class people faced with poverty and other hardships

# Naturalism

- A type of Realism
  - used detailed realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character
    - **social conditions**- slavery, poverty, local customs/prejudices, etc.
    - **heredity**- inherited traits (alcoholism, insanity, etc.)
    - **environment**- war, natural disasters, elections, etc.

# Scavenger Hunt

## pg. 462-3

- 1865
- 1908 Model T Ford
- Douglas 1858
- 1903
- Compromise of 1877
- Railroads 1883
- 1877
- 1872 *War and Peace*
- 1881-1862= 19 years
- Pierre and Marie Curie
- 1888 mid-March Blizzard
- *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859
- Latrobe, PA
- Charles Darwin
- 1876
- Wright Brothers 1<sup>st</sup> flight, 1903
- Russo-Japanese War, 1894
- Claude Monet, 1874
- Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, 1905
- Karl Benz, 1865
- John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, 1859
- Sino-Japanese War, 1904
- X-Rays
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876
- Wounded Knee, 1890

# *The Great Gatsby*





# Mark Twain

- Real name: Samuel Clemens
- Often incorporated the local dialect (accent) of a setting in his dialogue
- Known for his keen wit and satirical writing style
  - known as “the greatest humorist of his age”



# Satire?

- a literary composition, in verse or prose, in which human folly and vice are held up to scorn, derision, or ridicule.
  - *Colbert Report*
  - SNL's "Weekend Update"
  - *The Onion*
    - ***Labor Dept: Available Labor Rate Increases To 10.2%***
    - ***Industrial Revolution Provides Millions Of Out-Of-Work Children With Jobs***
    - ***Haiti Makes Bid For 2216 Olympics***
    - ***Recent Rise In International Disputes Traced Back To Cute U.N. Tour Guide***
    - ***Pilgrims Depart For America To Escape Horrible Oppression Of Soccer***
    - ***Pittsburgh School District Leads Nation In Ability To Spell 'Roethlisberger'***

# The Lowest Animal

- Reverses the Darwinian idea that humankind evolved from lower animals
  - the “higher animals” evolved from humans

# The Lowest Animal

- Prove Darwin wrong; humans are not higher forms of life (compared to animals), humans are the lowest form of life...
  - experiments @ the London Zoological Gardens
3. Humans are distinct; Quadrupeds are a family (group); all other animals are “links in the chain... from higher animals to man at the bottom”

# The Lowest Animal

4. The anaconda (since it only ate what it needed and saved the rest) is the higher form of life... while the earl (who slaughtered many animals and only ate one) is the lower form of life
5. Most animals won't accumulate more food than they need(even for winter), while humans will accumulate way, way more than they need

# The Lowest Animal

- 6. Revenge- humans do, animals don't
- Harems- humans do(by force), most animals don't(except by consent)
- Loose morals- humans have them(by choice), cats do(but not consciously so)
- Indecency, vulgarity, obscenity- humans invented them
- Blushes- humans are the only animal that blushes, or “[have] occasion to”

# The Lowest Animal

7. Humans are the only cruel animal
8. Organized fights, theft, slavery, patriotism, religion
9. humans are maniacs... all the points in the essay put humans at the bottom of the list
10. All the animals can live in peace; put a variety humans in the same cage... all kill each other off

# Kate Chopin: “The Story of an Hour”

- Deals with women’s liberation issues on a personal level
  - independence vs. control
- Questions to consider:
  - What’s so shocking about the wife’s response to her husband’s death?
  - What is the purpose of the images of spring?



# Jack London: “To Build A Fire”

- Types of Conflict:
  - **Internal**- an emotional or ethical conflict within a character
  - **External**- a conflict between a character and another character, fate, society, nature, god.
    - man vs. man
    - man vs. society
    - man vs. nature
    - man vs. fate/god
    - man vs. himself