

# I dwell in Possibility—

EMILY DICKINSON

I dwell in Possibility—  
A fairer House than Prose—  
More numerous of Windows—  
Superior—for Doors—<sup>A</sup>

5 Of Chambers as the Cedars—  
Impregnable<sup>1</sup> of Eye—  
And for an Everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels<sup>2</sup> of the Sky—<sup>B</sup>

Of Visitors—the fairest—  
10 For Occupation—This—  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise—

**A FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

The speaker is not literally living in a House of Possibility. What idea is really being conveyed in this metaphor?

**B FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

An extended metaphor compares two unlike things in more than one way. The house metaphor continues from the first stanza to the next. In lines 5–8, what is Dickinson saying about the size and scope of this house?

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1. impregnable: unconquerable.

2. Gambrels: a type of roof with two slopes on each side.

Detail of *Cape Cod Morning* (1950),  
Edward Hopper. Oil on canvas,  
34 1/8" x 40 1/4". Smithsonian  
American Art Museum, Washington,  
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## Variation on a Theme by Rilke

(The Book of Hours, Book I, Poem I, Stanza I)

DENISE LEVERTOV

A certain day became a presence to me;  
there it was, confronting me—a sky, air, light:  
a being. And before it started to descend  
from the height of noon, it leaned over  
5 and struck my shoulder as if with  
the flat of a sword, granting me  
honor and a task. The day's blow **C**  
rang out, metallic—or it was I, a bell awakened,  
and what I heard was my whole self  
10 saying and singing what it knew: *I can.* **D**

**C FIGURATIVE  
LANGUAGE**

In this poem, a day is given human qualities. What idea does Levertov highlight through this use of personification?

**D COMPARE AND  
CONTRAST**

How similar are the feelings expressed in this poem and Dickinson's poem?



# blessing the boats (at St. Mary's)

LUCILLE CLIFTON

may the tide  
that is entering even now  
the lip of our understanding  
carry you out  
5 beyond the face of fear  
may you kiss  
the wind then turn from it  
certain that it will  
love your back may you  
10 open your eyes to water  
water waving forever  
and may you in your innocence  
sail through this to that **E**

**E LYRIC POETRY**  
What feeling is the  
speaker expressing?

