

After great pain, a formal feeling comes
by Emily Dickinson

After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?

The Feet, mechanical, go round –
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought –
A Wooden way
Regardless grown,
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –

This is the Hour of Lead –
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First – Chill – then Stupor -- then the letting go –

After great pain, a formal feeling comes

1. Read the first stanza from the poem.

**After great pain, a formal feeling comes –
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?**

What literary device is used in the italicized words above?

- A. Metaphor, saying that the nerves are in ceremony.
 - B. Simile, comparing the nerves to tombs.
 - C. Symbolism, using the tombs to represent pain.
 - D. Hyperbole, exaggerating how still the nerves are sitting.
2. Read the following sentence from the last stanza of the poem.

**As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –
First -- Chill – then *Stupor* -- then the letting go**

What does the word *stupor* mean as used in the sentence above.

- A. a state of apathy
 - B. a condition of numbness
 - C. suspended thinking over time
 - D. a state of vitality
3. What is the tone of the poem?
- A. cheerful
 - B. remorseful
 - C. repentant
 - D. morose

4. Read the following stanza from the poem.

**This is the Hour of Lead --
Remembered, if outlived,
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow --
First -- Chill -- then Stupor -- then the letting go --**

What theme does the poet express in these lines?

- A. You will never forget pain.
 - B. Pain hurts but eventually you will break free.
 - C. Pain will continue to live on after you die.
 - D. The stages of pain are acute.
5. Read the first stanza from the poem.

**After great pain, a formal feeling comes --
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs --
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And Yesterday, or Centuries before?**

What literary device is used in the italicized words above?

- A. Personification, giving the heart the ability to question.
- B. Irony, describing a feeling that is opposite of what is expected.
- C. Onomatopoeia, imitating the sound of a questioning heart.
- D. Symbolism, expressing the depth of a broken heart.

AOW 22 Answer Key

1.B LA.910.2.1.7

2.A LA.910.1.6.3

3.D LA.910.2.1.5

4.B LA.910.2.1.5

5.A LA.910.2.1.7