

# Puspa Shrestha

Best Quality Resource Site for Class 11 And 12 Students  
(Based on Updated Curriculum 2077)

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*Emily Dickinson***Before reading****Answer the following questions.**

- What kind of day do you like: rainy, sunny or foggy? Why?
- How does the sun tell us about different stages of a day?

One of the most eminent American poets from the nineteenth century, Emily Dickinson's (1830-1886) poetry was heavily influenced by the Metaphysical poets of seventeenth-century England, as well as her reading of the Book of Revelation and her upbringing in a Puritan New England town. These upbringings inculcated in her Calvinist, orthodox, and conservative approach to Christianity. Dickinson and Walt Whitman are considered the founders of a uniquely American poetic voice. While Dickinson was extremely prolific as a poet her regularly enclosed poems in letters to friends she was not publicly recognized during her lifetime. However, she has



been steadily gaining popularity through her posthumously published poems.

In her poem "A Day", Dickinson, through the use of brilliant imageries and symbols, describes a beautiful day that leads the children from innocence to experience.

I'll tell you how the sun rose, \_\_\_\_

A ribbon at a time.

The steeples swam in amethyst,

The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,

The bobolinks begun.

Then I said softly to myself,

"That must have been the sun!"

But how he set, I know not.

There seemed a purple stile

Which little yellow boys and girls

Were climbing all the while

Till when they reached the other side,  
A dominie in gray  
Put gently up the evening bars,  
And led the flock away.

### **Glossary**

steeple (n.): tall towers with a spire on top, rising above the roof of a church

amethyst (n.): purple precious stone used in making jewellery

bonnets (n.): hats tied with strings under the chin, worn by babies and women

bobolinks (n.): songbirds with large, somewhat flat heads, short necks and short tails

dominie (n.): a school master (Scottish); a pastor or clergyman (US)

stile (n.): a set of steps that help people to climb over a fence or wall, especially in the village

### **Understanding the text**

**Answer the following questions.**

- How does the poet describe the morning sun in the first stanza?
- What does the line ‘The news like squirrels ran’ mean?
- What do you understand by the line ‘The hills untied their bonnets’?
- Is the speaker watching the morning sun? Why? Why not?
- How does the sun set?

### **Reference to the context**

- What, according to the speaker, is a day?
- What purpose does the hyphen in the first line serve in the poem?
- What makes this poem lyrical and sonorous? Discuss.
- Who are the target audience of the speaker? Why?
- The poem seems to describe a day for children. How would the adult people respond to this poem? Discuss this poem with your parents/guardians and write the answer based on their responses.

### **Reference beyond the text**

- Observe your surroundings of one fine morning and write a poem based on your own experience.
- Write a personal essay on **A Day in the School**.