

Questions on I dwell in Possibility by Emily Dickenson:

1. What adjectives and nouns are associated with poetry and possibility in the poem? What do each of these words and images suggest about the character of poetry? Of prose?
2. How would you describe the movement of the words and images in the poem? How do those in the second stanza relate to and differ from those in the first? How do those in the third stanza relate to and differ from those in the second?
3. If the poem suggests poetry is possibility, then what word does it suggest best describes prose?
4. What's the significance or effect of Dickinson's choice of a house as a metaphor for poetry? Why and how does the house work as a metaphor here?
5. What's the significance or effect of the fact that the word *poetry* never appears in the poem?
6. Like E.E. Cummings, Dickinson uses conventional syntax but substitutes unexpected words giving the poem an element of surprise and ambiguity. How does the unconventional use of preposition in this poem compare with that in other Dickinson poems you have read?