



Emily Dickinson

Growth of Man—like Growth of Nature

750

Growth of Man—like Growth of Nature—

Gravitates within—

Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it—

Bit it stir—alone—

Each—its difficult Ideal

Must achieve—Itself—

Through the solitary prowess

Of a Silent Life—

Effort—is the sole condition—

Patience of Itself—

Patience of opposing forces—

And intact Belief—

Looking on—is the Department

Of its Audience—

But Transaction—is assisted

By no Countenance—

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Analysis (ai): The poem presents growth as an internal, solitary process mirrored in both human development and natural cycles. It follows a concise four-stanza structure with Dickinson's characteristic dashes and slant rhyme. Each stanza reinforces the necessity of self-reliance and quiet perseverance without external validation.

Internal Development and Autonomy: The speaker emphasizes that true growth arises from within, independent of external influence, despite environmental support. "Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it— / Bit it stir—alone—" suggests external factors are permissive rather than causative, a recurring motif in Dickinson's exploration of individual agency.

Solitude and Self-Reliance: The "solitary prowess / Of a Silent Life" aligns with Dickinson's broader thematic focus on inner resilience and the legitimacy of private experience. This contrasts with 19th-century cultural emphasis on public achievement and religious guidance, positioning inner effort as spiritually sufficient.

Effort and Resistance: The third stanza frames effort as foundational, requiring endurance not only of personal limits but also of external opposition. "Intact Belief" implies continuity of inner conviction, a concept echoed in Dickinson's poems on faith and doubt.

Audience and Performance: The final stanza distinguishes observation from action: witnessing growth is passive, while real transformation occurs without recognition. This reflects Dickinson's skepticism toward societal praise, paralleling poems like "I died for Beauty—but was scarce."

Place in Author's Oeuvre: Among her lesser-circulated works, this poem stands out for its systematic articulation of personal development. It lacks the metaphysical crisis seen in her more famous poems, instead offering a disciplined philosophy of incremental self-formation.

Relation to Era and Form: Unlike contemporaries who framed growth through divine providence or moral instruction, Dickinson locates authority in the individual psyche. Her compressed syntax and philosophical density anticipate modernist

concerns with subjectivity and interiority, though without overt formal rupture.

(hide)

Likes: Limhk



Limhk - Wonderful poem.

There's a typo on the fourth line.

It should read: "But it stir — alone — "

Source: The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition

Mar '23

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