

Figurative Language in Poetry Key

1. Personification is a figure of speech which gives human characteristics to inanimate/non-living objects.

An example of personification in “The Soul Selects Her Own Society” occurs when the Soul “shuts the Door.” (Answers may vary)

2. A metaphor is a direct comparison of two unlike things.

Dickinson uses the entire poem as a metaphor. She compares an individual’s soul selecting the elements/companions of one’s own life to the person exerting free will. (Answers may vary)

3. Tone in literature refers to the writer’s feelings/attitude toward their subject. This poem has a slightly serious tone. Words used by Dickinson which create imagery indicative of seriousness are “soul,” “divine Majesty,” and “ample nation.” (Answers may vary)

4. Simile is a literary device that uses like/as to compare unlike things. In this poem, “Then—close the Valves of her attention—Like Stone” is a simile. The “Valves” of her attention may refer to the heart turning cold and unfeeling similar to a hard stone’s nature.