

## SAMPLE POETRY RESPONSE ESSAY

Poem #7  
by Emily Dickinson

**The Heart is the capital of the Mind,  
The Mind is a single State;  
The Heart and Mind together make  
A single continent.**

**On—is the population—  
Numerous enough;  
This ecstatic nation  
Seek—it is Yourself.**

Poem #7, by Emily Dickinson, is a short, 2 verse poem with an abab rhyme scheme. In the poem, Dickinson uses a metaphor to compare a person's heart and mind to a nation. The message of the poem is that each person is a world unto himself—an "ecstatic nation"—that is important, complete, and worth exploring.

Dickinson uses an extended metaphor to effectively compare a person to a nation: "The Heart is the capital of the Mind, The Mind is a single State". We have all the ingredients for a complete being in our hearts and minds. It seems an odd metaphor at first, but each person is complete in and of themselves although they need to interact with others, just as two nations interact with each other. Dickinson also uses personification to add emotion. Her words "this ecstatic nation" imply that we can be happy within ourselves. It also makes the reader feel the nation is human, which it is, because nations are made up of human beings. These two poetic devices help create wonderful imagery that reinforces the theme.

Dickinson's message that being alone and understanding and exploring yourself is both important and compelling. Each person lives in their own world in a way, and Dickinson claims that that inner world is worth exploring: "One—is the population—Numerous enough." No matter how old you are, there is always something new to discover about yourself, if you give yourself time to do it. In our busy world, finding time for this isn't always easy. I like this poem because I agree that spending time alone in reflection is worthwhile and necessary if you want to grow and understand yourself better. Dickinson tells us we must do this: "This ecstatic nation Seek—it is Yourself." She adds importance to this by capitalizing 'yourself'. I can agree that each one of us has a lot to discover in our own 'nation', and although the many distractions of our world make this difficult to do, it is important to know ourselves and continually reflect on our lives if we want to become mature emotionally and spiritually.

I love this poem because it says so much about life and self-discovery with so few words. Each individual is a complex world, or 'nation', and we must learn to be happy, or 'ecstatic' within ourselves. I believe that much of happiness is a decision we make about life that comes from the mind and spreads to our hearts. When we seek this happiness, as Dickinson instructs us to do, we will discover much within ourselves and learn to create a better "state" of being from which to live our lives.