



**GOD’S LOVE IN EMILY DICKINSON’S  
“GOD GAVE A LOAF TO EVERY BIRD”**

**A FINAL PROJECT  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For S-1 Degree in Literature  
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities  
Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that he compiled this final project entitled “God’s Love in Emily Dickinson’s “God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird”” by himself without taking any result from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains that he did not quote any material from other publications or someone’s paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, July 2017

AchmadGhaniyNuurrochman

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

“Many of life’s failures are people, who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

- **Thomas A. Edison**

“The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”

- **Steve Jobs**

“Makasesungguhnyabersamakesulitanituadakemudahan.  
Sesungguhnyabersamakesulitanituadakemudahan.”

- **Q.S. Al-Insyirah: 5-6**

*This final project is dedicated to my beloved family and friends*

## **APPROVAL**

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Semarang, July 2017

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines Emily Dickinson's "God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird", which talks about love, life, and happiness. The purpose of this study is to find out God's love in the poem. The method used in this paper is the intrinsic and extrinsic approach. The intrinsic elements, such as diction and imagery, are used to get the deeper meaning of the poem. The second one is to describe the mutual love between the speaker and God through the extrinsic elements, focusing on the speaker's perspective, maturity and life experience based on the theory of love by Erich Fromm concerning Love of God aspects. The result shows that the speaker of the poem expresses her feelings while giving the other creature a pleasure, besides the speaker of the poem is categorized as a religious person who is always grateful for what she owned.

Keyword: God, God's love, crumb, believe, intrinsic elements (diction, imagery), theory of love

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

One of the most familiar literary works is poetry because it usually represents the human life in a real life. Poetry is a kind of literary work which contains an essential message. Perrine in his book *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry Third Edition* says that “poetry might be defined as a kind of languages that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language” (1982:3). From the statement above, we can conclude that every word in a poem always has deep and meaningful message which the author wants to share to the readers.

In this research, the writer chose Emily Dickinson’s “God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird” as the object of this research. The poem tells about life and love. The writer uses Erich Fromm’s theory of love to analyze and discuss the poem.

### 1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, the writer read the poem carefully and found two problems to be discussed, they are:

1. What are the essential meanings of the Poem?
2. How does the speaker of the poem represent The God’s love in the poem?

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

According to the research problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. To get the deeper meaning of the poem by analyze the intrinsic elements.
2. To describe the mutual love between the speaker and God in the poem “God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird”.

#### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

In discussing and answering the research problems, the writer will limit the discussion to make easier when analyzing the poem. In this research, the writer discusses the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. In intrinsic elements section, the writer discusses the use of diction and imagery while in extrinsic elements section the writer uses theory of love to analyze God’s love contained in the poem.

#### **1.5. Methods of the Study**

In composing the research, the writer uses library research as the method of the study. The library research itself is the writer read some books, journals in the library and collects the data and some references from the internet to analyzing and discussing the poem.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE POET, THE POEM, AND THE TRANSLATION

#### 2.1. Biography of the Poet

Emily Dickinson is one of an American Poet. She was born in Amherst Massachusetts on December 10, 1830. She studied in Amherst Academy (Amherst College) for seven years and took some classes which were in English and classical Literature, Latin, Botany, Geology, History, Mental Philosophy and Arithmetic. She spent a short time in Lyon's Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (Mount Holyoke College) after finishing her study at the Academy on August 10, 1847 for a year before returning to the family in Amherst. Dickinson died of kidney disease in Amherst, Massachusetts, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1886, at the age of 55. She was laid to rest in her family plot at West Cemetery. The Homestead, where Dickinson was born, is now a museum.

Dickinson is well known as a religious person and because of that some of her poems are categorized as transcendental poem. Transcendental itself is something that related to spirituality, supernatural, abstract and it is quite difficult to understand (2006: 34). Transcendental poem means that a poem which talks about religiosity, spirituality, humanity and supernatural. Those are the reasons why some themes of her poem concern on life, death, faith, God and truth. One of the poems which talk about them is "God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird" because the poem talks about life, God and human.

## 2.2. The Poem

### God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird,

By Emily Dickinson

God gave a loaf to every bird,  
But just a crumb to me;  
I dare not eat it, though I starve,—  
My poignant luxury  
To own it, touch it, prove the feat  
That made the pellet mine,—  
Too happy in my sparrow chance  
For ampler coveting.

It might be famine all around,  
I could not miss an ear,  
Such plenty smiles upon my board,  
My garner shows so fair.  
I wonder how the rich may feel,—  
An Indiaman—an Earl?  
I deem that I with but a crumb  
Am sovereign of them all

### 2.3. The Translation

#### **Tuhan Berikan Sebongkah Roti ke Setiap Burung**

**Oleh: Emily Dickinson**

Tuhan berikan sebongkah roti ke setiap burung  
Tapi tidak denganku, hanya remah saja yang kudapat  
Kutidak beranimemakannya, walaupun aku lapar  
Sungguh kebahagiaan yang luar biasa  
Yang butuh perjuangan untuk mendapatkannya, juga menyentuhnya  
Yang menjadikan kubagaikan makhluk kecil  
Yang selalu banggakan setiap kesempatan  
Tapi mendapatkan sesuatu yang lebih  
  
Mungkin kelaparan akan semakin luas  
Namun kutak sangguk kehilangan perhatiannya  
Yang selalu memberikan banyak keberkahan, disetiap kehidupanmu  
Yang ditunjukkan dengan nikmat luar biasa yang kuterima  
Dan akupun bertanya, bagaimana orang-orang kaya itu merasakannya?  
Apakah seperti orang Indian atau bangsawan?  
Namun kuanggap semuanya, begitu denganku, walaupun hanya remahan  
Tapi aku merasa lebih berkuasa dari mereka

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

#### 3.1. Intrinsic Elements

This final project discusses two intrinsic elements of poetry that are diction and imagery. The definition of them is stated below:

##### 3.1.1. Diction

X.J. Kennedy in his book *Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* says that “poem state ideas, to be sure and sometimes that the ideas are invaluable, and yet the most impressive ideas in the world will not make a poem unless its word are selected and arranged with loving art” (1978: 440). From the statement above, it can be concluded that the selection of words in the poem is important, because poem is made by not only ideas but also the words. The selection of words in the poem can be called as diction. There are two parts of diction, which are: denotation and connotation. A Denotation is a dictionary meaning while connotation is a word that has one more meaning. The example of diction can be seen from Robert Frost’s “The Rose Family”(Perrine, 1982:112).

The rose is **a rose**  
And always **a rose**      (stanza 1, line 1 -2)

The word “rose” is connotation because it has one more meaning. In *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* says rose is “a flower with a sweet smell that grows on a bush with thorns on its stems” (2010: 1287). Meanwhile, in connotation meaning, it refers to a woman.



### 3.1.2. Imagery

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* imagery is “language that produces pictures in the minds of people reading or listening” (2010: 748). The imagery in the poem is used to show the readers the image of the poem. On the other hand, Perrine says “imagery may be defined as the representation through language of sense experience” (1982: 54). Imagery is used not only to show the image of the poem but also to describe the ideas contained in the poem to the readers. There are seven types of imagery which are visual, organic, tactile, kinesthetic, gustatory, olfactory, and auditory imagery (Abrams, 1999:21). Meanwhile, in this research, the writer focuses on the visual and organic imagery.

#### 3.1.2.1. Visual Imagery

Visual imagery is an image in the poem which can be seen by using our sense of sight. The example of visual imagery can be taken from the poem Robert Frost's “The Rose Family” (Perrine, 1982:112).

The rose is **a rose**  
And always **a rose**

The word “rose” is visual imagery because it can be seen by using our sense of sight. The speaker here uses visual imagery to describe his experience when he sees the rose.

### 3.1.2.2. Organic Imagery

Organic imagery is the image that describes and represents the human sense and internal sensation such as hunger, thirst, fear, nausea or fatigue. The example of this imagery is taken from Robert Frost's "Dust of Snow" (Miller, 1981: 48).

Has given my heart  
A change of mood (stanza 2, line 1 – 2)

The speaker here shows the reader to feel an anxiety and a fearsome. By using the word, the readers can imagine the feeling of anxiety.

## 3.2. Extrinsic Elements

This final project uses Erich Fromm's Theory of Love that used to The God's love contained in the poem.

### 3.2.1. Erich Fromm's Theory of Love

People around the world have a feeling that represents their happiness through someone or other things. This feeling is called as love. In *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* love is "strong feeling of deep affection for somebody or something" (2010: 884). Erich Fromm, a psychoanalyst and philosopher from Germany, created a theory about love. He says in his book *The Art of Loving* that "love is an activity, not passive affect, it is standing in not a falling for. In other words, love is primarily giving not receiving" (1956: 22). From that, it can be concluded that love is a pure and holy thing that appears without any pressure.

In his book *The Art of Loving*, He mentions that there are five types of love that are: Brotherly Love, Motherly Love, Self Love, Erotic Love and Love of God

(1956: 47). Meanwhile, in this research, the writer focuses on the fifth type of love that is the love of God to analyze The God's love in the poem.

Love of God is a kind of love that God gives to all creatures. In this type of love, someone can interpret differently because love of God for each person is different. Fromm explains that:

“Love of God for each person is different. It depends on several factors because of the life experience of each person, the different time to achieving the levels of maturity and perspective of each person's view about God itself” (1956:63).

It means that the view of God depends on our attitude and behavior. Based on the writer's understanding, this kind of love is used not only to show someone's view about God and someone's religiosity but it also can be used to show if someone is categorized into grateful or ungrateful person and how he or she represents it.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Intrinsic Elements

##### 4.1.1. Diction

God gave **a loaf** to every **bird**,  
But just **a crumb** to me, (stanza 1, line 1 – 2)

In the beginning of the poem, there is a word “a loaf”. The word “a loaf” is classified as connotation because it has one more meaning. The word “a loaf” is an amount of bread that has been shaper and baked in one piece (2010: 872).The word “a loaf” represents a “pleasure” which God given to the bird. It also can be defined that the word “a loaf” is a plenty of pleasure or a big pleasure, especially for the bird because a loaf is bigger than any kind of baked bread which must be sliced if we want to eat.

Still in the beginning of the poem, there is a word “bird”. The word “bird” here classified as denotation. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 8<sup>th</sup>bird is “a creature that is covered with feathers and has two wings and two legs” (2010: 135). The bird here means the speaker’s pet. The speaker wants the reader know that she has a pet. In the next line, there is a word “crumb”. The “crumb” is classified as connotation that means a pleasure. A pleasure that God given to the speaker while the word “crumb” in dictionary means “a very smallpiece of food, especially of bread or cake, that has fallen off a larger piece”(2010: 353).

Too happy in **my sparrow** chance  
For ampler coveting (stanza 1, line 7 – 8)

The word “sparrow” in line 7 is a denotation that means a small brown and grey bird, common in many parts of the world (2010: 1427). On the other hand, the speaker shows the readers that “sparrow” is one of God creatures in this universe. It can be taken from the Holy Bible that says “fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrow” (Matthew 10: 31). It clearly explains that we also should care for them even though they look small and helpless.

**Such plenty smiles** upon **my board**,  
**My garner** shows so fair (stanza 2, line 11 – 12)

In this stanza in line 11 there is a word “smiles”. The word “smiles” is classified as connotation. The word “smiles” based in *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* is “the expression that you have on your face when you are happy, amused, etc. in which the corners of your mouth turn upwards” (2010: 1405). From that explanation the word “smiles” means a God smiles, a smile which God given to the speaker. The speaker uses the word “smiles” to represent a pleasure because of God by the smile, the speaker lives in happiness. Still in this line, there is a word “board”. The word “board” means a “life” especially the speaker’s life. The word “board” based on *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* is “a piece of wood or other strong material, that is used for a special purpose” (2010: 150). Therefore, the word “board” can be classified as connotation. From the explanation above, we can conclude that the speaker

here is given happiness by God and she lives in better life. In line 12 has a correlation with the previous line. In this line, there is a word “my garner”. The word “garner” is classified as connotation which means a “wealth”. Wealth here refers to the speaker’s wealth. The word “garner” is to obtain or collect something (2010: 617). From this line, we know that the speaker lives in happy life because she has everything and realizes that God always gives a pleasure to her life. It can be concluded that the speaker is belief in God and grateful for what she has.

I deem that I with but **a crumb**  
Am sovereign of them all (stanza 2, line 15 – 16)

In line 15 there is a word “a crumb”. The word “crumb” is classified as connotation. In dictionary, the word “crumb” means a very small piece of food, especially of bread or cake, that has fallen of larger piece (2010:353). The speaker uses the word “crumb” to represent a pleasure. A pleasure that God given to her. This line represents how she feels proud for what she has now.

#### **4.1.2. Imagery**

##### **4.1.2.1. Visual Imagery**

God gave **a loaf** to every **bird**,  
But just **a crumb** to me, (stanza 1, line 1 – 2)

The first visual imagery can be found at the beginning of the poem that is in line 1 and 2. The word “a loaf”, “bird” and “a crumb” are classified as visual imagery because it can be seen by using our sense of sight. From those words, the readers can imagine the shape of “loaf”, “bird” and “crumb”. Those words mean that God

by of the speaker gives the bird a loaf as their food while she only has a crumb. In this stanza, God gives a pleasure to the bird by the speaker.

Such plenty smiles upon **my board**,  
**My garner** shows so fair (stanza 2, line 11 – 12)

The visual imagery also found in the word “my board” and “my garner”. That words can be classified as visual imagery because it makes the readers can imagine about the speaker’s condition in this poem. The word “board” means the speaker’s life while the word “my garner” represents the speaker’s wealth. From that, the readers know that she lives in better life.

I wonder how **the rich** may feel,  
**An Indiaman–an Earl?** (stanza 2, line 13 – 14)

There is a word “the rich” in stanza 2 line 13. That word can be classified as visual imagery because the readers can describe what the rich person looks like in this poem. There also a word “An Indiaman – an Earl”. That word also classified as visual imagery because the readers can see the physical appearance of an Indiaman and an Earl by using of the sense of sight. Those words show that the speaker is imagining how she feels being a rich person who has a lot and does not worry about anything.

I deem that I with but **a crumb**  
Am sovereign of them all (stanza 2, line 15 – 16)

There is a word “a crumb” in line 15. The word “a crumb” here is also classified as visual imagery because the readers can see and imagine it by using our sense of sight. The “crumb” is a small part of a loaf and the shape is very

small. The meaning of the word “crumb” in this line is a pleasure. This line shows that she feels proud and grateful however she only has a crumb.

#### 4.1.2.2. Organic Imagery

I dare not eat it, though **I starve**,  
My **poignant luxury** (stanza 1, line 3 – 4)

The stanza above is organic imagery because it represents the human internal sensation. The human sensation in the stanza is “starve” and “poignant luxury”. The speaker wants the readers to feel the feeling of starving and happy. The word “starve” explains that she is starving but she does not want to eat the crumb because it is a precious thing for her and the word “poignant luxury” explains that she feels happy and proud with a crumb however it looks small and useless.

**Too happy** in my sparrow chance  
For ampler coveting (stanza 1, line 7 – 8)

The other organic imagery can be seen in line 7 in stanza 1. There is a word “happy” in the line above. The word happy is identified as organic imagery because it also feels the human sensation that is happy. The word “happy” shows that the speaker is in happy life and tells the readers that we should cheerful to pass this life to get God’s mercy.

**Such plenty smiles** upon my board,  
My garner **shows so fair** (stanza 2, line 11 – 12)

The stanza above is classified as organic imagery. The word “such plenty smiles” means happiness. The word “plenty smiles” in the previous discussion is



God's smile. From that the readers can imagine the happiness feelings such like she's feels in her poem. The word "shows so fair" means that the speaker is always satisfy and grateful. By using that word, the readers can imagine and feel the speaker's feelings in this poem.

I wonder **how the rich may feel,**  
An Indiaman—an Earl? (stanza 2, line 13 – 14)

It clearly explains in the next stanza that is "how the rich may feel". That word makes the readers can feel being a rich person. She shows that she feels like the rich person who has everything. She shows that she has enough foods, clothes etc. which makes her proud and grateful to God over her life.

## **4.2. Extrinsic Elements**

### **4.2.1. God's Love that felt by the Speaker of the Poem**

"God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird" is a poem which talks about love, life and happiness. The writer will see how the speaker of the poem represents The God's love based on several factors such as the perspective, the maturity, and the life experience.

#### **4.2.1.1. The Speaker's Perspective**

Firstly, the speaker's perspective is stated in stanza one line 1 and 4,

God gave a loaf to every bird,  
But just a crumb to me,  
I dare not eat it, though I starve  
My Poignant Luxury (stanza 1, line 1 – 4)

The first stanza expresses the speaker's feeling. She feels confused why only the crumb she has while the bird has a big loaf. At the same time, she realizes that the crumb in her hand is a kind of pleasure. Then, she knows that she is appointed by God to give the bird a pleasure and because of it she thinks that the crumb in her hand is a pleasure and it is a precious thing that God has given to her. From that, she realizes that God does not differentiate someone whether she is rich or poor person, God always gives a pleasure to all creatures and God is compassionate and merciful to all creatures. It can be seen in the Holy Bible "Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful" (Psalm 116:5). In the next line, the word "My Poignant Luxury" expresses how she feels happy and grateful for what she has. It makes her become more religious and it can be seen in the stanza below.

It might be famine all around  
I could not miss an ear (stanza 2, line 9 – 12)

The speaker shows that she always needs God every time and everywhere. She never forgets to talk and pray to God about her condition and what she's afraid of is being forgotten by God. From that, she prays to God every time and becomes more religious to get the spirit when she is in bad condition. She realizes that God is a source of happiness and life. It can be seen in the Holy Bible that says "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7: 38). The reason why the speaker needs God in her life because she realizes that all creatures in this universe are small and worthless especially human.

#### **4.2.1.2. The Speaker's Maturity**

The speaker expresses The God's love by always be grateful and respect for what she has. It can be seen in the stanza one line 3 and 4.

I dare not eat it, though I starve  
My Poignant Luxury (stanza 1, line 1 – 4)

The speaker uses the word “My Poignant Luxury” to expresses how she feels happy and grateful for what she owned and she did. She feels happy because she can provide the bird a pleasure and she feels grateful because of the crumb. The crumb in her hand is a kind a pleasure and it is very precious for her. From that, she knows God is always give a pleasure to all creatures and God does not differentiate someone and she tells us that it is one of God's mercy that given to her and to all the creatures in this land. The struggle to get The God's mercy can be seen in stanza below.

To own it, touch it, prove the feat  
That made the pellet mine (stanza 1, line 5 – 6)

The speaker has proven that to get The God's mercy, she is brave to sacrifice, care and respect to others. It is what the speaker did to the bird by giving them a loaf that she owned. From that, she becomes more humble and always helps others.

#### **4.2.1.3. The Speaker's Life Experience**

The speaker's life experience can be seen in the stanza below:

To own it, touch it, prove the feat  
That made the pellet mine  
Too happy in my sparrow chance  
For ampler coveting (stanza 1, line 5 – 8)

The stanza above shows how the speaker survives in her life. The speaker proves that this life is so meaningful. She learns about something happened in her life. She tells us to reach a meaningful life we should sacrifice to others who need a helps because there is a happy moment if we can help them and tells us that giving a pleasure or an enjoyment to other creatures is a kind of valuable thing and has a lot of benefits. It clearly explains that if we are given God a pleasure or an enjoyment do not forget to be grateful because it makes our life meaningful. In the previous discussion, it stated that what the speaker's afraid of is forgotten by God. It makes her life change and she believes in God. The stanza below stated that the speaker is a religious person.

It might be famine all around  
I could not miss an ear  
Such plenty smiles upon my board  
My garner shows so fair (stanza 2, line 9 – 12)

The stanza above shows how the speaker lives in happiness. We know it because one of she's afraid of is forgotten by God. From that, she always prays and talks to God every time. She always learns something happened from the past and believes that God is a source of life, love and happiness. From that, she becomes more grateful and happy.

I deem that I with but a crumb  
Am sovereign of them all (stanza 2, line 13 – 16)

In this stanza, the speaker feels that crumb is a kind of pleasure and it is a very precious for her. She feels like a king who lives in better life without worry about anything. Because of that, she becomes more grateful and proud of what she has now. From that, she tells us that as long as we believe in God and put it in our soul, God will gives us a pleasure and an enjoyment. The speaker says that we should believe in God, live in low profile, humble, tolerance, respect etc. Those formulas that make us live in happiness.

From the explanation, it can be concluded that the speaker represents The God's love by always be grateful, care, respect, tolerance and help others and the most important thing is assure in God. Those reasons that make someone can be categorized as a grateful person while the ungrateful person is the opposite of them.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the poem “God Gave a Loaf to Every Bird”, the writer can conclude that the poem is deeply meaningful. Based on the analysis, the writer can answer the research problems mentioned in the first chapter. The first is the essential meanings. The essential meanings contained in the poem are God always gives a pleasure and an enjoyment to all creatures and God does not differentiate someone because all creatures in this land are equal in God’s eyes. The second one is The God’s love. The God’s loves in the poem are God always gives a smile, a pleasure and happiness in her life. Because of that she lives in happiness and in better life. She represents it by always be grateful for what she has, becomes more religious and she could not miss to always prays and talks to God. Because of that she believes that God is a source of life, love and happiness and she never complains about her life and realizes everything God given to her is a kind of pleasure. From that we can see that the speaker here is categorized as grateful person who always grateful for what she has. She also tells us that we are supposed to be grateful for what we have, live in low profile, humble, respect and help other and realize that everything God given to us is a kind of pleasure and the most important thing is assure in God because as long as we believe in God and put it in our soul, God will gives us a pleasure and an enjoyment. Those reasons that make someone can be categorized as a grateful person and the poem also persuade us to not differentiate someone because we are equal in God’s eyes.

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