Emily Dickinson - Poetry Analysis Assignment

Select two of the following “prompts” and write an approximately two-page essay answering the question, or follow the specific directions provided.

**Due dates:**

**Essay #1 – Tuesday 1/10**

**Honors’ Essay #2 – Friday 1/13**

Your outline format for the essay should follow this format:

I. Introduction

A. Hook/lead

B. State TAG (title, author, genre)

C. *Briefly* summarize the poem (as per the question topic)

D. Clear THESIS

II. Body Paragraphs

1. Varies! Does it make sense to explain the message/meaning in one paragraph? Include poetic elements (imagery, etc.) in another? Something else? This will depend on the question you are answering. You must have at least one piece of evidence (a quote) supporting your claims in each body – but please use as many quotes as you feel necessary.

III. Conclusion

1. Summarize the main points – wrap it up!
2. Be sure the rephrase the thesis in a different way
3. Relate the poem to a broader theme in life. What can we learn from it? Some reflection? Remember, it needs to relate to your thesis (and the question asked)

MLA Format for Poetry:

1. Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).
2. "Let us go then, you and I / When the evening is spread out against the sky" ("Prufrock" 1-2).

*Notice: Use a / to designate breaks in the lines of poetry; include number(s) only when citing the lines of poetry from one poem. If you are citing lines from several different poems, you need to indicate the poem to which you are referring (#2 – Can be just one word).*

**2-Page Essay Options**

1. Write an essay on Dickinson’s treatment of houses and nature in all three poems (“They shut me up in Prose,” “I dwell in Possibility,” “Crumbling is not an instant’s Act”). How does she use imagery to portray both confinement and liberation? What might this suggest about her own struggles and triumphs as a poet?
2. Choose a favorite song or hymn. Write a comparison between the song and one of Dickinson’s poems. Does it employ meter, rhythm, rhyme? How do fixed forms help the listener memorize the song?
3. The poem “This World is not” asserts that “Faith slips – and laughs, and rallies -,” suggesting that faith may have more in common with the rising and falling of the tides than with a rock or fortress. Write a response that considers how understanding faith, doubt, or religious conviction furthers the understanding of Dickinson’s poetry. Include one other poem in this analysis.