At the outset, Toru Dutt and Emily Dickinson seem strange comparison. I first became acquainted with Toru Dutt in high school through the study of her poem Sita. When I considered a topic for research, this short poem came to memory and hence a curiosity for its poet. Toru Dutt made touching study. But her brief day of life provided less than ample matter for an exclusive dissertation. Emily Dickinson was then chosen alongside, at first with misgivings, in regard to her complexities in themes. But fortunately and with joy, it can be said that the poems of Emily Dickinson made an intense and pleasurable reading and the doubts gave way to tender affection for the American poet recluse. A sense of alienation appeared to be the most common dominating factor pervading their works. A comparative study of this factor in terms of their poetry and lives was conjectured. The fact that they are both women is a matter of pure coincidence.

In seven simple chapters, the sense of isolation or alienation that dominated Toru's and Emily's life and poetry is traced. Since they lived in cloistered solitude for the major part of their lives, their personal lives and loves are given prominence. Their faiths, though essentially Christian, sprung from different backgrounds and contributed to a large extent for their estrangement from the mainstream of society. The themes of Death and Immortality that obsessed Emily and was thrust upon Toru's sensibility are treated in considerable detail. References are given at the end of each chapter and the poems of Emily Dickinson are numbered according to the Johnson (edited by Thomas H Johnson, 1955) edition. A select bibliography follows the concluding chapter.