

# Free literature review about phoenix as a symbol for endurance in a worn path

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In Eudora Wetly story “A Worn Path,” the path that the old woman Phoenix Jackson walks on symbolizes the theme of the story—that repetition in life can become similar to the monotony of death. An old woman Phoenix Jackson goes to town to buy medicine for her grandson. But, her grandson has died. Her body is frail, and her memory is failing. But like a path that persists in the woods, she still shows courage and resolve in going about her daily duties. She has become so accustomed to her routines that her routines are more vivid than her life. The path represents the woman’s age, and it also represents the fact that she, for all of her life has been stuck. The story takes place at a time when both women and blacks did not receive the same rights as males and whites. As an old, black woman, Phoenix has a rich inner life that does not shine due to her not being considered an equal by the standards of the other characters within the story.

The protagonist in the story is an old, yet cheerful woman. On a December day she sets off in her frail state across a path to the town hospital. It is clear that she has been here often as the nurses all know her. It is clear that she is a poor woman. The narrator says, “Without warning, she had seen with her own eyes a flashing nickel fall out of the man’s pocket onto the ground” (Wetly, n. p.). That she notices this much is an indicator of her poverty. The woman seems at peace with all of the animals that she encounters along the way. She speaks to the trues and foxes, owls and jackrabbits that she comes into contact with along the way. She is playful when she is in her element alone, but seems to be more reluctant to display this to the world of other people.

In the woods, on a path that Phoenix has walked her whole life, she is

confident. But she is so invisible in the context of civilization that she is asked if she is deaf and told to “ Speak up Wetly uses the literary elements of dialogue to convey the change sense of security of Phoenix’s surroundings. She is confident and fluent with her words when she speaks to animals. Her shies dialogue around people is an indication that something has changed in her self-assurance when she is around white people.

When Phoenix arrives she mentions that she needs medicine for her grandson, “ My little grandson, he sits up there in the house all wrapped up, waiting by himself.” But it becomes clear to the white nurse that Phoenix is confused. Her grandson is not there, and she ends up giving Phoenix a nickel because “ It’s Christmas time.” The story ends with Phoenix leaving back on the path she came on, “ Then her slow step began on the stairs, going down.” The path symbolizes Phoenix’s endurance. In many ways, she is considered helpless, but she is still just worn. She is low and careful, but still retains her identity and independence. Her journey, though humble, is a hero’s journey in which he walks a worn, tired path with grace.

## Work Cited

A Worn Path." Welty Online. N. p., n. d. Web. 26 Oct. 2014. .

A Worn Path Worn." The Atlantic. N. p., n. d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. .