

# Robert frost's "stopping by woods on a snowy evening" essay sample

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## **Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" Essay Sample**

Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", and Octavio Paz's "The Street" share similar themes in that they all explore solitude and insightfulness. There is an interesting contrast within this group of poems, especially between the Frost and Wordsworth poems and Paz's illustration. The first two poems are gentle and simple in their tone, whereas the last is quite solemn and worrisome. Frost and Wordsworth put positive connotations behind the themes of their poems, while Paz's theme is mostly negative. All three poems examine what a person might reflect on when they are alone and whether or not that reflection might be an affirmative or depressing experience.

Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is a simple, understated narrative lyric. The speaker pauses briefly on a snowy evening to experience the breathtaking beauty of the woods. In the poem the speaker begins by letting the reader know where he is. He has stopped by the woods to enjoy the beauty of nature as the woods fill with snow. He uses simple and easily understood words. "Between the woods and frozen lake" (Frost 1015) kindle images of the rider on a lonely road with the woods in the distance on one side and the frozen lake on the other. In the speaker's closing remark "But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep" (Frost 1016), it is evident that even though the woods are compelling him to stay, he is compelled more so by his obligations and the demands of

his life and those that society has placed on him. The entire poem paints a very vivid image of the peaceful woods.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is also a poem in which the speaker gains a great deal of pleasure in the beauty of nature and in this instance, also reflects upon it later for further comfort. "I gazed - and gazed - but little thought / What wealth the show to me had brought" (Wordsworth 1191), illustrates the tremendous gift that the beauty of the daffodils gives to the speaker. It is a clear image that the speaker captures and traps within his memory like a snapshot of a joyful time. In the last stanza "And then my heart with pleasure fills, / And dances with the daffodils" (Wordsworth 1191), the speaker also tells us that whenever he feels "vacant" or "pensive" he recalls the memory and is transformed from loneliness to a state of pleasure. The poem is a glimpse into the speaker's mind where we learn how he evokes a happy memory in order to cope with loneliness.

Octavio Paz's "The Street" is a poem in which the speaker is wandering through the street; he is totally conscious of his state of isolation. In contrast to the Frost and Wordsworth poems, the speaker in this instance is filled with anxiety. There is an uneasy feeling and a sense of urgency the reader feels for the speaker; almost as if the reader can feel the speaker's obvious trepidation and hopes for him to flee whatever it is that is frightening him. The speaker in this poem seems to feel as though he does not matter to anyone, "...where nobody waits for, nobody follows me, / where I pursue a man who stumbles and rises and says when he sees me: nobody" (Paz

1205). Unlike the previous poems, the speaker in this poem deals with being alone in a much different manner. He is anxious and afraid and does not stop to appreciate the beauty of nature. This is a somber, unsettling journey.

Robert Frost, William Wordsworth and Octavio Paz each have a different way of illustrating the theme of being alone. While each of the circumstances of these poems is quite different from one another, there is a certain sense of similarity within in them all. We learn from the Robert Frost poem that although he has someplace to go, stopping for a moment to absorb the beauty of nature is important to him. In the William Wordsworth poem we are shown that in a time of loneliness, reflecting back on a picturesque memory is what pulls him through the darkness. In Octavio Paz's poem, the speaker is alone and tense; running from the isolation seems to be his way of escape. All three poems are interesting reflections on one similar theme; being alone.