

Stopping by woods on a snowy evening and the road not taken essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Robert Frost often writes about journeys. Although his poems may at first seem plain, they have wider meanings, which often regard life's journey. Because people can often relate to Frost's writing due to his simple language, he is still a very popular poet today. His life spanned two important eras of literature – the Victorian and Modernist eras – as he was born in 1874 and died in 1963. He was American but travelled to England, which may account for his vivid descriptions of the world and his knowledge of the decisions in life which have to be made.

'Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening' is a typical Frost poem. It centres on this theme and a natural setting. The narrator is travelling near woods. He is alone and has complete solitude:

'Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though'.

The poet here suggests that this man is on his own in an isolated area as even the owner of the woods does not live nearby, but in the town. The man is aware that the owner will not be there, perhaps suggesting that he was looking for time alone.

Snow is filling up the woods, suggesting suffocation and a feeling of entrapment.

In the second stanza the reader is again reminded that the man is in the middle of nowhere:

'My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near'

As Frost mentions the narrator's horse, this emphasises the point that they are alone in an odd place especially as it is ' the darkest evening of the year'. Everything is static as even the lake is frozen. The horse does not feel secure and this may be because of the stillness:

' The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake'

The long vowel sounds accentuate the quiet stillness, as only the weather is slightly disturbing the complete silence.

It is the last stanza that tells the reader the most about the true meaning of this poem. We learn that the narrator finds the woods attractive:

' The woods are lovely, dark and deep'

Here Frost uses an oxymoron to create the tone and uses alliteration on ' dark and deep'. The traveller finds the woods beautiful yet scary. Clearly the traveller enjoys the solitude of the woods and the darkness. However he has to stay in the real world:

' But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep

And miles to go before I sleep.'

Once again Frost uses plain language to convey a wider meaning. Although the narrator is drawn to the woods, he has promises to keep in the real world. Perhaps he is a doctor or is delivering something or has a family to care for. He will not sleep for a long time. Maybe he is serious and is depressed and the darkness attracts him, as it is a way to escape.

Commitments to other people keep us going, even the traveller who is really just a bloke on a horse. He himself has to travel life's journey and I feel that this poem may suggest a lack of faith and that he was looking for some meaning, perhaps God and does not convert but continues to go on. On the other hand, he may even be contemplating suicide for the ultimate escape, which would be ending life's journey.

There is a strong rhythm in this poem. There are four quatrains with each line being an iambic tetrameter. The rhyme scheme is ABBA, BBCB, CCDC, DDDD. Using the rhyme of the third line in each verse in the following verse creates the strong rhythm and the repetition of the last two lines of the poem where the rhyme scheme is DDDD emphasises the hard work the traveller has in front of him.

Another Frost poem regarding a journey is 'The Road Not Taken.' This poem is about a traveller who came to a fork in a road and could not decide which road to travel down. We learn that he would like to have travelled down both:

' Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveller'

He found it hard to decide which road to travel down to continue his journey and wanted to opt out of making a decision and instead become a traveller who would be able to travel both roads. However this is of course not possible. He does not feel comfortable at making this decision. As he looked down one of the roads, he eventually cannot see where it leads. When he looks at the other road he finds that it is 'just as fair' and that both paths are equally attractive. It has not been travelled on as much and 'wanted wear'. Although, in the end they have been worn about the same. Frost is saying here that in life many decisions have to be made and although two options may seem as good as each other, you may find that the one you chose is not as suitable or as good a choice as you first thought. Decisions in life have to be taken seriously. The man cannot be swayed by what other people chose:

' And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black'

The rhyme scheme in this poem is ABAAB, CDCCD, EFEEF, and GHGGH. It is made up of four stanzas each with five lines. There is not a particularly strong rhythm in this poem, which differs to 'Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening', which has a very strong rhythm throughout. The rhyme schemes also differ as the rhyme from the first verse is carried on to the next verse and so on in 'Stopping By Woods'.

One of the main differences in these two poems is that the traveller on the horse looks forward to what he has to do in the future and continues to travel and does not give up, even though he comes close as if looking for a way to escape, but in 'The Road Not Taken' the traveller will contemplate his journey in the future and remember how he had to make a decision and will feel regret. The other traveller will carry on with his life. Both poems present the fact that life is a journey and we have to make a lot of decisions in our lives. The traveller with the horse chose to carry on with life, even through hard times though the traveller who made a decision to go down the less travelled road perhaps did not make the right decision and will view the journey he took in a negative manner. The man on the horse saw the positive side of life in the end and had hope after having a lack of faith.

In conclusion, we may face decisions in life but these have to be made carefully and nobody should distract us from the decisions that we make, like the traveller in 'The Road Not Taken'. Frost demonstrates in these poems that simplicity can lead to wider possibilities and we have to be able to find these meanings in order to understand the journey of life. I prefer 'The Road Not Taken' as it makes me think more about the decisions that have to be made in life and how important they can be. Frost wants us to make the right decisions so that we do not feel regret and I feel that this is an important issue.