

The poem stopping by woods on a snowy evening



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The Poem Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening The Poem Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening This poem is layered with different meanings and it requires the reader to contemplate Frost's emotions behind the words. Like most of Frost's poems, Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening can be read on several level yet you can ignore them all and still enjoy the surface meaning. On the surface of this poem, it's talking about a man traveling through the woods with his horse and they stop near someone's house. The horse wants the man to continue but he wants to stay. Being in the woods causes the man to reflect on the larger tensions between duty; his promises to keep(13) and the desire to do what he wants.

However, in order to fully understand the emotions and the deeper meanings within this poem, we'll analyze these three aspects of the poem: images, rhythms and meanings. This entire poem uses words that paint very vivid images of gorgeous winter, lovely dark woods and peacefulness, which inside causes a certain friction or tension. Also there is a sense of darkness in the poem, such as in the darkest evening of the year(8) and The woods are lovely, dark and deep(16). And the fact that the poem takes place in the isolated woods, there is a certain quality of peacefulness and stillness being portrayed as in the frozen lake(12) and The only other sound's the sweep/Of easy wind and downy flake(11-12). Between the woods and frozen lake(7).

This notion of being in between those two things is a significant tension in the poem. Therefore without these exact words, this poem could lack several layers of meaning and emotion. Just below the surface there is the sleep/death metaphor, and the undercurrent of gentle longing for death tinges the surface with a melancholy that reinforces and plays off the night

and winter images. But the imagery of the poem quoted above creates in the reader the actual feelings of peace, beauty and tension; these actual feelings make up a range of experience entirely different from the experience of the rational thought that sums up the poem. All stanzas have a regular rhyme scheme of the last word of the first, second and fourth lines in each stanza (AABA, BBCB, etc.) except for the last stanza, which is all in the same rhyme (DDDD). Besides that, the last word from the third line rhymes with the following stanza's lines one, two and four. These perfect rhymes and rhythms lend itself to the light restful feel of the poem.

Frost's choice of written words are much like spoken English which lends itself to the conversational feel that his poems have. Form wise, note the predominance of soft, sibilant sounds, evoking the sweep of easy wind and downy flake(11-12). Also the sounds associated with nature in the poem all sound soothing, such as sweep(11) and deep(13) which suggests further that the woods is a place of refuge for the man. The change in rhyme in the final stanza gives us a clue about the shift in the content, too. The shift comes at a point in the poem when we might expect an insight or answer to the question the poem poses, but the same rhyme throughout this final stanza suggests instead that the man is still thinking or still asking the questions.

In addition, the final two lines repeat one another, which also suggests that a problem or tension still exists, that the poem doesn't completely provide resolution. Every word has a key role in the deeper meaning of the poem.

Normally poems are shorter than other works. This makes each word of a poem extremely significant. Frost's major meaning seemed to be that one should take time to stop and notice the beauty around us but not to dawdle

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and dwell too long, as there is much to do in a lifetime. In the first stanza, To watch his woods fill up with snow(4), we see a man stopping in the forest to watch it fill up with snow. Here, the woods in the poem symbolize death. The woods and death are both looked at as very cold miserable things.

Frost is trying to convey, through the picture of cold and dreary woods, that the man is contemplating suicide. At this point in the man's life, getting lost and dying in the woods seems easier than facing all of his troubles. In the next stanza, his horse is pulling at the reins bells trying to get him to leave the cold woods He gives his harness bells a shake(9). The horse is representing the side of him that wants to return and confront his troubles. In the following stanza, only serene thoughts are portrayed. Again, the man is pondering whether or not to stay in the deep and lonely woods.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep(13). With this line, he is telling himself he would die in peace if he stayed within the depth of the silent woods. But I have promises to keep,/ And miles to go before I sleep,/ And miles to go before I sleep(14-16). These final lines remind the man that he has commitments to loved ones to support them; he can not abandon these people that he loves so much. These lines are repeated to warrant that continuing home is the fit thing for the man to do. By analyzing these three key elements of poetry, it is much easier to gain the full meaning of a poem.

Understanding that the man in the poem was contemplating suicide opens the poem up to be much more than four trivial stanzas. It becomes a picture of how someone who might be contemplating suicide thinks and feels.

Searching for the complete understanding of a poem is like a journey for the

reader; the destination is reached when the author's true meaning is successfully conveyed. English Essays.