

Frost and Snow

ROBERT FROST WAS A GREAT FORMAL POET WHO OFTEN WROTE ABOUT NATURE. THIS MONTH, AMMON FORD UNZIPS ONE OF FROST'S MOST HYPNOTIC AND MYSTERIOUS POEMS.

To unzip poetry:

>> **TO REVEAL** THE TRUTH OF A POEM

>> **TO ANALYZE** A POEM'S MEANING

>> **TO CLARIFY** THE FORM BEHIND THE WORDS

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening **BY ROBERT FROST**



Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

AMMON FORD UNZIPS “STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING”

In this poem, Frost takes us on a journey, using the best virtual animation of his time. I can see the woods; I can hear the horse; I can feel the “woods fill up with snow.” The speaker is a man riding along a barren road at night. He’s tired and longs for a comfortable place to lay his head. He looks up from his reins and sees beside the road a grove. It’s peaceful and quiet. As he looks into this comfortable scene, drawn into it, he “zones out,” losing all sense of time and place. For that brief moment, he experiences only the sound of his



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horse, the sweeping wind, and the serenity of the wood. Frost uses iambic meter and a simple rhyme scheme to convey this feeling. The flowing rhythmic words captivate the reader in just the same way as the speaker is captivated by the scene.

Is there a deeper meaning? Perhaps. The horse could be symbolic of some worldly remembrance or one of the “promises” to which the speaker is bound. The wood could represent some inner desire. The poem may be a statement about life and priorities, or duty, but I personally would rather read the lines than read between them. I would rather enjoy the serenity that the wood offers in this crazy world and “zone out,” just as the speaker did, and take a moment to breathe deeply the crisp air of that enchanting wood.

Unzipped: Your Turn

- >> HOW DOES FROST’S USE OF RHYTHM AND RHYME CONTRIBUTE TO THE MEANING OF THE POEM?
- >> WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THE REPETITION AT THE END?
- >> WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HORSE? HOW DOES THE POET EVOKE THE HORSE THROUGH THE LANGUAGE OF THE POEM?

ABOUT ROBERT FROST

BORN

March 26, 1874,
San Francisco,
California

DIED

January 29, 1963,
Boston,
Massachusetts

OCCUPATIONS

Frost worked as a teacher, a cobbler, and a newspaper editor before becoming a poet.

HOME

Frost and his wife ran a farm in New Hampshire.



AWARDS

Won the Pulitzer Prize an unprecedented four times.



SEND US the title and author of your favorite poem, and tell us why you love it. What is it about the poem that speaks to you? What’s your favorite image? How does it relate to you and your life? Send your response to LC@Scholastic.com.