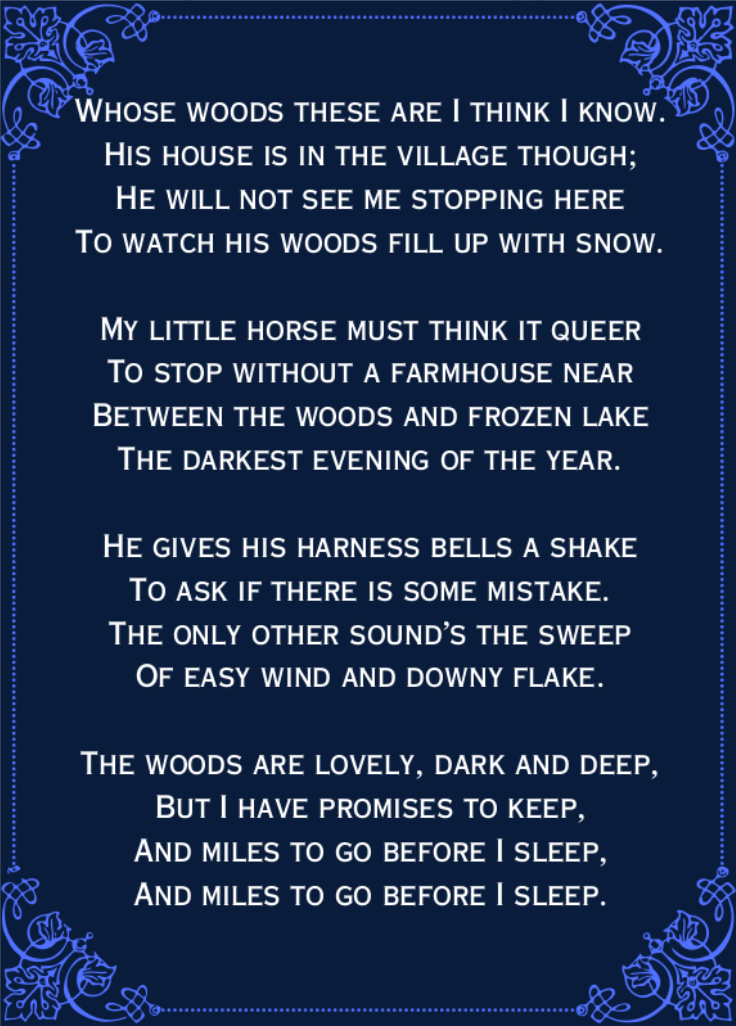


STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING
BY
ROBERT FROST

EMBRACING THE DARKNESS

While reading the poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost I immediately thought about death. In the first stanza the poet uses male pronouns to identify an unknown person who he says owns the woods that are later described as “lovely, dark, and deep.” This description of the woods evokes a sense of beauty and mystery which can be associated with the unknown aspects of death and suggests a peaceful and tranquil final resting place. By the poet not naming the owner of the woods, it brings another sense of mystery, alluding to the personification of death. This really resonated with me because by giving death human attributes it takes the power away from a scary life event, and can make it feel more approachable and less intimidating, bringing it closer to us rather than seeming distant.

The repetition of the last line is important because it adds a dramatic and emotional effect. By him saying it twice, it is more powerful and stands out more to the reader. It can be interpreted as motivation for himself, but also emphasizing his exhaustion and trying to convince himself to keep going. Death is sometimes referred to as a deep sleep, and miles in this context could be equated to an unknown, long span of time. While he wanted to stop in the woods, perhaps giving into death, his final words in the poem keep him going.



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.



Robert Lee Frost




ROBERT FROST (1874-1963) WAS AN AMERICAN POET BORN IN SAN FRANCISCO. FROST SET FOR MANY OF HIS POEMS IN NEW ENGLAND, WHERE HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE. IN 1912, HE MOVED HIS FAMILY TO ENGLAND WHERE HE PUBLISHED HIS FIRST WORKS.



BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, HE PURSUED HIS CAREER OF WRITING AND TEACHING, LATER BECOMING ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AMERICAN POETS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

TWO OF FROST'S GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE HIM WINNING THE PULITZER PRIZE FOUR TIMES AND READING HIS POEMS AT THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S INAUGURATION. WHILE HIS WRITING CAREER WAS A SUCCESS HE FACED MANY ADVERSITIES IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE SUCH BEING UNABLE TO ATTEND HARVARD DUE TO HIS ECONOMIC STATUS, LOSING TWO OF HIS CHILDREN AT YOUNG AGES, AND TWO MORE TRAGICALLY AS ADULTS. THESE LOSSES DEEPLY AFFECTED FROST AND INFLUENCED SOME OF HIS LATER POETRY, WHICH OFTEN EXPLORES THEMES OF GRIEF, LOSS, AND MORTALITY. DESPITE THESE PERSONAL HARDSHIPS, FROST'S POETIC VOICE REMAINED STRONG, AND HIS WORK CONTINUED TO RESONATE WITH AUDIENCES AROUND THE WORLD.

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"Robert Frost." LitFinder Contemporary Collection, Gale, 2007. Gale Literature: LitFinder, link.gale.com/apps/doc/LTF0000023948BI/GLS?u=cuny_mancc&sid=bookmark-GLS&xid=ce8aa892. Accessed 22 Mar. 2024.