

POETRY CHALLENGE 4: STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

This famous poem was written by an American poet called Robert Frost, who was born nearly 150 years ago in 1874 in San Francisco.

STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

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 Frost (1874-1963)

ANALYSIS:

Analysing poems is a great activity, and gives you the chance to look for hidden detail and think about the language of the poem. For example:

1. Look at the rhyming words in the poem. Is there a pattern to the rhyme? Is there a rhythm to the poem?
2. Why do you think the poet has repeated 'And miles to go before I sleep'? How does this poem make you feel?
3. The poem says 'the woods are lovely' – are there other words or images in the poem that help you to feel comfortable in these 'dark and deep' woods?
4. Can you see how the poet creates the atmosphere of the poem? What difference would it make to the atmosphere if he'd described 'a howling wind and icy flake'?

CHALLENGE:

Can you draw a picture of the scene? Look carefully at what is described, and what the poem tells you is missing from the scene. Use your imagination to fill in the rest! If you're not keen on drawing you could search for a painting or photograph online that you feel represents the poem.

NOTE FOR PARENTS/TEACHERS: This poem is often analysed for its different layers of symbolic meaning. Older children could do more analysis and/or research this on the web, and there are extension activities at <https://poets.org/lesson-plan/teach-poem-stopping-woods-snowy-evening-robert-frost>