

An Analysis of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost

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Abstract

Robert frost is one of the supercalifragilisticexpialidocious American poets of 20th century. He won four Pulitzer prizes During his life time and gained lot of popularity not only in England but in whole Europe. His Poetry dealt with elements of nature personal and social aspect of human beings. His themes are Very inspirational, innovative and call of his age. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is one of the most popular poems of Robert Frost. In this poem, in vivid description and beautiful language, the poet made the persona in a kind of dilemma between beauty (“The woods are lovely, dark and deep”) and obligation “ But I have promises to keep,” which is a conflict between the enjoyment of beauty and the practical pressures of everyday for everybody.

Key Words:

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, pulchritudinous, floccinaucinihilipilification

I. Introduction

Robert Frost is one of the most popular and honored poet of America. His poem reflects his broad outlook and realistic approach. Frost does not believe in international brotherhood but is a diehard nationalist. He believes that an individual's natural relationship to society extended to his family, close friends, then home town or local community, his state and finally his family. Frost's poems create a memorable and pulchritudinous impression by the overwhelming presence of nature. In his poetry, we find a skillful combination of outer lightness and inner gravity. Frost is of the view that a poem begins in delight and ends with a wise idea. Frost saw nature as an alien force capable of destroying man, but he also saw man's struggle with nature as a heroic battle. “Stopping by woods on a snowy evening” reveals a definite relationship between the narrator and his natural surroundings.

Stopping by 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

This is one of the most popular among Frost's popular poems. In the poem the poet who stopped by woods on a snowy evening and his feeling at the moment are vividly described. The horse felt puzzled and floccinaucinihilipilification when stopped at the moment, but he didn't know it was the beauty and darkness of the woods that attracted the master. The persona (or the “I” of the poem) cherished a deep love for nature, and when surrounded by nature, he felt perfectly contented. Probably he longed to die there, being lost in the bosom of nature. Thinking of the promises to keep,

he felt obliged to go, to cover the long distance lies before him.

In the first line—“Whose woods these are I think I know.”--- Frost turns normal word order around. Ordinary word order would have us say something like “I think I know whose woods these are.” By moving woods to the start of the sentence, Frost gives it more prominence or power. In the second line, “His house is in the village though;” the last word make no logical sense on the surface meaning because “though” should make some contradiction to the statement before. So though here qualifies something left out as the stanza ends we learn something besides the speaker's embarrassment; we learn his motive for stopping: “To watch his woods fill up with snow.” Frost's language here is plain. Saying fill up contribute to the image made by the poet; his woods becomes a container which snow can fill.

In the second stanza, picking up the here rhyme; tell us that the little horse must think it queer. Consider the word must in the line. We only claim that something must be true if we don't know it for certain. When Frost writes “My little horse must think it queer,” he uses the doubtful must because he knows a human cannot mind read his horse. The persona attributes doubts to his horse because he himself believes it weird or eccentric to stop one's horse for no good reason out in the middle of nowhere to watch snow falling in the darkness. This man's uneasiness shows in his self-mockery: even his horse must think he's crazy. As the stanza continues, the poet gives us more information in images that carry feeling. The road, we learn, passes between the woods and the frozen lake. Sometimes an image informs us by what it omits. While frozen ads cold to the poem, the line also increases the solitude of the scene: the lane runs between wood and lake only, no houses or factories here, no inns or filling stations, just these cold and natural things, on “The darkest evening of the year.”

In the third stanza, the little horse does what horses do; he shudders or shakes, standing still in the cold night, and to the driver who still feels foolish pausing to gaze at snow in the woods, the horse's jingling harness bells seem like the horse's reproach. The jingling is another image---so far we've had images of sight (to watch), of touch (frozen lake), and of sound (bells)---and now the sound image multiply: “the sweep/ Of easy wind and downy flake.” Notice that images often appeal to more than one sense. If frozen is an image of cold in frozen lake, it is an image of sight also, because we know what a frozen lake looks like. And the sweep is a swooshing sound, but it's also a visual broom moving. By the end of the third stanza the poem has created a dramatic conflict, like a

story or o play. The conflict lives in the mind of the speaker, who attributes one sides of his feeling to his horse; of course, it is the person who thinks it queer to pause where he pauses; at the same time it is the speaker who stops to gaze into the lovely beauty of the wood, exercising the other side of his feeling. According to an old saying, he is "of two minds about it," In the final stanza, mind 1 writes the first line and mind 2 answers with the second, third and fourth; the mind with the most lines has the last word.

In our daily life, we are often ambivalent --- of two minds, sometimes of three or more--- about what we do. Often two desires are in conflict; the woods are lovely, but I have duties; the scoop of ice cream will taste good, but I will get fat; I want to see this movie, but I want to pass the test. Human beings are ambivalent by nature: we often find ourselves headed in two directions at the same time. In our deepest selves we are never one-hundred percent of anything, neither loving nor hating, and if we tell ourselves we are pure, we fool ourselves. That partly explains why people like this poem so much.

Conclusion

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is a poem full of the air of harmony and beauty. No wonder, there is a literal Interpretation about it, which can be that "it represents a moment of relaxation from the onerous journey of life, an Almost aesthetic enjoyment and appreciation of natural beauty which is wholesome and restorative against the chaotic Existence of modern man. The poetic imaginary is really pulchritudinous. However, the poem has not only the beautiful Artistic conception but also deep and helpful philosophical ideas or the themes, that is, the realization of value is the Most important thing in our life and everybody should shoulder his responsibilities and hurry on with his life journey Instead of only enjoying the life at all costs. The psychological journey of "I" in this poem just reflects the Psychological conflict of modern people between shouldering their responsibilities and enjoying the natural beauty.

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