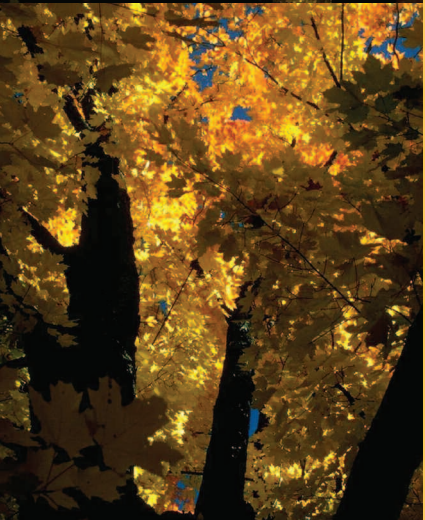
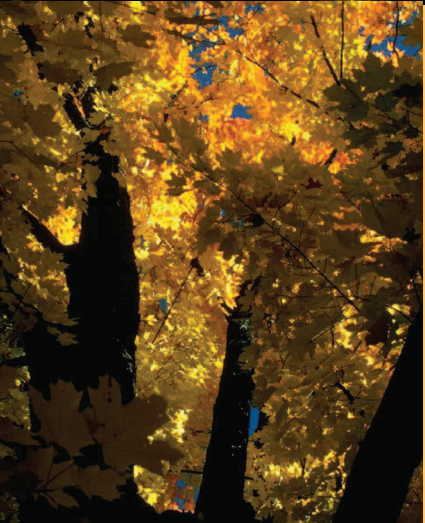


Into • *The Road Not Taken*

In reading poetry, the reader's biggest challenge may be understanding the poet's reason for writing the poem. The poet's purpose gives the poem its theme. Therefore, the poet always shares feelings and ideas that are inspiring, and to which the poet must give voice. It is this central message that is the **main idea**, or **theme**, of the poem. Without it, the poem would lack a reason to be.

Focus

The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost, is one of the best known and most beloved pieces of modern American poetry. The poem's popularity is surely because of Frost's skill, but its theme, which is slowly revealed to the reader, speaks to our hearts and minds. By the end of this important poem, hopefully you will grasp its meaning, and Frost's need to write the poem.



The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost

Two roads diverged¹ in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
5 To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
10 Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
15 I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
20 And that has made all the difference.

1. *diverged* (DIH vurjd): went in different directions

● Studying THE SELECTION

- *The Road Not Taken*

Recalling

1. Describe the setting of the poem.
2. What decision was the speaker faced with?
3. Which road does the speaker choose?
4. What is the meaning of the speaker's final statement?

Interpreting

5. Why did the speaker choose one road and not the other? Explain what the speaker means.
6. What does Frost mean in Lines 13-15?
7. What do the two roads symbolize? What is the theme of the poem?

Concluding

8. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice? What did your decision concern? Why did you make the choice you did?

Examining Poetry

Reread the Frost selection, and concentrate on the symbolism in the poem. Remember, a **symbol** is one thing that represents something else. For example, the American flag is a symbol of national pride and patriotism. In literature the appearance of dark clouds, lightning, and thunder is often used as an indication that something bad is about to happen. Symbols may be suggestive of future events.

What was symbolic about the speaker taking the road that “was grassy and wanted wear”?

Creating and Writing

Look back at your answer to question 8. Think again about the choice you made. Now think about the choice that the speaker made in *The Road Not Taken*. Try to write your own poem about important choices.