

WINTER SOLSTICE POETRY READING

Hosted by Creation Care Ministry - December 19, 2021



Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

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.

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.

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.

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.

Not Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

JENNIFER MICHAEL HECHT

I

Promises to keep was a lie, he had nothing. Through the woods.
Over the river and into the pain. It is an addict's
talk of quitting as she's smacking at a vein. He was always
going into the woods. It was he who wrote, *The best way*

out is always through. You'd think a shrink, but no, a poet.
He saw the woods and knew. The forest is the one that holds
promises. The woods are lovely, dark, and deep, they fill
with a quiet snow. Miles are traveled as we sleep. He steers

his horse off the road. Among the trees now, the blizzard
is a dusting. Holes in the canopy make columns of snowstorm,
lit from above. His little horse thinks it is queer. They go
deeper, sky gets darker. It's the darkest night of the year.

II

He had no promises to keep, nothing pending. Had no bed
to head to, measurably away in miles. He was a freak like me,
monster of the dawn. Whose woods these are I think I know,
his house is in the village though. In the middle of life

he found himself lost in a dark woods. I discovered myself
in a somber forest. In between my breasts and breaths I got
lost. The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I've got promises
to keep, smiles to go before I leap. I'm going into the woods.

They're lovely dark, and deep, which is what I want, deep lovely
darkness. No one has asked, let alone taken, a promise of me,
no one will notice if I choose bed or rug, couch or forest deep.
It doesn't matter where I sleep. It doesn't matter where I sleep.

**WHERE DO YOU
NOTICE LIGHT OR
SHADOWS IN
YOUR LIFE?**

Reflections

Those Winter Sundays

ROBERT HAYDEN

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Snow

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

Once with my scarf knotted over my mouth
I lumbered into a storm of snow up the long hill
and did not know where I was going except to the top of it.
In those days we went out like that.
Even children went out like that.
Someone was crying hard at home again,
raging blizzard of sobs.

I dragged the sled by its rope,
which we normally did not do
when snow was coming down so hard,
pulling my brother whom I called by our secret name
as if we could be other people under the skin.
The snow bit into my face, prickling the rim
of the head where the hair starts coming out.
And it was a big one. It would come down and down
for days. People would dig their cars out like potatoes.

How are you doing back there? I shouted,
and he said *Fine, I'm doing fine*,
in the sunniest voice he could muster
and I think I should love him more today
for having used it.

At the top we turned and he slid down,
steering himself with the rope gripped in
his mittened hands. I stumbled behind
sinking deeply, shouting *Ho! Look at him go!*
as if we were having a good time.
Alone on the hill. That was the deepest
I ever went into the snow. Now I think of it
when I stare at paper or into silences
between human beings. The drifting
accumulation. A father goes months
without speaking to his son.

How there can be a place
so cold any movement saves you.

Ho! You bang your hands together,
stomp your feet. *The father could die!*
The son! Before the weather changes.

Acquainted with Night

ROBERT FROST

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

邯郸驿里逢冬至，抱膝灯前影伴身。
At the courier station of Handan on Winter
Solstice night, my arms clasping my knees, only
my shadow is accompanying me.

想得家中夜深坐，还应说着远行人。
My family might sit for a long time, talking
about me now at this moment.

To Know the Dark

WENDELL BERRY

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.