



# Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

*Robert Frost , Susan Jeffers (Illustrator)*

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Ever since it was published in 1978, the picture-book presentation of Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" has been an enduring favorite. For this special edition with a new design, trim size, and three new spreads, Susan Jeffers has added more detail and subtle color to her sweeping backgrounds of frosty New England scenes. There are more animals to find among the trees, and the kindly figure with his "promises to keep" exudes warmth as he stops to appreciate the quiet delights of winter. The handsome new vellum jacket will attract new and old fans as it evokes a frost-covered windowpane. This celebration of a season makes an ideal holiday gift for a child, a teacher, or a host. Robert Frost (1874-1963) is one of America's most celebrated poets and a four-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

Susan Jeffers is the illustrator of such distinguished picture books as **Three Jovial Huntsmen**, a Caldecott Honor Book; **Rachel Field's Hitty**; and the ABBY Award-winning **Brother Eagle, Sister Sky**, which was also a *New York Times* best-seller.

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Details

Date : Published September 24th 2001 by Dutton Books for Young Readers (first published January 1st 1969)  
ISBN : 9780525467342  
Author : Robert Frost , Susan Jeffers (Illustrator)  
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# From Reader Review *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* for online ebook

**Malcolm Kidd says**

One of Frost's most haunting and lucid illustrations of his resolution to death is in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923). Written in the first person, the voice of the poet is expressed through the speaker, who, when travelling home on a winter's night, is compelled to pull up his horse and gaze towards some woods as they "fill up with snow". Seemingly transfixed, on "the darkest evening of the year", the poet is positioned between the woods and a frozen lake, alluding to Dante's "Inferno" in "The Divine Comedy", echoed in his own poem "Fire and Ice". Frost is clearly contemplating death here, and in the alliterative lines of the third stanza he writes "The only other sound's the sweep, of easy wind and downy flake", and the reader is almost falling into the snowy woods with the poet, the woods that are "lovely, dark and deep". Before he reaches this point of no return, he is alerted back to reality by the harness bells of his horse. Shaken from his oneiric melancholy, the poet becomes the speaker again and suggests a resumption of his journey, which he repeats, "And miles to go before I sleep". He has promises to keep, but the greater issue is whether he will indeed 'keep' his life (Poirier, 1977). Frost has been described as a poet of 'rejected invitations' (Brower, 1963). The alluring darkness of the woods and the underlying inference of winter sleep, represent powerful invitations, rejected by the speaker who pulls himself back, with the help of his horse, from the brink. The latter echoic line received a mixed response; Laurie Lee refers to the "shattering repetitions" and "gauche imperfections" as his very reasons for including the poem in the 2006 edition of *Lifelines*; and Christopher Smart (Hamilton, 2011) refers to this echo in terms of a blues repetition as the "soul of the voice". Frost extrapolates a cavernous image of the deep, dark abyss of the woods, to that of the distance remaining of the speaker's life.

Frost's curiosity in the hereafter is emphasised in the final verse of "Away" (1920):

And I may return  
If dissatisfied  
With what I learn  
From having died.

A sense of his agnosticism here is tempered with a statement made whilst on a peripatetic amble with John Lynen, when he said "You know, there is nothing after this" (Lynen, 1960).

The conception of death was created by man, and this is illustrated powerfully in "Range-Finding" (1916). A field, the natural habitat of insects, birds, and the like, has become man's battlefield. Shots are fired to test the distances that the gun sights need to be set to. These shots strike the field's growth, and create little disturbance, unlike the devastation were they to be met by human flesh. A spider, seeing its web vibrate, rushes to it, hoping for prey, but finding nothing, withdraws. The creatures of the earth are oblivious to the concerns of men. The ravages of war can only arrest the progress of nature temporarily. A battlefield grows back in time, man does not, endorsing the lack of purpose of man's conflict as much as its lack of meaning in nature. At the same time, this very distance between man and all other orders and species is emphasised definitively by the human condition which gives man 'ethical meaning' according to Lynen. Unlike nature, which merely exists, man has developed historically through a paradigm of right and wrong, and as such has found justification for killing, and so to war.

Frost, neither a soldier, nor considered a war poet, wrote evocatively on the subject, of note regarding his friend and kindred spirit Edward Thomas (1878-1917), in "To E.T." (1923). Thomas died in 1917 at the battle of Arras, after Frost had returned to the United States. They met when Frost and his family moved to England in 1912. Frost encouraged Thomas to write poetry, and he went on to publish seventy five poems before his death on the battlefield. This event is addressed in Frost's lament to his friend:

.....when you fell that day  
The war seemed over more for you than me  
But now for me than you – the other way.  
How over, though, for even me who knew  
....  
If I was not to speak of it to you

His overtly cathartic sense of loss is profound, deeply personal and different to his other poems concerning death. Frost's own life was filled with tragic loss; his father died when he was eleven, followed by three of his children, including his son who committed suicide, and his wife. These must have all racked up a heavy mental and spiritual burden which he carried for most of his life, and undoubtedly would have influenced much of his work in one way or another. Unlike many of his generation, Robert Frost (1874-1963), had a long life, and like many others who survived that time, he witnessed and endured much personal tragedy. In his own way he wrote about it all, whereas most are not able to do that. His poetry haunts, intrigues and engages through his invitation to listen in on a conversation he was having with himself. (When time is spent, eternity begins). (Helen Hunt Jackson. 1830-1885).

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### **Linore says**

This is a sweetly illustrated book and makes a nice read-aloud for littler ones. My problem with it is that the illustrations fail to do justice to the poem's intimations. There's way too much light for "the darkest evening of the year," for instance, and the narrator is shown making snow angels on the snowy floor of the woods. If you want to read a poem to little ones while having pictures to show, fine. But I wouldn't think Robert Frost would enjoy this near subversion of his masterpiece! The subtler meanings of this beautiful work, which is one of my favorite of Frost's, by the way, are completely absent. Even children's books can stay true to the spirit of a work while catering to the understanding of younger minds, but I get no sense here that the artist even understood the implications of the words. I was disappointed, therefore, but if you don't mind an interpretation determined to put a happy spin on Frost's deeper reflections, this might still satisfy you with its pretty artwork.

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### **Heather Elliott says**

Stopping by Woods on a Snowing Evening is a wonderful picture book that allows young readers of all ages the opportunity to learn about one of the most famous poets- Robert Frost. The picture illustrations match beautifully with the words of the poem allowing young readers an opportunity to visualize the lines of the poem (which can be a great tool when trying to teach them about poetry!). The poem is just as magical as it has ever been, but the illustrations truly keep the reader engaged until the end. The text is easy to follow as there is only a sentence on a page making it great for lower elementary grades. The poem itself is complex enough to be used as a tool for upper elementary and even middle school students.

If I were to use this book in my classroom, I would definitely use it as a read aloud book during a poetry unit. I would even go as far as using it as an example in a mini lesson if I felt that my students were ready to handle poetry at this level. Overall, I would definitely recommend using this book in all grades at some point in the school year. Whether it is just for a read aloud or as an exemplary piece in a poetry unit, it is so beautifully written and illustrated that all children should be exposed to it.

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**Miles Mathews says**

I had not read Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" in decades. I memorized the poem back in grade school, and it is fun to see how much my daughter loves this book!

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**Sadia Mansoor says**

*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.*

One of my most fav poems by my favorite poet.... I AM IN LOVE WITH THIS POEM <3  
Whenever I read it, I imagine myself walking through a forest with such lush scenery ^\_^

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**Stella Chen says**

Loved this poem. Story of my life.

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**Melki says**

The old familiar words are given new life by Susan Jeffers' ethereal, lovely illustrations as an elderly gentleman stops to admire the beauty of a quiet woods, and even makes a snow angel.

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### Nicole says

LOVE this poem. Reminds me of sitting in a window and watching the snow fall. The illustrator did a perfect job.

### Noelle says

[illegible]

## Bettie? says

Features in a 1996 nationwide poll compilation.

From wiki - *"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"* is a poem written in 1922 by Robert Frost, and published in 1923 in his *New Hampshire* volume. Imagery and personification are prominent in the work. In a letter to Louis Untermeyer, Frost called it *"my best bid for remembrance"*.

*Frost wrote this poem about winter in June, 1922 at his house in Shaftsbury, Vermont that is now home to the "Robert Frost Stone House Museum". Frost had been up the entire night writing the long poem "New Hampshire" and had finally finished when he realized morning had come. He went out to view the sunrise and suddenly got the idea for "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". He wrote the new poem "about the snowy evening and the little horse as if I'd had a hallucination" in just "a few minutes without strain." [3]*

*The poem is written in iambic tetrameter in the Rubaiyat stanza created by Edward Fitzgerald.*

## A Book Vacation says

When I was in high school, my English teacher made my class memorize random poems. I don't remember why we had to do this, but I do remember analyzing and memorizing "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," which soon became one of my favorite poems of all time. It stayed with me long after high school, and in my graduate program for education, I made an iMovie of the poem depicting the scenery while also depicting the chain rhyme on screen. I still have that iMovie and I occasionally show it in classes when I go to teach poetry, so imagine my surprise when I came across this hardcover, illustrated book of my favorite poem! I stood in the bookstore and read it; absolutely amazed with the illustrations and the interpretation of the poem, which is a bit different from my own interpretation, but alas, I decided not to buy the book, not then anyway. Of course, I thought about it often and kept thinking of going back to get it, but never did. Then Christmas came, and my wonderful friend bought it for me! I was, and am, extremely excited because it's such a beautiful book! And, I plan to use it in the classroom as well, making poetry more fun for my

students as I read it to them and show them the pictures... and then the real analysis will begin. I think this is one of the best picture books I've ever seen, and I highly recommend it, for both the young and the old...

To read my full review upon release (1/31/12):

<http://wp.me/p1jhaj-1F4>

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## **Julie says**

This illustrated picture book, set to Robert Frost's famous poem, is a treasure for all ages.

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## **Michelle says**

So often when I think of my children I think of vibrancy, energy, motion. Sometimes it's dancing, sometimes it's that I'm-too-tired-to-admit-I-need-a-nap frantic zooming from one thing they shouldn't do (or touch, or put in their mouth) to another. Poetry and children just seem to go together. Children respond with pleasure to the unexpected rhyme, the tap-tap-tapping of an alliterative phrase, or the reassuring rhythm of a familiar meter. In so many ways, kids *are* poetry - poetry in motion. Most of the the poetry I read to my kids reflects that motion, that high energy. Shel Silverstein. Dr. Seuss. Sandra Boynton.

Then one day in the bookstore, after grabbing the newest Skippyjon Jones and dragging my son away from the trains, this caught my eye:

and I remembered. I remembered the first time I read Robert Frost. The first time I ever read a poem that made me *stop*; that made me feel the weight of the pauses, the meaning in the silence between words. So it came home with us as well.

That night, we read *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, but we read it *slowly*. The illustrations by Susan Jeffers really couldn't be more perfect. We savored each of Frost's lines, then asked each other questions about the pictures - looking for the spots of color in the winter blacks, whites, and greys. 'Do you see any more animals?' or 'That owl *is* beautiful!' I have read this poem, with these illustrations, to my son time and time again, and to his little sister as well. Yet, however many times we read it, it never ceases to amaze me how *still* they are, and how wonderful it is to have a children's poetry book to reflect that stillness.

Children are poetry in motion. But they are poetry in stillness, too.

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## **Sheila says**

This book was sitting on a coffee table at a house I was visiting family at, so I picked it up to see what it was, and read through the whole short book. Beautifully illustrated, the pictures with the corresponding lines of

poetry are almost magical, and kept we pulled in to a beautiful ending. I really enjoyed this one.

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### **Muhammad Nasef says**

And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.....

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### **Emily Sims says**

Summary: This is a book written as a poem. It is about a man and his horse who travel many miles on a winter day, in their sleigh, to the woods and then back to their house in the village.

Evaluation: I really enjoyed this book and think it is wonderful for students to read as it introduces them to poetry. It also includes beautiful pictures!

Teaching: I would read this book to students when discussing poetry in an ELA class as I think it is a great example of a poetic story. After reading, I could use a white board to further discuss poetry and what it includes. I could also have students complete a poem themselves and share it with the class!

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### **Katherine Austin says**

1) Book summary, in your own words (3 pts)

-This classic Robert Frost poem is about a man who takes a walk through the woods on a snowy evening (kinda easy to see where he got the title for the poem, right?). He enjoys taking in the beautiful scenery. Unlike his anxious horse, he just wants to sit and enjoy nature for awhile.

2) Grade level, interest level, lexile (1 pt)

-3rd-4th grade.

3) Appropriate classroom use (subject area) (1 pt)

-Poetry unit.

4) Individual students who might benefit from reading (1 pt)

-Students learning about poetry.

5) Small group use (literature circles) (1 pt)

-Students can read the poem in literature circles and discuss the meaning.

6) Whole class use (read aloud) (1 pt)

-Carpet read aloud.

7) Related books in genre/subject or content area (1 pt)

-The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

-Outside Your Window: A First Book of Nature by Nicola Davies

8) Multimedia connections (audio book, movie) available (1 pt)

-None available.

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## **MissInformation says**

I think that Jeffers lyrical illustrations really create a beautiful chord combined with Frost's words. I grew up in snow, and it is captured so exquisitely. I love this edition, but so much is communicated in the illustrations that I started to think about the words being overpowered or limited by the portrayal. I found most of the book, where there are animals subtly drawn in the trees- their image unfolding for the reader who pauses to look- to be in total support of the text, and not interfering.

Quibbles: there is an unmistakable Santa-look to the main character, and the "promises to keep" line is illustrated with a family. This is a point that takes away a bit from the sense created by the poem alone. It also, for me, puts it in the voice of the other/a story about somebody, as opposed to me identifying.

This seems is appropriate for younger children (and then skip to adults!), because of the picture book format.

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## **Judy says**

When a book focuses on a single poem, that poem takes on more importance. 'Stopping by Woods' is an American classic that every student should have read at least once, preferably in high school. Sometimes I like to read a line and think about what it means while I admire Jeffers' art. (Note: I am not a fan of poetry.)

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## **Julia says**

It was the beautiful and pristine cover of this book along with its spine that caught my eye. Intrigued I picked it up without even really looking and recognizing that it was a famous poem illustrated until I really got a chance to sit down and read the first line of both the book as well as the poem.

Although the reader of poetry may know the poem well enough, especially if they enjoy Robert Frost it is Susan who adds the beauty to this particular retelling. She explores the concept of the subject of the poem who is going out while it is snowing and the beauty of the woods even with its white-coated animals such as the tons of bunnies hiding in the brambles.

The reader is given a black-and-white chance to explore the breathtaking beauty of a snowy woods and the compassionate heart as the old man (is he suppose to look like Santa?) works on fulfilling a promise. All in all a most beautiful retelling and one that is sure to be treasured by the poetry lover who can add it to their collection.

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