Name: _____   Class: _____

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
By Robert Frost
1923

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was one of the most popular and critically respected American poets in history. His poems frequently employ rural scenes from the New England countryside. At first glance, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is a rather simple poem—a man pausing his horse to observe a wintery landscape before moving on—but its carefully constructed lines, like the woods, have a deeper allure. As you read, take notes on Frost's use of imagery and the structure of this poem.

[1]   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.

[5]   My little horse must think it queer[1]
       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
[10] To ask if there is some mistake.
       The only other sound's the sweep
       Of easy wind and downy[2] flake.

       The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
       But I have promises to keep,
[15] And miles to go before I sleep,
       And miles to go before I sleep.

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1. **Queer** *(adjective):* strange
2. **Downy** *(adjective):* soft and fluffy; resembling a bird's down feathers

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Use complete sentences and answer the following questions after discussing with your partner.

1. Why might the speaker be in the woods at night? Where could he be going?

2. What do you think makes him stop on so cold and dark of a night?

3. What kind of promises might the speaker have made? Why would they keep him from staying?

4. Why do you think the speaker could be contemplating suicide?

5. How does starting the poem with a line that contains "I think" show uncertainty inside of the speaker?

6. What gives away that the poem is not as peaceful and quiet as it originally seems?

7. Why do you think the author takes such care to write about the dark, stillness, and cold?