THE ROAD NOT TAKEN
ROBERT FROST

TWO ROADS DIVerged 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 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 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, 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 TRAVERE BY, AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

BUT AS A METAPHOR, IT MEANS MUC, MUCH MORE.

IN THE POEM "THE ROAD NOT TAKEN" I USE A WALK IN THE WOODS AS A METAPHOR.

TAKEN LITERALLY, THE POEM IS ABOUT CHOSING BETWEEN TWO PATHS IN A YELLOW WOOD.

IN LITERATURE WALKING OFTEN SYMBOLIZES AN INNER JOURNEY, AND WHERE YOU END UP IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU LEARN AS YOU GO.
Questions:

What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

Many readers see the two roads as a choice between a good path and a bad path. However, you can make the claim that both roads are equal in value. What parts of the text support this idea?

Think about the different reasons the speaker might “sigh” while thinking back on his journey. How does each reason offer a different perspective on the speaker’s attitude toward his choice?
After Apple-Picking
by Robert Frost

My long two-pointed ladder’s sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there’s a barrel that I didn’t fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn’t pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it’s like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

In this poem, apple picking is a metaphor that we can apply to our lives. To figure out how it might apply ask yourself how the speaker feels about his task. Which parts of the poem tell you? Then think about the parts of your life that make you feel like the speaker does after a long day of apple picking.


**Answer Key**

**What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?**

The rhyme scheme is ababa cdccd efeef. Point out to students that this is kind of weird. Five lines?

Robert Frost also famously said that writing poems that don't rhyme is like playing tennis without a net. We like structure - it gives us some guidelines to follow when we are creating something. Ask your students how they would like it if they had to write an essay on a poem that was about whatever they wanted. Most of them would prefer to have some options to guide their decisions.

**Many readers envision the road as a choice….**

"Then took the other as just as fair"
"had worn them really about the same"
"equally lay"

On “Orange is the New Black” Piper went off about how people get this poem wrong.

**Think about all the different reasons someone might “sigh” on a journey.**

It could be a sigh of regret. After all, he'll never get to go back and take the other path. Kind of depressing. However, it could be a sigh of contentment. He's happy with his choice, so the other one doesn't matter. Either works.

**Apple Picking**

The picking of apples represents something that the speaker longed for, but no longer desires. He says “I have had too much of apple picking,” so much so that he feels the rung of the ladder on his foot long after he is done picking and even dreams about apples. He further states that he is “overtired/of the great harvest I once desired.” He doesn’t care about the apples that fall to the ground, and his task seems insurmountable.

When I teach this to seniors, I relate this to the process of applying to colleges. By the time they get to November, they are “overtired” of the process, almost to the point where if they don’t get into a college, they cease to care. What are the apples for them? All the things they have to do, and sometimes they get so worn out by the process that they don’t spend as much time on it as they should. And let’s not get started on all the dreams they probably have about it!

©David Rickert

[http://davidrickert.com](http://davidrickert.com)
NOTICE TO THE READER

All rights reserved David Rickert 2016. Permission is hereby granted to the individual purchaser to reproduce student materials in this book for noncommercial individual or classroom use only.

Other than the heretofore specified limited permission for reproduction, the text of this publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, storage in an information retrieval system, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

The Publisher makes no representation or warranties of any kind, including but not limited to, the warranties of fitness for particular purpose or merchantability, nor are any such representations implied with respect to the material set forth herein, and the publisher takes no responsibility with respect to such material. The publisher shall not be liable for any special, consequential, or exemplary damages resulting, in whole or part, for the readers’ or students’ reliance upon, this material.

Thanks to Kimberly Gesweinb for the use of the font “KG Shake It Off Chunky” and to Erin Cobb of “Lovin’ Lit” for the use of her borders.

Thanks,

David Rickert

Like this comic? There’s more! Why not check out the entire poetry comics set in this bundle? You’ll find comics by Emily Dickinson, William Blake, Sylvia Plath and more!