

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
BY 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.

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.

From *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde

Lady Bracknell: Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice... as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which in most cases, was probably not much.

The Stepsister Speaks Out

It isn't easy being the ugly stepsister. Everybody always feels so sorry for poor little Cinderella, but what about me? I deserve a little sympathy, too. Does *my* fairy godmother ever turn up with a magic wand? Does the prince ever dance with me at the ball? Not on your life. The best I can every hope for with my pumpkins is a decent piece of pie. And as for the rats, well, rats are rats, with their sneaky eyes and skinny tails, nibbling and gnawing at the garbage. I never saw one yet who turned into a coachman.

If you ask me, that Cinderella is weird. Certainly, she isn't normal. Besides the fact that she has naturally curly hair and wears size 4 1/2 shoes, she is so good-natured that it's downright sickening. If you had to dust and sweep and clean all day long, would you go around singing to the birds? Of course you wouldn't. No sensible person would.

A lot of people think I'm jealous of her. Maybe I am. And with good reason. I subsisted on seven hundred calories a day for three whole weeks before the ball. I did my leg-lift exercise faithfully. I got a perm and a facial and a manicure. I even bought a new gown. Blue velvet. Designer label. I mean, I was *ready*. *Princey*, I thought to myself, *here I come!*

And what happens? Little Cindy, who has never seen the inside of a health club in her life and who doesn't know the caloric difference between a carrot stick and a chocolate éclair, whips together a dress out of some old curtains from K-Mart, waltzes off to the ball and snags the prince.

It isn't fair! It really isn't fair!

From "You Can't Take it With You" by Hart and Kaufmann

I wasn't aware I was missing anything either, till I quit. I used to get down to that office nine o'clock sharp, no matter how I felt. Lay awake nights for fear I wouldn't get that contract. Used to worry about the world, too. Got all worked up about whether Cleveland or Blaine was going to be elected President-seemed awful important at the time, but who cares now? What I'm trying to say, Mr. Kirby, is that I've had thirty-five years that nobody can take away from me, no matter what they do to the world. See?

From *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

Miss Watson told me to pray every day, and whatever I asked for I would get it. But it warn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line, but no hooks. It warn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times, but somehow I couldn't make it work. By and by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said I was a fool. She never told me why, and I couldn't make it out no way. I set down one time back in the woods, and had a long think about it. I says to myself, if a body can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pork? Why can't the widow get back her silver snuffbox that was stole? Why can't Miss Watson fatten up? No, says I to my self, there ain't nothing in it. I went and told the widow about it, and she said the thing a body could get by praying for it was "spiritual gifts." This was too many for me, but she told me what she meant—I must help other people, and do everything I could for other people, and look out for them all the time, and never think about myself. This was including Miss Watson, as I took it. I went out in the woods and turned it over in my mind a long time, but I couldn't see no advantage about it—except for the other people; so at last I reckoned I wouldn't worry about it any more, but just let it go.