**Mending Wall**

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it

And spills the upper boulders in the sun,

And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing: 5

I have come after them and made repair

Where they have left not one stone on a stone,

But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,

To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,

No one has seen them made or heard them made, 10

But at spring mending-time we find them there.

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;

And on a day we meet to walk the line

And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go. 15

To each the boulders that have fallen to each.

And some are loaves and some so nearly balls

We have to use a spell to make them balance:

"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"

We wear our fingers rough with handling them. 20

Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,

One on a side. It comes to little more:

There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across 25

And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder

If I could put a notion in his head:

"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30

Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,

And to whom I was like to give offense.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35

That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather

He said it for himself. I see him there,

Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top

In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. 40

He moves in darkness as it seems to me,

Not of woods only and the shade of trees.

He will not go behind his father's saying,

And he likes having thought of it so well

He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." 45

1. What are two things the speaker states that damage the structure of stone walls?

2. Why is this significant (see lines 9-11)?

3. What might the gaps represent on a metaphorical level?

4. Why do you think the speaker and his neighbor meet to fix the wall?

5. Explain the metaphors in line 24: He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

6. What is the speaker’s opinion of the wall? Why?

7. To what does the speaker compare his neighbor to in line 40? What connotations does this comparison have?

8. Why does the speaker say his neighbor will not change his mind about the wall?

9. Explain lines 41-42.

10. What is your opinion? Do you believe “Good fences make good neighbors”? Why?

**Home Burial**

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs

Before she saw him. She was starting down,

Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.

She took a doubtful step and then undid it

To raise herself and look again. He spoke 5

Advancing toward her: "What is it you see

From up there always?--for I want to know."

She turned and sank upon her skirts at that,

And her face changed from terrified to dull.

He said to gain time: "What is it you see?" 10

Mounting until she cowered under him.

"I will find out now--you must tell me, dear."

She, in her place, refused him any help,

With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.

She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see, 15

Blind creature; and awhile he didn't see.

But at last he murmured, "Oh," and again, "Oh."

"What is it--what?" she said.

"Just that I see."

"You don't," she challenged. "Tell me what it is."

"The wonder is I didn't see it at once. 20

I never noticed it from here before.

I must be wonted to it--that's the reason.

The little graveyard where my people are!

So small the window frames the whole of it.

Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it? 25

There are three stones of slate and one of marble,

Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight

On the sidehill. We haven't to mind *those.*

But I understand: it is not the stones,

But the child's mound----"

"Don't, don't, don't,

don't," she cried. 30

She withdrew, shrinking from beneath his arm

That rested on the banister, and slid downstairs;

And turned on him with such a daunting look,

He said twice over before he knew himself:

"Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost?" 35

"Not you!--Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!

I must get out of here. I must get air.--

I don't know rightly whether any man can."

"Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.

Listen to me. I won't come down the stairs." 40

He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.

"There's something I should like to ask you, dear."

"You don't know how to ask it."

"Help me, then."

Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.

"My words are nearly always an offense. 45

I don't know how to speak of anything

So as to please you. But I might be taught,

I should suppose. I can't say I see how.

A man must partly give up being a man

With womenfolk. We could have some arrangement 50

By which I'd bind myself to keep hands off

Anything special you're a-mind to name.

Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.

Two that don't love can't live together without them.

But two that do can't live together with them." 55

She moved the latch a little. "Don't--don't go.

Don't carry it to someone else this time.

Tell me about it if it's something human.

Let me into your grief. I'm not so much

Unlike other folks as your standing there 60

Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.

I do think, though, you overdo it a little.

What was it brought you up to think it the thing

To take your mother-loss of a first child

So inconsolably--in the face of love. 65

You'd think his memory might be satisfied----"

"There you go sneering now!"

"I'm not, I'm not!

You make me angry. I'll come down to you.

God, what a woman! And it's come to this,

A man can't speak of his own child that's dead." 70

"You can't because you don't know how to speak.

If you had any feelings, you that dug

With your own hand--how could you?--his little grave;

I saw you from that very window there,

Making the gravel leap in air, 75

Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly

And roll back down the mound beside the hole.

I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.

And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs

To look again, and still your spade kept lifting. 80

Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice

Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,

But I went near to see with my own eyes.

You could sit there with stains on your shoes

Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave 85

And talk about your everyday concerns.

You had stood the spade up against the wall

Outside there in the entry, for I saw it."

"I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.

I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe I'm cursed." 90

"I can repeat the very words you were saying:

'Three foggy mornings and one rainy day

Will rot the best birch fence a man can build.'

Think of it, talk like that at such a time!

What had how long it takes a birch to rot 95

To do with what was in the darkened parlor?

You *couldn't* care! The nearest friends can go

With anyone to death, comes so far short

They might as well not try to go at all.

No, from the time when one is sick to death, 100

One is alone, and he dies more alone.

Friends make pretense of following to the grave,

But before one is in it, their minds are turned

And making the best of their way back to life

And living people, and things they understand. 105

But the world's evil. I won't have grief so

If I can change it. Oh, I won't, I won't!

"There, you have said it all and you feel better.

You won't go now. You're crying. Close the door.

The heart's gone out of it: why keep it up? 110

Amy! There's someone coming down the road!"

"*You*--oh, you think the talk is all. I must go--"

Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you----"

"If--you--do!" She was opening the door wider.

"Where do you mean to go? First tell me that. 115

I'll follow and bring you back by force. I *will*--"

1. “Home Burial” is an example of a dramatic poem. What does this mean?

2. What is the basic situation of the poem? What is the main conflict?

3. In line 9, why do you think her facial expression goes from “terrified to dull”?

4. In lines 15-16, what is it that the wife is sure her husband will not see? Why does she believe he will not see it?

5. How do the husband and wife deal with the situation differently? Write a line from the poem that demonstrates the position of each (one that expresses the wife’s feelings/approach and one that expresses the husband’s).

6. What is the man’s request of his wife? How does he feel about her reaction to their situation?

7. What is the wife’s response? What is her main grievance with her husband?

8. How does the poem end? is the situation resolved?

9. With which person (husband or wife) do you empathize with most? Why?

**After Apple Picking**

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. 5

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 10

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, 15

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. 20

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 25

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, 30

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 35

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 40

Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,

Or just some human sleep.

1. In what activity has the speaker been engaged? How does he feel about this activity?

2. What might the “sleep” that is referred to throughout the poem represent?

3. What might be the significance of the barrel’s not being full?

4. The speaker says there may be two or three apples left on the branches. What might these represent? How does he feel about leaving these behind?

5. How will apple-picking affect the speaker’s sleep? Give examples of visual, auditory, tactile imagery that expresses this idea.

6. The speaker says he is “overtired / Of the great harvest [he had] desired.” What might this mean?

7. The speaker says “There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch.” What is the effect/meaning of the repetition of “thousand”?

8. What would happen to apples that were dropped? What might this represent?

**The Road Not Taken**

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; 5

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, 10

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. 15

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 traveled by,

And that has made all the difference. 20

1. What dilemma does the speaker of the poem face?

2. How does the speaker make his choice?

3. Even as the speaker makes his decision, what does he realize about the future?

4. What could the road represent?

5. Notice the title of the poem. Why do you think Frost chose this as the title?

6. Relate this poem to your life. When have you come to a fork in the road of life? How did you make your choice? If you could go back and take the other road, would you?, etc.

**Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

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. 4

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. 8

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sounds the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake. 12

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. 16

1. Circle the examples of alliteration in the first stanza. What effect does the alliteration have on the sound of the poem?

2. When does the poem take place? What might this represent?

3. The speaker says, “The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.” What do you think the speaker finds so “lovely” about the woods?

4. Why does the speaker not stay in the woods to sleep? What might this represent?

5. What is the effect of the repetition of the last two lines?

**Design**

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,

On a white heal-all, holding up a moth

Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth--

Assorted characters of death and blight 4

Mixed ready to begin the morning right,

Like the ingredients of a witches' broth--

A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,

And dead wings carried like a paper kite. 8

What had that flower to do with being white,

The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?

What brought the kindred spider to that height,

Then steered the white moth thither in the night? 12

What but design of darkness to appall?--

If design govern in a thing so small.

1. This poem is an Italian sonnet. Explain that structure using evidence from/application to this poem to illustrate the characteristics.
2. The word “white” is repeated multiple times throughout the poem. How is its use significant?
3. List three examples of figurative language or imagery from the poem and explain the effect of each.
4. How does this poem confound our normal perceptions of “light” and darkness”? How does the poem’s structure reflect its theme?

**Out, Out—**

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard

And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,

Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.

And from there those that lifted eyes could count

Five mountain ranges one behind the other 5

Under the sunset far into Vermont.

And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,

As it ran light, or had to bear a load.

And nothing happened: day was all but done.

Call it a day, I wish they might have said 10

To please the boy by giving him the half hour

That a boy counts so much when saved from work.

His sister stood beside him in her apron

To tell them ‘Supper.’ At the word, the saw,

As if to prove saws knew what supper meant, 15

Leaped out at the boy’s hand, or seemed to leap—

He must have given the hand. However it was,

Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!

The boy’s first outcry was a rueful laugh,

As he swung toward them holding up the hand 20

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—

Since he was old enough to know, big boy

Doing a man’s work, though a child at heart—

He saw all spoiled. ‘Don’t let him cut my hand off— 25

The doctor, when he comes. Don’t let him, sister!’

So. But the hand was gone already.

The doctor put him in the dark of ether.

He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.

And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright. 30

No one believed. They listened at his heart.

Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.

No more to build on there. And they, since they

Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

1. Explain the basic story of the poem.
2. What is the poem’s theme? How do you feel about this theme?
3. List two examples of figurative language and explain their effect.
4. List two strong images/uses of diction and explain why they stand out to you.