The Road Not Taken
by Robert Frost

1
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;

2
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,

3
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.

4
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.
Robert Frost (1874–1963)

Robert Frost is one of America’s most popular poets. By the end of his life he was a living legend, but in the beginning, it was a very different story. Born in 1874, Frost spent his first eleven years in San Francisco. Sadly for Robert, several years later his father died, so the family moved to Massachusetts and lived with relatives. It was there that Frost met the love of his life, Elinor White.

Later, Robert and Elinor got engaged and Robert went off to study at Dartmouth College. But one term into his course, he dropped out and went home to work as a reporter for a local newspaper and teach at a high school. Soon after, Robert and Elinor got married and had a baby boy called Elliot. The same year, he managed to get a place at Harvard University. Unfortunately, he dropped out after two years of study. (1) It was as if he hadn’t wanted to carry on, although quite the opposite was true. The fact was that Robert had to support his wife and family. As a result, they moved to a farm in New Hampshire and made money raising chickens. (2) Perhaps he’d rather have had more time to write poetry, but life on the farm was hard. However, he did manage to write a little, early in the morning, before work. During this period, he completed some of the poems that would eventually make him famous.

Robert wasn’t good at farming, so after nine years he returned to education and taught English at an academy. Five years later, frustrated by his lack of success, Robert moved his family to England. There, he found a publisher for his work and soon became popular in poetry circles in England as well as in America.
In 1915, he went back to America, where he wrote The Road Not Taken. He was forty-two at the time and the poem’s theme of indecision probably reflected Robert’s own regrets. (3) Suppose he’d moved to England sooner, perhaps he’d have found fame earlier? (4) Imagine he’d finished his degree, maybe success would have been easier? In 1960, he was asked to read his poem The Gift Outright at President Kennedy’s inauguration. Today, Robert Frost’s poetry is read and enjoyed by poetry lovers all over the world.