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### The interpretation of the wood pile.

One of the most famous American poets Robert Frost wrote the poem “The Wood pile” that was published in his 1914 poetry collection called *North of Boston*. This poem provides the story about a person who is roaming in the winter forest and ends up finding a wood pile. The author gives the reader a very good and deep description of the settings around the main character, and what happens while he is walking in this forest, giving the impression that the main character is lost. Images that the author uses help to establish the atmosphere of sadness, emptiness and loneliness. In this poem there are several ambiguities like why the character is in the forest, why he meets a bird and why there is a forgotten wood pile in the forest that the main character finds. The wood pile is the main focus of the poem, and with support of setting, situation and images, the wood pile can be interpreted as the authors forgotten project on which he used to work, and now it is just uselessly dying, adding the feeling of loneliness to the picture of the empty and silent forest.

Setting and situation are important elements of poetry for this poem because the poem is mostly description of the forest and what is happening around the main character who is walking. The opening line describes a bleak setting, where the author is, “Out walking in the frozen swamp one gray day” (1). The action actually takes place in the forest, and it is a pretty scarce forest because Frost says: “The view was all in lines/ Straight up and down of all tall slim trees” (5-6). You can really see the straight lines through the trees far away when there are not so many trees, and this usually happens in swamps. Such an emptiness of this

forest adds the feeling of despair. Additionally, the reader can assume this is the middle of winter because as the main character walks, “The hard snow held [him], save where now and then / One foot went through” (4-5). This shows that his path is really hard, so the reader doubts the character enjoys this walk. The main character probably got lost in this forest: “Too much alike to mark or name a place by / So as to say for certain I was there” (7-8), so he is just roaming and trying to find the way out.

Even though this is winter, the author mentions the gray color couple times. The author says that the day is gray, and he also mentions gray when he is describing the wood pile simply saying that “The wood was gray” (29). Author uses gray color because he wants to tell the reader that gray is the main color in the setting around, so there is no sun and very cloudy. Gray color usually means some sad mood and emptiness, so the main character might be in that sad, calm mood and feel very empty inside. Altogether these setting and situation gives the feelings of loneliness, emptiness and despair.

Although setting and situation are very important, it would be impossible to deliver to the reader this real atmosphere without images. In this poem there are mainly visual images: the images of the forest where he is walking, the white snow under his feet and the trees around him. The main character also saw, “A small bird flew before [him]” (10). The bird gives the reader the image of sound when it flew in front of him, “say no word to tell [him] who he was” (12). Silence is a sound too, and this silence fills the image of what is actually going on with some sort of scariness and emptiness. There is the reason why the author says that even the bird didn’t make any sounds; he wants to show the reader how silent and calm the setting is around the main character. This silence might be as a symptom of being lost. The main character might be so lost in himself that he does not even hear what happens around him, even though the bird might have said something. This image of the bird, both sound and vision, is important because it not just the one line, but this bird really caught the

main character's attention and leads his attention to the main vision image – the wood pile. About half of the poem is dedicated to this wood pile. It is described as being, “a cord of maple, cut and split/ And piled – and measured, four by four by eight” (23-24). This description shows how carefully this pile was made, so someone definitely made this for purpose. The author mentions that this pile is old: “it was older sure than this year's cutting / Or even last year's or the year's before” (27-28). The pile is somewhat sunken, the bark is wrapping of the woods and there are clematis strings around it. All these facts show that this wood pile stayed here for a long time, like a couple years. Also this pile is left in this swamp “far from the useful fireplace” (38). This implies that someone definitely forgot this wood pile. Together all images set up these bleak settings around the main character and help the reader feel what the author feels inside.

Images along with setting and situation just give the description, but there is an additional layer of meaning behind them. The forest might represent the author's life, where he got simply lost. All people have hard times when life seems so pointless and you feel so lonely in this world, so the author does, he is just roaming around and cannot find the way out. He really wants to move forward and he does not give up, even though it is really hard to keep moving: “I will turn back from here / No, I will go on further – and we shall see” (2-3). So the character keeps going, but the bird interrupts his futile roaming. Birds are usually associated with something good and light, so this bird can be interpreted as a light in his life. It catches the character's attention, plays some games with him, “He thought that I was after him for a feather” (14), and leads his attention to the wood pile.

The wood pile itself is as gray and abandoned as all the rest surrounding. If the forest is author's life, then the wood pile is his project that he forgot about. This project is finished but was never really used, so it is just sinking in his ruined life, same as “the pile in somewhat sunken” (30). The bad mood takes all the dreams and good ideas away; just like

clematis does with the pile, it “wound strings round and round like a bundle” (31). But his project is still there; it is not ruined yet. The author is wondering how “someone” can “forget his handwork on which/ He spent himself, the labor of his ax” (36-37). That “someone” is actually the author who “spent himself” on this project some time ago and just forgot about it. If he chooses to leave this project the way it is and not use it, it will eventually die “with the slow smokeless burning of decay” (40). There the author leaves us an open ending: we do not know what will the main character do with the pile. Most likely he will just leave it in the forest because it is too much effort for just some old wood pile.

The setting and situation helps the reader to feel the way the main character feels like- lonely, empty and lost. Images help to describe what the character actually sees and what the atmosphere around is – grey and bleak. The image of the wood pile is important and it is very clear, so the reader gets the feeling of uselessness of the pile. By using an imagination, the reader can interpret the poem that way as the forest is the authors life, bird is a light in this life which leads to the wood pile - authors project he forgot but finds it again and watches how it is just uselessly dying.