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### The Star is More than Just a Tiny Light

Frost's poems are mostly sad and dark, so it might seem that it is hard to find any cheerful and inspirational topics or images in Frost's poetry. The truth is that the reader just has to open his or her mind and soul to Frost's poems to see more than just an upper layer. Frost's audience has to stop paying attention to the dark side of his poems and start looking for the positive. The reader will then be surprised how many positive poems he has and how many positive images are found in Frost's poems. One of the most interesting images is the image of the star which can be met in several poems, for example "Fireflies in The Garden," "Come in" and "Choose Something Like a Star". The star might look like a tiny light in the sky to the average star-gazer. So before reading these poems the reader would probably never think about the star in the way Frost represents it. Early in his career, Frost depicts the star as huge and physically powerful; however, as he advances in wisdom the star becomes a more important image in the poems as the symbol of the star gains imaginative power and serves as a guiding light in life.

The earliest poem out of the three represented poems is "Fireflies in the Garden". The poem was published in 1928 in Frost's poetry collection called *West-Running Brook*. In this poem the main role belongs to the fireflies; the stars have the secondary role. On the surface, it seems that Frost just compares the fireflies with the stars. In the first line Frost talks about the actual stars saying that "Here come the real stars to fill the upper skies" (1). When Frost refers to the fireflies he calls them "emulating flies". He sees that there is some competition

between the stars and the fireflies, because they always come out at the same time of the day – sometime around when it just got dark. From the earth what people see is that the fireflies and the stars look similar: they are just tiny lights. However, Frost mentions that the fireflies “never equal star in size” (3). From this line the reader understands that the stars are much bigger than they appear. Later in the poem Frost praises the fireflies for “a very star-like start” (5). The stars are so far away that they look like the same size as tiny insects, but we know from science that they are actually giant substances. As a matter of fact, the main point of the poem is to eulogize the fireflies for their attempt to compete with the stars. In comparison to fireflies, stars are much more powerful and are at the level that fireflies will never obtain. Although the stars have just a secondary role, this poem shows the reader that the stars are greater than just tiny lights up in the sky. The awareness of the stars’ size is just the start of Frost’s representation of the star and in the next poems he goes beyond just the physical power of the stars.

In “Come in”, which can be found in Frost’s collection of poems *A Witness Tree* that was first published in 1942, the narrator ends up being at the edge of the woods dusk. The narrator hears the “thrush music” which is “almost like a call to come in / To the dark and lament” (15-16). The dark woods might be associated with a dangerous area but the thrush itself is a good character. In the poem Frost says that “The last of the light of the sun / . . . / Still lied for one song more / In a thrush’s breast” (9, 11-12). The light in the thrush’s breast is the only light in the woods; it is the only good thing. The thrush is trapped in the woods because it is too dark and dangerous even for the bird. The bird is calling for help which is like a temptation for the narrator to come into these dangerous woods. The image of the star does not come up until the very last stanza where the narrator fights the temptation saying: “But no, I was out for stars: I would not come in” (17-18). Probably the narrator saw the stars in the sky and realized what was the real purpose of his walk – to observe stars. Despite the

fact the thrush was tempting him to go into the woods, the stars kept him safe and out of the dangerous woods. Essentially the stars served like a savior for the narrator. In this poem if the woods are dangerous, the stars might be interpreted as a saving guide. The stars did not let the narrator step into the dangerous side, so one might say that the stars are like a guide that leads people on the right path.

Some might argue that the thrush in the woods was not actually “calling” to the narrator, so if there was some temptation it may have been in himself. The last lines of the poem say “I mean not even if I asked, / and I hadn’t been” (19-20). These lines make the reader realize that there was no actual calling, so one might state that all the temptations were just in the narrator’s head. For example, there might be some bad thoughts or ideas that would put the narrator in danger if one follows these ideas. However, even if there was no actual “calling”, there was some kind of temptation in the narrator’s head. This temptation called the narrator to perform some dangerous actions that might hurt him. So when he was walking he recognized stars up in the sky and these stars drove these bad thoughts away. Even though in this poem Frost gives the star more power than just physical, the star still serves as a secondary image; whereas in the next poem the star is the main and substantially the only image.

The final poem that is being analyzed does not belong to any of Frost’s collections but in our book it is under the title *An Afterword*. The poem is called “Choose Something Like a Star” and it was first published in 1943. While in previous poems Frost refers to the image of the star to guide the reader’s interpretation of other subjects, in this poem Frost is fully dedicated to the image of the star and he clearly admires the star. Already in the first line Frost praises the star heartily: “O Star (the fairest one in sight)” (1). The fact that Frost capitalized the word “Star” emphasizes the majesty of the star. After all the praises the author tries to talk to the star and finally “it says, ‘I burn’” (11). The personification for the star, the

ability to talk that Frost gave the star, strengthens the idea of how powerful and important the star is. However, the phrase ““I burn”” is the only thing that the star said. One would say that this is obvious, so it does not mean anything but there is a meaning beyond the outer layer. The phrase might be translated as *I live*. All the people are alive, but not all actually live their life. Some just waste their time on not important things instead of living by heart. When the person actually lives his or her life, there is a fire in one’s eyes and it might seem like the person is burning inside. So when the star says ““I burn,”” it is actually a very inspirational phrase, even though it is short. Besides being very sensitive and inspirational Frost represent the star as something very powerful and a strong guidance for people’s life.

The end of the poem is fully dedicated to describe how much the star has imaginative power. Frost has an interesting comparison saying that the star is “steadfast as Keats’ Eremite” (18). In this line Frost refers to John Keats’s poem “Bright Star” where Keats compares the star to an eremite, which means Christian recluse. Someone who is recluse follows only his own instincts and is not influenced by the opinion of others. Similarly, the star cannot be influenced by someone or something, it always stays steadfast, unchangeable and independent. In modern world people are so influenced by people around them, they tend to change their mind depending on what others think about it. People are like a flock and there are not many people who are not afraid to be different. Frost sees people as the mob and he says: “at times the mob is swayed” (22). These times are when the mob again and again follows some new trends, all together, so they are swinging from one side to another. Frost’s advice at these times is that “We may choose something like a star / To stay our minds on and be staid” (24-25). Frost wants people to stop following the mob and be staid and unchangeable like the star is. For the ones who choose the star as their role model, the star becomes a guide to the right path and a savior from meaningless life. The star guides people to the point where everyone will have an independent opinion and stop being part of a stupid

flock. The star “asks of us a certain height” (21), so by guiding people to the right direction it will lead us to some heights in our lives. Everyone is a person and is different from one another, so when people stop following each other and start thinking independently, these can achieve something great. Each poem gives a good understanding of how Frost thinks about the star, but by analyzing all poems together the reader can get an overall understanding of Frost’s view about the star.

By analyzing each poem separately, the reader can see how Frost sees the star and feels about the star at the different stages of his life. If the reader zooms out and looks at all three poems together one can find a flow: how Frost’s representation of the star changes over the time. In his early poem “Fireflies in the Garden” Frost shows the reader that the stars are much greater than they might seem for the people from earth. Such a representation gives the star physical power but so far it has nothing to do with influencing people’s minds. However, it is very important to acknowledge the physical power first, because it is easier for people to follow something that looks strong. Weak exemplar does not give people such confidence as strong and powerful ones do. In the first poem Frost just gives the reader the understanding that the star is actually powerful. Later in life, as Frost gets more life experience, he uses the image of the star again in “Come in” where the star gains a more important role as a saving guide. The understanding of the star’s giant size in “Fireflies in the Garden” gives it physical power which makes it easier for the reader to acknowledge that the star might be our guide and even a savior as it is represented in “Come in”. Even though in “Come in” the star has some positive imaginative influence on the narrator, that influence was just for one incident. Yet in “Choose Something like a Star”, the star is represented as a guide and savior for the whole life and nation. Such a progression in thinking about the star is the last step for Frost in acknowledging the importance and power of the star.

Frost's representation of the star builds on throughout his career. Frost starts with understanding of the great physical power of the star in "Fireflies in the Garden". Later on he sees how it can influence people's minds in occasional situations, like the situation with a dangerous temptation in "Come in", so the star gains imaginative power as well. Each poem builds on the previous poem, so it would be hard to understand that the star can influence people's minds before acknowledging the star physical power. In the first two poems the star has a secondary role and the reader gets Frost's understanding of the star by their interpretations; whereas in the last poem, "Choose something like a Star", Frost summarizes both poems interpretation and says his idea in his own words. Also he goes further in understanding and representation of the star and gives it even more imaginative power. Frost's idea is that the star should be people's role model and guide, so it will help people to get out of the mob, be the difference and achieve some great heights in our lives. In the beginning of Frost's career, he shows how fireflies try to compete with the stars, so they see the star as a role model. Towards the end of his career he comes to the conclusion that the stars actually are role models for the whole nation.

The first time Frost mentions the stars in "Fireflies in the Garden" where he acknowledges the physical power of the stars. As Frost gets more experienced in life, he uses the image of the star again in "Come in" where the star serves as a savior guide for the narrator; Frost gives it imaginative power. In "Choose Something Like a Star" Frost fully dedicates the poem to the star with the conclusion that people should choose the star as their role model, and it will save and guide them to the right direction. Life is a journey where people learn and discover something new every day. Frost is not an exception and his representation of the image of the star changes and advances throughout his life. Early in his career, Frost depicts the star as huge and physically powerful, however as he advances in wisdom the star becomes a more important image as the symbol of the star gains imaginative

power in the poems and serves as a savior and guiding light in life that brings people to the new heights.