Poem: 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

"The Road Not Taken" is a [narrative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative) poem consisting of four [stanzas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanza) of [iambic tetrameter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iambic_tetrameter) (though it is [hypermetric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metre_(poetry)) by one beat – there are nine syllables per line instead of the strict eight required for tetrameter) and is one of Frost's most popular works. This poem, besides being among the best known, is also one of the most misunderstood.

The final lines "I took the one less traveled by / And that has made all the difference" are often cited as emblematic of America's individualist spirit of adventure, in a reading that assumes they are to be taken literally. This is doubtful: whatever difference the choice might have made, it was not made on the basis of a discerned difference between the two paths that opened up before the traveller. The speaker admits in the second and third stanzas that both paths may be equally worn and equally leaf-covered, and it is only in his future recollection that he will *call* one of the two roads, the one he took, "less traveled by."

The "sigh" can be interpreted as one of regret or of self-satisfaction; in either case, the irony lies in the distance between what the speaker has just told us about the roads' similarity and what his or her later claims will be. Frost might also have intended a personal irony: in a 1925 letter to Crystine Yates of [Dickson, Tennessee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dickson,_Tennessee), asking about the sigh, Frost replied, "It was my rather private jest at the expense of those who might *think* I would yet live to be sorry for the way I had taken in life."

According to Larry L. Finger's analysis, nearly all critics have agreed that the sigh represents regret as this is mirrored in the regretful tone of the opening lines. He quotes scholar Eleanor Sickels as saying that the poem is about "the human tendency to wobble illogically in decision and later to assume that the decision was, after all, logical and enormously important, but forever to tell of it 'with a sigh' as depriving the speaker of who-knows-what interesting experience."

Likewise, Lawrance Thompson is cited as saying that the speaker of the poem is "one who habitually wastes energy in regretting any choice made: belatedly but wistfully he sighs over the attractive alternative rejected."

While a case could be made for the sigh being one of satisfaction, given the critical support of the 'regret' analysis it seems fair to say that this poem is about the human tendency to look back and attribute blame to minor events in one's life, or to make more meaning of things than they may deserve.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Road_Not_Taken#cite_note-2)