**Summary of A Roadside Stand**

A Roadside Stand is a poem written by American poet Robert Frost to portray the miserable living conditions of marginalised economic classes in the countryside. He puts the owners of road stalls in the spotlight to talk about their plight. They set up their small-scale businesses near the roads to sell their small produce of vegetables and fruits. The city people who pass by the roads in luxury cars do not want to spend their money on the road vendors’ frugal products. The poor roadside stall sellers desperately want to get a taste of some city money. But the ones who stop, only ask for directions or some gas for their vehicles.The poet looks at this behaviour with disgust. A Roadside Stand poem summary is a critical commentary on the social, economic and political conditions imposed upon the country’s people that makes them stuck in the vicious circle of poverty. Students can read the summary given below to understand the poem in detail. Students can also refer to [CBSE Notes](https://byjus.com/cbse-notes/) and CBSE Summary for more information and study material on Class 12 CBSE English.

**CBSE Class 12 English A Roadside Stand Summary**

The first line of the poem indicates efforts taken up by a roadside stall owner to renovate his stall. The poet refers to it as a house to indicate its importance in the life of its owner. While the look of the stall resembles that of a small house, it is also the sole means of earning for its owner. The stall owner looks desperately for some earnings – some cash, not for some lowly donation of food that would barely satisfy one meal. The poet says that the city money is mostly used for the growth and development of cities, which in turn, helps the city people become richer. The traffic that passes in front of the stall on the road is ‘polished’ – expensive vehicles that are owned by people from the city. It is sad to see that they never bother to spare some money for the poor people in the countryside.

Interestingly, the traffic does stop for a moment, but that is to frown upon the meaningless art and haphazard graffiti drawn on the walls; to gaze upon the wild berries put up for sale in wooden quarts, to watch the golden-coloured squash with silver warts on them; or just to admire the scenic beauty of the place they have stopped by at momentarily. The poet talks in a tone that is sympathetic to the miseries and cries of the poor road stallers or other road vendors. He curtly asks the traffic to simply move along if they do not want to spend their money.

The poet points out that what is most hurting about this experience is the despondency related to the lives of these poor people. They set up their stalls outside the city to earn some money – money that might help them better their lives. They want to achieve that particular status of a comfortable life that was promised to them by the movies. But, they are restricted from achieving their goals by the politicians who rule the place.

The poet gives us a picture of how poor people are ill-treated by politicians. It is shown in the news that these poor people will be brought out of their misery and relocated to good villages with the assurance of economic development. They would be placed near theatres and stores where they would live comfortable lives. But, none of this happens, as ironically, the politicians who promised them all these things actually thrive on exploiting the poor rather than granting them the chance of a good life, as promised. Instead, the politicians create comfort and luxury for themselves and laze around doing nothing but sleeping during the day and staying awake at night – going completely against the natural way of living. The poet is completely disgusted by the actions of these politicians, as can be seen in the use of words like ‘greedy good-doers’ and ‘beneficent beasts of prey’ in the ways he describes them.

The poet is deeply saddened by the innocent longings of the road vendors for some luck at earning money. The long wait of the poor vendors for the sound of an approaching customer – a squeal of brakes or the sound of a stopping car seem like a vain wish to the poet. Out of the thousand cars that pass by, one might stop beside a stall to make a turn or to ask for directions. Sometimes cars stop to ask if they could buy some gas. The poet interprets this action as an example of harsh ignorance and lack of sympathy toward the road vendors. How could these people in cars possibly buy gas from someone who has nothing?

The much-needed forms of development and fulfilment of aspirations have never been found in the country. The poor people who stay here live with a constant lack of resources and necessities. They are unable to reach the levels of comfort and sophistication of people in the cities. The poet draws a sharp line of contrast between the people from the country and the people from the cities. The poor simply are not able to turn their fate around.

The poet ponders if putting an end to the poor people’s lives would really take them out of their misery. He considers the concept of mercy-killing desperately as a viable solution to this eternal problem of poverty and pain. After an enraged moment of intense pain and agony for these people from the country, the poet returns to a sane state. He wonders how he would feel if someone offered to kill him to put him out of his misery.

**Conclusion of A Roadside Stand**

A Roadside Stand poem summary shows how a mindset for relentless development and higher standards of living in cities impacts the poor people living in the country. The poor become victims of the economic and political systems endorsed by the city administration. We can study this through the poet’s strong sympathetic stand towards the country people and his offensive rebukes directed towards the city people who pass by the road.

A detailed understanding of the poem can help students critically analyse and appreciate the poem. Students can refer to our website for further information and content related to the Class 12 English subject for better understanding and preparation for [CBSE](https://byjus.com/cbse/) board exams. They can also access topics like grammar and writing in English.