

A Roadside Stand



Robert Frost

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Frost, in full **Robert Lee Frost**, (born March 26, 1874, San Francisco, California, U.S.—died January 29, 1963, Boston, Massachusetts). His father, William Prescott Frost Jr., died of tuberculosis when he was just 11, leaving a paltry eight dollars with the family. His mother died in 1900 of cancer. For most of his life, Frost battled with mental depression. Perhaps, this problem ran in the family. He won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Literature four times and Prizes like Bollinger Poetry Prize (1963). He was made Poet Laureate of Vermont. His best works include 'Birches', 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', 'Mending Walls', and 'The Road Not Taken'.

POEM'S ANALYSIS: A ROADSIDE STAND

Roadside Stand summary deals with the lives of poor deprived people. Furthermore, the poet contrasts the struggling lives of the countryside people with the insensitive life of the city dwellers. They expected their prospective customers to stop there and buy things but the city people just speed by in their cars and do not even notice them. These poor people have nothing to do except wait for the passing cars to stop and purchase their products. The poet deeply sympathises with these impoverished people and feels compassion for them.

The poet draws a contrast between the lives of poor people in rural areas

and the heartless and indifferent city dwellers. These helpless individuals have set up to sell their things. When a car does pass by, it usually has a question or a complaint to make. The description shows the poet's profound sympathy and compassion for poor, needy people.

A small shelter at the side of the road is described in the opening of the poem. The farmer offered wild berries kept in antique-looking jars, the freshly extracted juice kept in not-so-enticing containers. He hopes that the passing automobiles will stop and buy some of his farm's harvests, allowing him to support himself but his hopes are in vain. He tries to sell his products for money. He believes that money can give him a better lifestyle as he saw in the movies. However, his hopes are never fulfilled.

The poor village people had little earning. They lead a life of poverty. The poet makes mention of the news which points out the relocation of the poor villagers to the vicinity of shops and theaters. There were big promises to ensure good care for them.

The poem shows the heartlessness of the city dwellers through the poet's insane desire to put an end to the country people so that there would be relief from their complaints about the lack of upliftment of their lives.

In Conclusion 'A Roadside Stand' summary shows the great contrast between the comfortable life of city dwellers and the harshness faced by the impoverished rural people.



IMPORTANT WORD MEANINGS

Pathetically: In a way that arouses pity, especially by displaying sadness

Warts: A small growth on the outer surface

Crossly: In an annoyed or angry way

Beasts of Prey: an animal killing other animal

In vain: without success or a result

Requisite: required / needed

MCQS

Q1- Who is the poet of A Roadside Stand?

- A) Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- B) Robert Frost
- C) Lord Byron
- D) Percy Shelley

Ans. B

Q2- Who is Robert Frost?

- A) An American storyteller

- B) An American essayist
- C) An American narrator
- D) An American twentieth century poet

Ans D

Q3- What does Frost's poem deal with?

- A) human tragedies , fears and their solutions
- B) humans
- C) nature
- D) buildings

Ans A

Q4- What does Frost present in the poem A Roadside Stand?

- A) the lives of poor deprived people with understanding and in a sympathetic way
- B) the lives of people who stand on bus stand
- C) lives of travelers
- D) none

Ans A

Q5- What does Frost describe in the poem?

- A) the feelings of the owners of a roadside shed
- B) the feelings of passengers

C) the feelings of people on footpath

D) none

Ans A

Q6- What is a Roadside Stand in the poem?

A) a bus stop

B) a waiting point

C) a shed outside a roadside old house

D) none

Ans C

Q7- What is being sold on roadside stand?

A) furniture

B) cosmetics

C) Diesel

D) wild berries, golden squash and some other similar products

Ans D

Q8- What is the childish longing that the poet refers to?

A) to travel the city malls

B) to travel the city showrooms

C) to interact with city people

D) hope of getting some financial help from the polished city traffic

Ans D

Q9- Why are the city people called greedy?

A) Because of their appearance

B) because they did not stop at the stand

C) because of their behavior

D) because of their selfish interests

Ans D

Q10- Who are beasts of prey in the poem?

A) the government officials

B) Rural folk

C) The city folk

D) All these

Ans C

Q11- What promise was the government making to relocate the villagers?

A) to give them all the luxuries

B) to show them movies

C) their all needs will be looked after

D) all these

Ans C

Q12- What does 'Out of their wit' mean in the poem?

- A) by helping the poor people
- B) by showing rosy pictures to the poor people
- C) by fooling and exploiting the poor people to their own benefit
- D) all these

Ans C

Q13- Who are the 'pitiful kin' in the poem?

- A) social agencies
- B) government officials
- C) city people with cars
- D) The poor rural folk and farmers

Ans D

Q14- What does I stand for in the poem?

- A) owner of the stand
- B) city flower who stopped on the stand
- C) Poet of the poem-Robert Frost
- D) None

Ans C

SHORT TYPE QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q 1. What Is The Childish Longing That The Poet Refers To In The Poem A Roadside Stand ? Why Is It in vain ?

Ans: According to the poet the owner of the roadside stand suffer from a childish longing. The shopkeepers wait all day long expecting customers and keep their windows open to attract the customers passing by. But no one turns up to buy anything from the roadside stand thus their childish longing goes in vain.

Q 2. What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand?

The rural folks pleaded pathetically for some customers to stop by and buy some of their goods. City folks used to pass by on this road and hence the rural folk set up roadside stands to attract their attention and sell their goods.

Q 3. Why are the owners of the roadside stand requesting money from the city?

Answer: The individuals running the roadside stall request some city funds because they desire to live the opulent lifestyle that is depicted in movies and other media, which political parties are allegedly refusing to provide for them.

Q 4. Why do cars pause on the side of the road?

Answer: Contrary to what the poor farmers anticipate, no automobiles ever stop by their roadside kiosks. If they ever enter the yard, it is simply to reverse and turn the car around. Sometimes, cars will merely stop to ask for directions or petrol.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q 5. Do you agree that Frost's poem "A Roadside Stand" expresses his deep sympathy for the poor and disadvantaged? If yes, give reasons.

Answer: The poems of Robert Frost are always about human tragedies and fears.

Answer: The poem 'A Roadside Stand' is about the enormous disparity between the urban rich and the rural poor, as well as the condescending attitude of one class of people toward the other. Frost is deeply saddened by the disillusionment of poor people who work tirelessly to earn a living. The farmer erects a small shed with fruits and vegetables for sale, hoping that passing cars will stop and purchase

his wares. However, these car owners believe that the roadside stands are a blight on the rural scenery they are passing through. The poor are consistently ignored by the wealthy, as well as by the government and other social service agencies. Even when a benefactor appears, it is always for selfish reasons. The poet can only hope that there is a way to alleviate their pain and suffering.

Q 6. What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to? Why is it 'vain'?

Answer: The poet refers to the farmers' eager and anxious wait for a prospective customer as "childish longing." They keep their windows open in the hopes of hearing the sound of brakes when a car pulls up to the stand to purchase the goods on display. They have only pinned their hopes of survival on the city's wealthy residents. According to the poet, "childish longing" is futile because it frequently leads to disappointment. The poor villagers are completely ignored by the 'polished' cars that drive by and the rich city dwellers' indifference. It demoralises them. Even if a car stops, it will be to ask for directions, reverse the car, or request a gallon of gas.