

The Road Not Taken

Powell - ArtIS 210 - Photography

Often it's hard to know what to photograph. We shoot aimlessly, waiting for inspiration that may or may not come. We lack direction. Sometimes it's useful to start with something non-photographic in mind: a song, a word, a character in a book or movie, or a poem. Using this as a starting point, you can begin by working as an illustrator, and then move on to become an interpreter.

Let's try this by taking a poem by the poet Robert Frost:

Robert Frost (1874–1963). "The Road Not Taken" Published in *Mountain Interval*. 1920.

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.

What do you think the poet is trying to say beneath the little story he tells?

Now, make photographs that capture the essence of what you think the poem is about.

You can work from a literal point of view (photograph someone standing in a road, photograph a fork in a road, etc.).

You can also work metaphorically by finding things that suggest aspects of the poem in a more oblique way (a forked stick instead of a forked road, someone flipping a coin to make a decision....).

You can also use the metaphor to represent something else, a turning point or the moment of an important decision. Where did this choice take the character? At the end of the poem he predicts himself looking back nostalgically at this moment and giving it added significance.

Think about how light and your use of space can create a mood. Do you want your photo to be completely in focus, or do you want to use selective focus to emphasize one part while leaving other parts misty or mysterious? (Remember that you can control depth of field by planning which aperture setting to use.) Do you want to include people or not? How can textures help you say what you intend to say?

Shoot lots of different ideas. Experiment.

Shoot at least **2 (36 exposure) rolls**. Hand in contact sheets, and **5 8"x10"** final prints. Pay attention to print quality and exposure.

Due: **Wed. Feb. 8th**