- 6. The big question set up by the poem is what those lovely, dark, and deep woods symbolize to this traveler. What idea or value in life has he said "no" to in passing them by?
- 7. Whatever the woods stand for, what has the speaker said "yes" to in passing them by? In other words, what choice has he made?
- 8. Do you think this poem is about a feeling that we all might have at one time or another in our lives? Explain.

Writing About the Poem

A Creative Response

1. Extending the Poem. Imagine that this traveler arrives at his destination late because he stopped to look at the woods. How does he explain his lateness to whoever is waiting for him? Write out what he says when he gets home.

A Critical Response

- 2. Comparing and Contrasting Poems. Written hundreds of years apart, Frost's poem and the following poem have much the same setting (although in different seasons), and they both use English that is simple enough to be understood in any century. Their differences, however. are also apparent. In an essay, compare and contrast the two poems. In a final paragraph, tell which poem you prefer and why. Consider these topics as you prepare to write:
 - a. The season the poem is set in
 - b. The poem's language
 - c. The speaker's feelings about the night
 - d. The speaker's feelings about beauty
 - e. The poem's message or meaning
 - f. The symbolism in the poem (if any)
 - g. Your opinion of the poem's message

Night of Spring

Slow, horses, slow, As through the wood we go-We would count the stars in heaven, Hear the grasses grow:

5 Watch the cloudlets few Dappling the deep blue, In our open palms outspread Catch the blesséd dew.

Slow, horses, slow, As through the wood we go-10 We would see fair Diano rise With her huntress how:

We would hear the breeze Ruffling the dim trees, Hear its sweet love-ditty set 15 To endless harmonies.

> Slow, horses, slow, As through the wood we go-All the beauty of the night We would learn and know!

> > —Thomas Westwood

Reading About the Writer

20

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was born in San Francisco—a fact often forgotten when his poetry i celebrated as the most distinctive voice to comout of New England in the twentieth century. His first book of poetry was published in England, and with its immediate success in America, Frost begar a long career. Despite the influence of modernism on literature, as represented by the poetry of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, Frost continued on his own way. In appearance, he looked like the kind o homespun New Englander for whom he spoke. He was actually a sophisticated man of the world whose use of native scenes and native accents sometimes disguised the fact that his vision of the world was far from simple. As the most honored and famous poet of his time, Frost made one of his last public appearances at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy in 1961. Other poems by Frost appear on pages 253 and 337.

^{11.} Dian: the moon, here personified as Diana, the goddess of the hunt.