

Two Poems (poetry) by Robert Frost

A Brook in the City

The farm house lingers, though **averse** to **square**
 With the new city street it has to wear
 A number in. But what about the brook
 That held the house as in an elbow-crook?
 I ask as one who knew the brook, its strength
 And **impulse**, having dipped a finger-length
 And made it leap my knuckle, having tossed
 A flower to try its currents where they crossed.
 The meadow grass could be cemented down
 From growing under pavements of a town;
 The apple trees be sent to hearth-stone flame.
 Is water wood to serve a brook the same?
 How else **dispose** of an immortal force
 No longer needed? **Staunch** it at its source
 With cinder loads dumped down?
 The brook was thrown
 Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone
 In **fetid** darkness still to live and run—
 And all for nothing it had ever done
 Except forget to go in fear perhaps.
 No one would know except for ancient maps
 That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
 If, from its being kept forever under,
 These thoughts may not have risen that so keep
 This new-built city from both work and sleep.

Design

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
 On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
 Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth—
Assorted characters of death and **blight**
 Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
 Like the ingredients of a witches' broth—
 A snow-drop spider, a flower like froth,
 And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,
 The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
 What brought the **kindred** spider to that height,
 Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
 What but **design** of darkness to appal?—
 If design govern in a thing so small.

Exercise 1: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know.

assorted

blight

dispose

impulse

square

averse

design

fetid

kindred

staunch