

Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

Civic Reflection Discussion Plan

- In laying out suggestions or expectations for the discussion, ask that participants leave any outside knowledge or previous opinions they might have about this poem or the author at the door, so everyone can look at it afresh. Stating this expectation at the outset is very important, especially with this poem. There is a powerful popular cultural misreading of it, as well as another more expert reading that is quite reductive of its meanings because it is based on Frost's own statements about why he wrote it. Both miss the richness of the poem.
- Read poem aloud.
- Opening Exercise: Talk in twos or threes for five minutes about a road not taken in your own journey. What is the meaning of this road not taken, to you?
- Questions for large group:
 - Start by describing the scene in this poem. What is happening? Where and when?
 - What does the narrator encounter? What does he do? Why?
 - What is the meaning of the final stanza? Why the sigh? Why the double I?
 - What does this poem say to us about the way we make choices/how we talk about the choices we have made?
 - Implications for organizational choices, and leadership?
- Closing Exercise: Write/Think/Speak briefly about the following: Ten years from now, what do you hope this organization will be saying (with a sigh, or not) about its own choices?

A link and introduction to the poem can be found in the Resource Library:
http://www.civicreflection.org/online_tools/resource_library/advanced_search/?v=detail&id=6542
