



**NORTH NORFOLK FESTIVAL OF
LITERATURE & LANDSCAPE**

**Poetry reading 3: Noticing & Imagining
(All ages, adaptable)**

Text: The Way through the Woods



**Teaching notes for upper primary and lower
secondary classes**

The way through the woods (1910)

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.


Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.

But there is no road through the woods.

by Rudyard Kipling (1865 - 1936)

For older students, please also read the final poem: **Robert Frost's 'Road not Taken'** to explore and develop the theme of pathways in both poems

Ages 9–12 (focus: interpretation & language)

 Activity (Ages 9–12):


Students annotate the poem: Circle strong words; underline phrases they don't understand; star favourite lines

○ Discussion / development

- Which senses are used in this poem - find examples
- Can you spot any similes or metaphors? What techniques does Kipling use to paint the scene vividly?
- Does the poem have a rhythm, rhyme or sound pattern? What effects does it create?
- What happens to the rhythm in the last line and what difference does that make?
- How many different subjects / viewpoints does the poem touch on? Write a list of who is *doing* or *being* each verb (hint - not all the actors are human or even animate)

○ Writing

- Choose one of the viewpoints / subjects and describe the scene / tell the story from their point of view (what might they know that the speaker does not?)
- Write a news story about the discovery of a lost road in the woods, drawing on details from the poem

 Goal: Highlight effects of sensory detail + simple language. For higher-ability sets develop discussion around use of witnesses in mystery writing

Reading Prompts for ages 7-9


- “What used to be in the woods?”
- “Where did it go?”
- “What animals live there now?”
- “What sounds can you hear?”

Activity

- Draw the road long ago
- Draw the woods now

Writing (ages 7-9 continued)

- “In the woods I hear...”
- “Something is hidden in the woods...”

 Goal: Build imagination + sensory awareness