



What color contrast is presented in lines 1-2?

A. The poet presents a contrast between the curving white birches and the darker trees in the background.



What literary technique is used in lines 21-22?

A. The poet shows a sense of humor when he **personifies** "Truth" as a matter-of-fact woman who must tell her side of the story as she "interrupts" the author.

Birches

Robert Frost

FOCUS: EXTENDED METAPHOR

What color contrast is presented in lines 1-2?

When I see birches bend to left and right
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
 As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them 5
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
 After a rain. They click upon themselves
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
 As the *stir* cracks and *crazes* their enamel.
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells 10
 Shattering and *avalanching* on the snow-crust —
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
 They are dragged to the *withered* bracken* by the load,
 And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed 15
 So low for long, they never right themselves:
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun. 20
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows —

What literary technique is used in lines 21-22?

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

bracken — large, coarse ferns with tough stems.



Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he *subdued* his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung *limp*, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not *launching* out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his *poise*
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So I was once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of *considerations*,
And life is too much like a pathless wood

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Describe how the boy
"tames" the trees (lines
29-40).

A. He subdues the trees by climbing very carefully to the top branches. Then he flings himself out, kicking his feet, until he lands on the ground.



When can life be compared to a "pathless wood" (line 44)?

A. When a person feels lost and does not know where to turn because he is so beset by problems, life can be compared to a "pathless wood."

Describe how the boy
"tames" the trees
(lines 29-40).

When can life be compared to a "pathless wood" (line 44)?

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