

There Are Many Roads

By Sheila Johnson

As if it were yesterday, I clearly remember reading, memorizing, and reciting *The Road Not Taken*, by Robert Frost, one of my favorite poets at the time. In my mind, my fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Edens, had earned the Best Teacher Award for an eternity. She was passionate about her job as an educator and took a special interest in all of her students. She was willing to stay after school and tutor those of us who needed the extra time and attention. She was by far one of the most influential people I will ever meet.

I was experiencing a period of transition in my life for many reasons even at the young age of eleven. My scope of learning, experimenting, and growing into a young woman was widening and expanding. All things seemed new and exciting in my world. I had been given the gift of blocking out the negative and living in the present goodness of the universe. This gift would remain with me for the rest of my life—saving my life many times.

As I read the *The Road Not Taken*, I veered off into space and time wondering about the choices I would make in my young and maturing life. What path would I take? How would I manage myself in a world that seemed to be moving at lightning speed? I wondered if I would survive the violence that was increasingly making its appearance locally and globally. I wondered, as a child of the sixties, if I would be able to gain the necessary credentials to take on male dominated careers. I wondered if I would marry, have children, or remain single and become part of the exciting space program at NASA. I questioned my ability to soar to new heights and leave my family behind for a career in medicine or science. Robert Frost tapped into my imagination causing me to design and paint roads that I had never seen but could only dream about. He poetically spelled out regrets that may have had silver linings—but he would never know, because he took only one.

And today, as I write because of the love of writing, as I mother, because I love my children and grandchildren, as I teach, because I love knowledge, as I laugh because I love joy, as I study the Gospel because I love God—I wonder if Robert Frost ever considered taking more than one road, more than one path as I have?

But I think he was clear in the very last stanza of his poem when he penned,

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”