

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

--Robert Frost

The Identity Principle

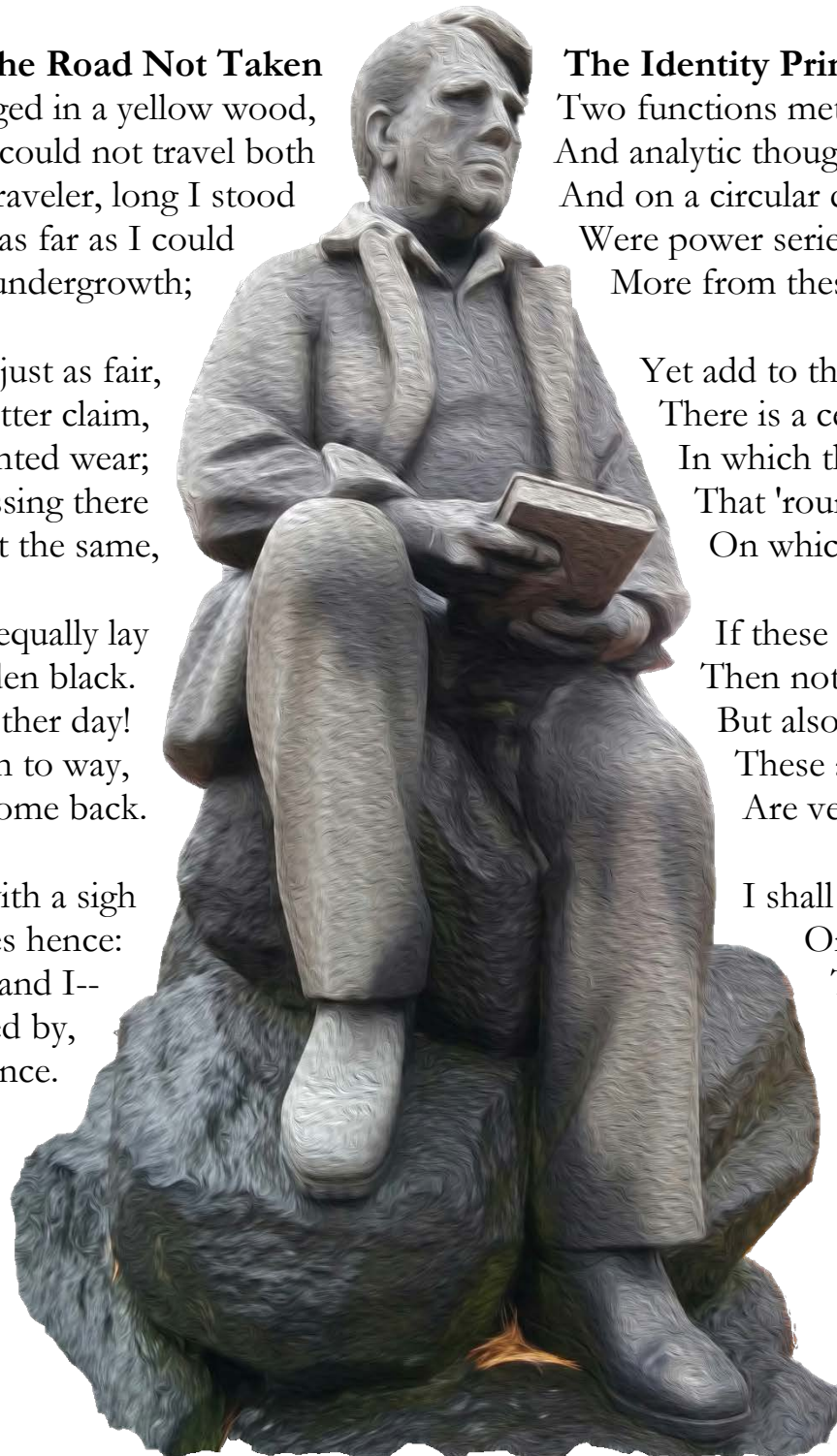
Two functions met in the complex plane,
And analytic though they were,
And on a circular domain
Were power series, it seemed in vain
More from these trifles to infer.

Yet add to these this other thought:
There is a certain set, we claim,
In which there lies a point, z_0 ,
That 'round with other points is fraught,
On which the functions are the same.

If these assumptions should obtain,
Then not just on this set we've spun,
But also on the whole domain,
These analytic functions twain
Are verily not two, but one.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
One morn before a classroom full:
Two functions met in the plane,
and I--
I could no difference descry;
Forsooth, they were identical.

--Greg Carroll



Statue of former Amherst College professor
Robert Frost outside Seeley Mudd Mathematics
and Statistics Building