

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd. \_\_\_\_\_

## Poetry Explication and Analysis

Using the **SSTV-MIDST** method (see chart on second page), explicate and analyze the following poem. Use the questions on the chart to guide your analysis—to help you look closely for different vehicles that communicate meaning, tone, and mood. Identify them **AND** their effects (the Big So What!). ALWAYS connect the vehicle/literary device to the poem's meaning!

The first couple of times you read the poem, just let it wash over you without forethought. Then begin your close reading and annotations.

*Mark up the poem with your comments, questions, reactions, and notes as you read it. **Interact with the text!***

### Desert Places

*Robert Frost*

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast  
In a field I looked into going past,  
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,  
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.  
All animals are smothered in their lairs.  
I am too absent-spirited to count;  
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness  
Will be more lonely ere it will be less -  
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow  
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces  
Between stars—on stars where no human race is.  
I have it in me so much nearer home  
To scare myself with my own desert places.

As part of your annotations, circle any archetypes, briefly identify what each represents in general, and then note *how* each affects the meaning of this particular poem.

**Speaker** . . . . . Who is the voice within this poem? What is he talking about? What is he focused on?  
What can you infer about him from what he says and how he says it?

**Story** . . . . . What's literally happening stanza by stanza? Where is the speaker? What time of day is it?

**Tone** . . . . . How does the speaker feel about what he is talking about? Use specific descriptors.

**Vehicles** . . . . . *How do you know he feels that way? Prove it!*

**Metaphor** . . . . . What figurative comparisons does he make throughout the poem? What effects do they have on tone and mood?

**Imagery** . . . . . What images of this experience does he give us to help us to see, hear, touch, taste, smell what he does? What effects do they have on tone and mood? Why those images and not others?

**Diction** . . . . . What specific words have connotations that clearly communicate his attitude?

**Structure** . . . . . How are the stanzas divided? What things set them apart from each other? What lines are enjambed? What effects do they have?

**Title** . . . . . What does the title have to do with the rest of the poem? What does it communicate to us about the poem's meaning and the speaker's feelings?