This is the first sentence of Dante’s *The Inferno*:

“Midway in the journey of our life

I came to myself in a dark wood,

For the straight way was lost.”

Often epic poetry begins *in medias res*, which means that it begins in the middle of the story, not at the beginning. Reflect on why a poet would begin a story in this way. What seems significant about this particular quote?

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In this quote, there is a shift from 1st person plural (our) to 1st person singular (I/myself). Why? What do you think is the purpose of this shift? What effect does it have on the reader?

This is the first sentence of Dante’s *The Inferno*:

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What is meant by “I came to myself”? Why does Dante use this phrase?

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What could the “dark wood” represent?

This is the first sentence of Dante’s *The Inferno*:

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What is the connotation of the phrase “straight way”?

This is the first sentence of Dante’s *The Inferno*:

“Midway in the journey of our life

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Why do you think Dante ends this sentence with the word “lost”? What are the connotations of the word *lost*? What might this mean for the rest of the work?