



***Janetta Falls, New Jersey, 1846***  
**Jasper Cropsey (American, 1823-1900)**

**Cropsey's dense and highly detailed forest dwarfs the lone artist seeking solitude.**



Oil on canvas; 62 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 48 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: W. Clagett Emory Bequest Fund, in Memory of his Parents, William H. Emory of A, and Martha B. Emory, BMA 1958.14

Jasper Cropsey was one of many 19<sup>th</sup>-century American artists who believed that woods, lakes, rivers, and hills had many lessons to teach about the beauty of nature and man's place in the world. As a young artist, one of his favorite spots to paint was in northern New Jersey and along the Hudson River in New York. In this painting, an artist finds solitude deep in the woods where he has come to sketch.

What do you think he can hear?

- The rush and splash of the waterfall
- The calling of birds
- The rustling of leaves
- The crackling of twigs or branches falling to the ground
- But probably no human voice

What can the artist see?

- Tree trunks everywhere—some stand upright, some lean this way or that. Some broken limbs hang down; others have already fallen to the ground.
- Delicate leafy green branches of various species crisscross to screen off the outside world
- Weighty rocks cluster in mottled tones of brown, orange, and gray.
- Water falls in a continuous stream of bubbles and foam over jagged rocks.
- Spots of sunlight filter through trees and warm the rock where the artist sits.

The artist in this painting may be Cropsey himself. He is a very small, slight figure compared to the tall trees and the robust rocks. What has the artist done to draw attention to the artist in the woods?

- He wears a bright red scarf and blue trousers in a painting where all the other colors are earth tones.
- He sits in the center of the painting in a bright spot of sunlight.
- The cleft in the rock below him is shaped like an arrow pointing in his direction.

Imagine having a conversation with Jasper Cropsey. How might he respond if you asked him why he painted himself so small?