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From Reader Review Complete Poems Of Robert Frost, 1949 for online ebook

Leila says

This book was bought in error and is not the complete works of Robert Frost, just a selection.

Dorothy says

April is National Poetry Month and, in honor of that fact, I have decided to re-read (or at least skim) and review some of my favorites. For me, that always starts with Robert Frost.

I discovered the poetry of Robert Frost, as I discovered so many things, in college. In my Speech class, one of my assignments required me to deliver a speech including favorite poems. I didn't really have favorite poems. As I searched my memory for what I might use, I remembered the inauguration of John F. Kennedy several years before. The school that I attended at the time had gathered all of the students into the auditorium in assembly and played the inauguration for us on television. Thus, I saw the poet with the shock of white hair, on that snow-covered day, delivering his poem as part of the ceremony. And, all those years later, I had an epiphany. I thought, "Ah ha! I'll do Robert Frost."

But, of course, I didn't really know much about Robert Frost and I didn't have a favorite poem of his, so I had to do a little research.

It didn't take long for me to feel a connection with his poetry. I found that it was based on rural themes and was about ordinary people, two things that were very familiar to me, having grown up in the country on a farm. Moreover, it was written in a deceptively simple manner, in vernacular that was easily understood. The settings of his poems were mostly in New England and I had grown up in the South, but it all felt very comfortable and homey to me.

That was when I first read *Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. I have returned to it many, many times in the years since. My book's cover and pages have water stains and there are teeth marks from a long-dead dog who took a liking to it and gnawed away one corner of the hardback. There are post-it notes stuck throughout the book, marking favorite poems. It is a book that has been loved almost to death but still it hangs together, even if in fragile condition.

There are many favorites among the poems of this book, but I return again and again to two; one because it reminds me of my own childhood when I was a rider of tree saplings and the other because it states so very simply much of what I believe.

The first one is *Birches*. It describes a boy swinging on birches that had been bent down by ice storms. It speaks of the joy which he derives from this simple act, this boy "too far from town to learn baseball, whose only play was what he found himself." The poet admits that he, too, was once a "swinger of birches." And the poem ends:

I'd like to get away from earth awhile

And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

The other poem that means a lot to me, especially since I've become a habitat gardener is *The Tuft of Flowers*. It describes the poet going to turn grass that has been mowed for hay and seeing a butterfly flitting here and there searching for some remembered stand of flowers, now gone. As he watches the butterfly, it draws his eye to a patch of flowers the scythe had spared.

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

The mower in the dew had love them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn...

And as the poem ends, the poet feels a kinship with the mower, "a spirit kindred to my own." He had previously felt alone in the field but now he sees that we are all in this together - the mower, the turner of the grass, the butterfly, and in silent conversation with the mower who has now moved on, he says:

"Men work together, I told him from the heart,
Whether they work together or apart."

A deceptively simple poem with a deeper meaning for those who take the time to find that "tuft of flowers." That was Robert Frost. That's why I love his poems.

Rachel Jackson says

You would think one day I would learn my lesson about poetry: I'm just not into it. I say this every time I read a poetry book, and it's true every time. Despite glowing recommendations, from friends or websites, I try really hard to like poetry but can never seem to get past the stubbornness I've always seemed to hold about works of poetry. It's becoming more and more a futile task.

In this case, one of my friends is a huge Robert Frost fan—to the point that his ex-girlfriend once thought he'd given her a Frost poem as a gift when it was really one that he wrote for her—and I value his book recommendations highly. I told him I wanted to find some poetry that I really connected with, and he, predictably, suggested Frost; so I searched for and discovered this collection of *Complete Poems* of Robert Frost.

Unfortunately, my prevailing notions on poetry are still prevailing, and this collection was boring and frustrating for me. I found a few poems here and there that I enjoyed, but overall, Frost's poems all sound the same to me and have the same general subjects and tones, rendering them dull and forgettable surrounded by so many of the same types of poems.

I say that I should give up poetry for good, and I don't ever know if I mean that. I'd like to find a poet whose work I do really enjoy and connect with, but, regrettably, Robert Frost does not appear to be that poet.

A. Dawes says

If not the greatest of modern poets, I don't think many would argue regarding his accessibility. Frost is certainly the poet that resonates most with me.

Edlira Dibrani says

The night light

She always had to burn a light
Beside her attic bed at night
It gave bad dreams and broken sleep,
But helped the Lord her soul to keep
Good gloom on her was thrown away.
It is on me by night or day,
Who have, as I suppose, ahead
The darkest of it still to dread.

ZaRi says

Nothing to say to all those marriages!

She had made three herself to three of his.
The score was even for them, three to three.
But come to die she found she cared so much:
She thought of children in a burial row;
Three children in a burial row were sad.
One man's three women in a burial row
Somehow made her impatient with the man.
And so she said to Laban, "You have done
A good deal right; don't do the last thing wrong.
Don't make me lie with those two other women."

Laban said, No, he would not make her lie
With anyone but that she had a mind to,
If that was how she felt, of course, he said.
She went her way. But Laban having caught
This glimpse of lingering person in Eliza,
And anxious to make all he could of it
With something he remembered in himself,
Tried to think how he could exceed his promise,
And give good measure to the dead, though thankless.
If that was how she felt, he kept repeating.
His first thought under pressure was a grave
In a new boughten grave plot by herself,
Under he didn't care how great a stone:
He'd sell a yoke of steers to pay for it.
And weren't there special cemetery flowers,
That, once grief sets to growing, grief may rest;
The flowers will go on with grief awhile,
And no one seem neglecting or neglected?
A prudent grief will not despise such aids.
He thought of evergreen and everlasting.
And then he had a thought worth many of these.
Somewhere must be the grave of the young boy
Who married her for playmate more than helpmate,
And sometimes laughed at what it was between them.
How would she like to sleep her last with him?
Where was his grave? Did Laban know his name?

He found the grave a town or two away,
The headstone cut with John, Beloved Husband,
Beside it room reserved; the say a sister's;
A never-married sister's of that husband,
Whether Eliza would be welcome there.
The dead was bound to silence: ask the sister.
So Laban saw the sister, and, saying nothing
Of where Eliza wanted not to lie,
And who had thought to lay her with her first love,
Begged simply for the grave. The sister's face
Fell all in wrinkles of responsibility.

She wanted to do right. She'd have to think.
Laban was old and poor, yet seemed to care;
And she was old and poor—but she cared, too.
They sat. She cast one dull, old look at him,
Then turned him out to go on other errands
She said he might attend to in the village,
While she made up her mind how much she cared—
And how much Laban cared—and why he cared,
(She made shrewd eyes to see where he came in.)

She'd looked Eliza up her second time,
A widow at her second husband's grave,
And offered her a home to rest awhile
Before she went the poor man's widow's way,
Housekeeping for the next man out of wedlock.
She and Eliza had been friends through all.
Who was she to judge marriage in a world
Whose Bible's so confused up in marriage counsel?
The sister had not come across this Laban;
A decent product of life's ironing-out;
She must not keep him waiting. Time would press
Between the death day and the funeral day.
So when she saw him coming in the street
She hurried her decision to be ready
To meet him with his answer at the door.
Laban had known about what it would be
From the way she had set her poor old mouth,
To do, as she had put it, what was right.

She gave it through the screen door closed between them:
"No, not with John. There wouldn't be no sense.
Eliza's had too many other men."

Laban was forced to fall back on his plan
To buy Eliza a plot to lie alone in:
Which gives him for himself a choice of lots
When his time comes to die and settle down.

Leslie says

I am rating this although I didn't read the entire book before it had to go back to the library. (I estimate that I read 75%)

My previous experience with Robert Frost's poetry has been mostly of his early poems, so I was delighted to find some new favorites in the later ones. Late or early, my preference is still for the shorter poems, although my admiration for his longer poems is growing with exposure. I think that if I enjoyed those longer poems more I would have given this book 5 stars!

Harley says

One of the best poets living or dead.

Claire (Book Blog Bird) says

In the UK, English teachers don't tend to teach a lot of American poetry - it's usually reserved for university education. I'll tell you, though, they could go further and do worse than to introduce some Robert Frost poetry into the curriculum.

Disclaimer: I'm no poetry buff. I do, however, like a bit of poetry every now and then and I find Robert Frost's poems very accessible and utterly beautiful in their imagery. They remind me of Norman Rockwell paintings. Some of his poems are pretty long but many are very short and he manages to pack so much narration and world-building into just a few lines. It's really quite incredible.

Jennifer says

Some of his story poems are really enjoyable. It's like dropping into the middle of a conversation and having to pick up the pieces to figure out what is happening. Others of them are tedious. I found some new ones from him that I enjoyed; but mostly reading him requires a lot of quiet which is not one of my luxuries.

Cindy says

In elementary school, my teacher hung up a beautiful poster printed with "Acquainted with the Night." The background picture was a dark dreamy urban silhouette, lit by a single street lamp. Sadly, we never covered Robert Frost in class but I read the poem to myself every morning and looked for Mr. Frost's poetry in our school library. I'm nearly thirty now, and as cliche as it is, I still unashamedly love curling up with this book on cold nights. I read "My November Guest" every autumn!

Lisa says

Love Robert Frost. Some of my happiest memories include sitting around a few desks with English faculty friends, when I taught at a private school, and delving into the intricacies of a few Frost poems. I also remember sitting in a sauna-like classroom at college during the summer-no air conditioning on a stifling day-and listening to my old, bow-tied professor wax eloquent about Frost and Melville. Days to cherish.

Alan says

Spent my morning with these trying to find RF's critical assessment of fame, how his neighbors come last to recognize him. Turns out, it's not in the Complete, since he was elected Poet Laureate of Vermont (where he'd moved from N.H. forty years before) in 1961, at age 85. Year after he recited from memory at JFK's Inauguration. Wryly, Frost responds "On Being Chosen Poet of Vermont," "Breathes there a bard who isn't moved/ When he finds his verse is understood...By his country and his neighborhood." And that IS the order, friends: The Country will recognize you before your neighbors do, especially yankees, mebbe.

I found this stunning, despite almost five decades of familiarity, many of them teaching certain poems like "Home Burial" and "A Servant to Servants," and of course property feeling in "Stopping by Woods", as well as the role of Edward Thomas and England in the universally misunderstood and admired "Road not Taken," with the most famous aposiopesis in English and American lit, "and I--/ ...I took...."

My perusal this morning suggested I had neglected a dozen bird poems I should have noted in my "Birdtalk", like "Never again would Birds' Sounds be the Same," "Directive" about the Phoebes weeping to those not versed in country things, "Minor Bird" possibly about Titmouses or Phoebes, and others. Then, for this Amtrak rider, Boston to Colorado six times, some poems start from trains, "A Passing Glimpse," "Figure in the Doorway," and "On the Heart's Beginning to Cloud the Mind."(One, a train in Utah.) And several on wells, from the prolog "Pasture" to "For Once, then, Something." And even old shoes, "A Record Stride." Above these subjects looms the writer's flexible, ironic, undercutting voice and tone, still uncommon in American poetry, so often elevated, sublime, the "I" growing as s/he speaks.

And may I say, as a lifelong "liberal," community college teacher, supporter of the American Dream and fulfillment thereof, I was amused at RF's parodic political satire mostly from the R--Rep or Right. His "Departmental" could be a satire on Hillary anthill: "Death's come to Jerry McCormick,/ Our selfless forager Jerry" (372); as could "A Roadside Stand" be a satire on my whole political and professional life, "Where they won't have to think for themselves anymore;/ While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,/ Swarm over their lives enforcing benefits/ That are calculated to soothe them out of their wits..."(370).

Frost famously conflicted with the Amherst College liberal President Meiklejohn, whose policies RF termed at the time, "Micklejaundice." But later in life, Frost conceded, "Meiklejohn was right."

Well...I find Frost's poetry filled with nuggets, turns of phrase, sometimes parodic turns, and especially quick changes in tone--rare in any but cummings and Dickinson, who lived down the street from where Frost taught in 1919, and whose life overlapped his by eleven years. Bill Pritchard's literary biography is unsurpassed as a poetic reading, and it contains a photo of Frost regaling my two great, witty Amherst College teachers, Baird (Shakespeare) and Craig (In Freshman Comp, he asked my class, staring out the window, if any of us saw drumlins out there? No-one did. Craig, "You can't see them if you don't know the word." See RF, "Drumlin Woodcock.") and Craig's upperclass Seminar on Dickens and James). Both Baird and Craig endorsed my senior honors thesis on Renaissance prosody and tone, directed by the learned and witty Richard Cody.

I rejoice in having had such teachers, but I do wonder at all that I have missed through decades of familiarity. As Baird once wrote me of my grad subject, Andrew Marvell, his "To His Coy Mistress" is much better than familiarity suggests. I would say, this goes for most of Frost--though may I add, his neighbor down the street, of another gender, surpasses him...and all but one or two poets. But both ED and RF expand our New England dialect vocabulary, like "aftermath" for the second mowing.

Deanna says

I pick up and read a one or two a night. Into my Own is one of my favorites.

Audrey Greathouse says

This was an interesting exercise in just taking in poetry and looking at a poet's life from start to finish. I also did this with Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Collected Works" a little while back, and I have to say that a few poems a day are a wonderful addition to my daily reading regimen. Going through this omnibus cover to cover also had no small impact on my own poetry writing, and I'm glad to have gotten away from the rut my own work was in by looking at the world around me through the borrowed lens of Frost's love of nature. A better student of poetry would probably have all sorts of things to say about how his style grew and evolved over his life, but I found myself enjoying his early work as much as his late, and experienced no great change in the beautiful quality of his insights and language.

Rob says

My daughter came to visit yesterday bringing this back. She loaned it to one of her friends who returned it to her only two weeks ago. I think it's got more dog-ears now and I'm pretty sure it has acquired a coffee stain since the last time I opened it.

Amanda C says

Great book for the bath with a glass of wine

Helen Powel says

I do find it harder to read poems than prose. Although some of them are really short they are made to think. This sounds daft, but I do read to escape I find at least at this moment. I want to get lost in a story. I will try again in another phase of my life :-)

Rona says

Read Frost, over and over. He captures the moments in life. The beauty, the horror, the indecision of a moment.

Don't look into his biography; it'll ruin it.

David Ward says

The Complete Poems of Robert Frost by Robert Frost (Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1964) (811+/-). This is the complete collection of his work. "Mending Wall," "The Road Not Taken," and "Stopping By the Woods on

a Snowy Evening" are the most immediately recognizable. My rating: 7/10, finished 10/25/14.
