

Robert Frost Farm Friends Newsletter

(Robert Frost Homestead Foundation)

*The
Robert Frost Farm*



P.O. Box 1075 Derry, New Hampshire 03038
A National and New Hampshire Historic Site

Issue 5

Spring 2004

Frost was keenly attuned to the mystique of nature since much of his poetry reflects a delight in the natural scene. In keeping with his belief that... "A complete poem is one where an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found the words," his poetry portrays everyday life in rural New England in lyrical, yet conversational and dramatic language. In the following sonnet he illustrates an intimate knowledge of and feeling for the lessons of nature.

*You come to fetch me from my work tonight
When supper's on the table, and we'll see
If I can leave off burying the white
Soft petals fallen from the apple tree
(Soft petals, yes, but not so barren quite,
Mingled with these, smooth bean and wrinkled pea;)
And go along with you ere you lose sight
Of what you came for and become like me,
Slave to a springtime passion for the earth.
How Love burns through the Putting in the Seed
On through the watching for the early birth
When, just as the soil tarnished with weed,
The sturdy seedling with arched body comes
Shouldering its way and shedding the earth's crumbs.
"Putting in the Seed"*



Long considered an integral part of Derry, several lines from "A Prayer in Spring" written by Frost in 1906, appear in the program for "The Planting of The Orchard" which was held at the Farm on May 20, 1979.

*Oh give us pleasure in the flowers today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.*

*Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.*

*And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands still.*

*For this is love and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfill.
"A Prayer in Spring"*

Inviting guest speakers to Derry to celebrate the work of America's foremost poet is a tradition at the Farm. Lectures are held in the Farm's barn theater at 2 P.M. and are open to the public without charge.

SUNDAY JULY 18 - POET JEFFREY HARRISON:

INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE: A POETRY READING

As the first guest in this year's Literary Series, poet Jeffrey Harrison will be reading from his three books of poetry - "Feeding the Fire", "Signs of Arrival", and "The Singing Underneath", as well as reading several of Frost's poems. David Kirby of The New York Times Book Review writes... "The poems in Jeffrey Harrison's new collection, "Feeding the Fire" chronicle our growth from the cluelessness of childhood to that slightly greater state of awareness called adult life."

Harrison credits Robert Frost along with Baudelaire, Keats, and Philip Larkin, as being primary sources of poetic influence. The late James Merrill, one-time Connecticut Poet Laureate and Harrison's mentor, selected Jeffrey's book of poetry, "The Singing Underneath" for the National Poetry Series. He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts as well as the Pushcart Prize, the Amy Lowell Traveling Poetry Scholarship, and the Lavan Younger Poets Award from the Academy of American Poets.

His poems have appeared in The New Yorker, The New Republic, Poetry, The Paris Review, The Yale Review and many other magazines. He has taught at several Universities, and at Phillips Academy where he was the Roger Murray Writer-in-Residence for three years. Jeffrey lives in Dover, Massachusetts with his wife and two children.



SUNDAY JULY 25 - DAVID SANDERS

LYRIC AND DRAMA IN FROST'S "NORTH OF BOSTON"

David Sanders has been a Professor of English at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY since 1986. In addition to courses in British and American Literature, he also teaches a course in Biblical Literature every year.

His scholarly interest is focused primarily on Frost's work where he has made numerous contributions to the Robert Frost Review and The Robert Frost Encyclopedia. He has forthcoming articles on the poet for The Journal of Modern Literature and Resources in American Literary Studies, both scheduled to appear this year. David has also presented and published professional papers on T.S. Eliot, Mark Twain, Elizabeth Bishop, and others. As President of the Robert Frost Society for 2004-2005, he will continue to organize sessions for national meetings of the Society as he has done since 1990. The meeting this year will be for the Modern Language Association.

David is somewhere in the middle of writing a book on Frost's "North of Boston." With his teaching background in biblical literature, he has future plans for a book on modern writer's uses of biblical materials.

He shares his family life in an 1836 farmhouse, still amid farms outside Rochester, with his wife Sara, and their two children, a cat and two Airedale terriers. He is a longtime runner and cross-country skier as well as an avid gardener and landscaper who, like Frost, has done some "stone-wall building" on a modest scale.



SUNDAY AUGUST 1 - ROBIN HUDNUT

ON BALANCE: A GRANDDAUGHTER'S MEMORIES OF ROBERT FROST

Poet Robert Frost was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874. His granddaughter, Robin Hudnut, lives in the Bay Area and often celebrates his birthday by sharing her insights and perspectives on Frost's life and poetry. Past celebrations have taken place together with the Mayor of San Francisco, the Market Street policemen and school children joining in at the Robert Frost Plaza in San Francisco, and at the dedication of the Robert Frost stained glass window at Grace Cathedral.

Born in Billings, Montana, she is the only daughter of Marjorie, Frost's third daughter who was born in 1905 at the Farm in Derry. A graduate of Smith College with a BA degree in Art History, Robin is both a commercial artist and a fine artist painting in oil and watercolor. Her work has been exhibited in California, Montana, New York, and Massachusetts. She has illustrated six children's books. Two of these were written by her aunt, Lesley Frost: "Digging Down to China" (1968) and "Going on Two" (1972).

Robin shares her part in the world out of which Frost created his poetry, connecting him with her mother who was also a poet, and evokes his history, his values, his country, his countryside. She brings his presence into the room. Listeners soon forget Robin and listen to the "sound of sense" with which Frost imbued his lyrical and storytelling verses. Through her presentation, Robin helps her audience feel the music, joy and sorrow, and the just plain fun in Frost's life and work. They go out with a full heart.

Robin's last speaking appearance at Derry was in March 1999 as part of a "Frostbitten Weekend" sponsored by Plymouth State College. In addition to speaking at various venues in the country, she has led annual poetry workshops in San Francisco Bay area schools, and again on May 16 she will lead another in Sonoma, California.

SUNDAY AUGUST 15 - DONALD SHEEHAN

ROBERT FROST AND DARKNESS: REFLECTIONS ON "AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT"

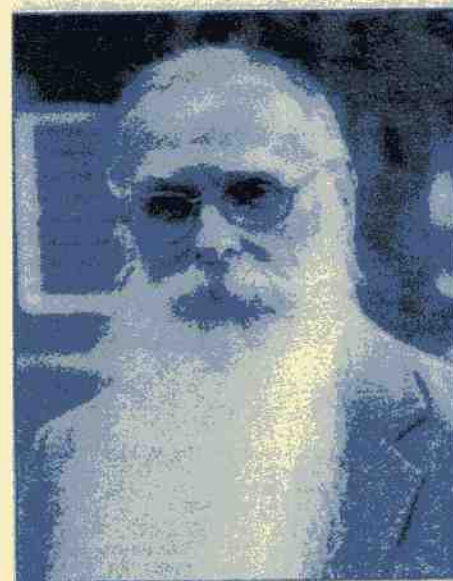
Donald Sheehan, Executive Director of The Frost Place in Franconia, New Hampshire recently retired from Dartmouth College's English and Graduate Departments to devote himself fully to The Frost Place. The Frost Place which opened in 1977 as a museum and center for poetry and the arts dedicated to Frost's life and work, is based in a farmhouse in Franconia, NH where the poet and his family, upon returning from England, lived from 1915-1920.

Since the beginning of a Poet-in-Residency Program in 1977, Trustees of The Frost Place have followed a consistent policy of choosing a poet from somewhere in America whose career at the time of their selection resembles Robert Frost's in 1915 when he arrived in Franconia. In his preface to the Frost Place anthology, *Mountain Intervals*, (Meriden-Stinehour Press, 1986), Sheehan wrote, "Houses and rooms are important to poets and their poems." Executive Director for over twenty-five years, Sheehan, since 1982, has chosen the poets for residency each year. Volume I of *The Breath of Parted Lips - Voices from The Robert Frost Place* (Cavan Kerry Press 2001) features poetry of the past twenty-four resident poets with a foreword by former New Hampshire Poet Laureate Donald Hall, and an introduction by Sheehan whose lucid and insightful written remarks precede a selection of each resident poet's work.

A classical scholar, with an interest in Ancient and Modern Lyric Poetry, Classical Byzantine Greek and Classical and Medieval Latin Poetry, Sheehan has published essays on modern poetry as well as translated several selected publications from Greek and Russian. Sheehan lives in Sharon, Vermont with his wife Carol.



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Excerpts from:
AN EARLY FROST BROADSIDE
 by Lawrance Thompson.

Shortly after Robert Frost was offered a part-time position to teach at Pinkerton Academy in 1907, Principal Reverend George W. Bingham asked Frost to write and read a poem appropriate for the 100th anniversary of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's birth. "...Distressed by the prospect of such an ordeal, and inherently opposed to writing poems to order, Frost none the less felt duty bound to comply with Mr. Bingham's request... On Longfellow's birthday, February 27, 1907, students, teachers and guests gathered in the chapel at Pinkerton Academy. ...There were appropriate declamations by boys and girls and a commemorative address by Mr. Bingham... Then the part-time hen-man was introduced with remarks to the effect that he would read a poem of his own, written especially for the occasion. Thus led to the slaughter, Frost established a precedent; for the first time in his life he read one of his own poems aloud before a public gathering..." The theme of the poem was entitled THE LATER MINSTREL. Pinkerton's administration was so pleased with the poem that they printed it in broadside form to fit a small half-size sheet suitable for insertion into chapel hymnals and sung to the tune of the old hymn "COOLING."

These hymnals and the poem were long forgotten until 1939 when Thompson visited friends in Derry, NH and called on a former Frost student, Mrs. Helen Melvin Moody.

Mrs. Moody offered Thompson the opportunity to look through her attic where many old schoolbooks and papers were stored. Moody found a pristine copy of the broadside containing "THE LATER MINSTREL", offering it to Thompson who refused, explaining there might be no other copy of the broadside in existence. Mrs. Moody then recalled seeing other hymnals including the broadside stored in a back room of the church.

The Later Minstrel

Robert L. Frost

Tune Cooling 339

Remember some departed day,
 When bathed in autumn gold,
 You wished for some sweet song, and
 sighed
 For minstrel days of old.

And that same golden autumn day,
 Perhaps the fates would bring
 At eve, one knocking at your heart,
 With perfect songs to sing.

You knew that never bard on earth,
 Did wander wide as he—
 Who sang the long, long thoughts of
 Youth,
 The secret of the Sea.

You knew not when he might not come,
 But while he made delays,
 You wronged the wisdom that you had,
 And sighed for vanished days.

Song's times and seasons are its own,
 Its ways past finding out,
 But more and more it fills the earth,
 And triumphs over doubt.

An Early Frost Broadside 9

the chapel hymnals so that it might be available for singing to the old hymn tune "Cooling" by the students at assemblies. Before that plan was carried out, the Academy's literary paper printed the poem with an account of the exercises, so that it made its first appearance in print on page

339 COOLING C. M. Ainsie J. Abbey, 1858

1 O could I find, from day to day, A near-ness to my God,
 Then would my hours glide sweet a-way, While leaning on His word. A - MEN.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>2 Lord, I desire with Thee to live,
 Anew from day to day,
 In joys the world can never give,
 Nor ever take away.</p> | <p>3 Blest Jesus, come and rule my heart,
 And make me wholly Thine,
 That I may never more depart,
 Nor grieve Thy love Divine.</p> |
| <p>4 Thus, till my last expiring breath,
 Thy goodness I'll adore;
 And when my frame dissolves in death,
 My soul shall love Thee more.</p> | |

Benjamin Cleveland, c. 1790; alt.

A search of nearly an hour in a hot and dusty, wasp-infested room, failed to turn up additional copies of the broadside. The only other known Broadside is part of the Special Collection at Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Lawrance Thompson then put a reputable collector in touch with Mrs. Moody who received proper worth for her rare Broadside. After the sale, she wrote Thompson expressing her gratitude that the proceeds had enabled her to finally realize a long-time desire to own a second-hand grand piano. "...And when the piano had been installed just where she had always dreamed one might be, in her parlor, she had celebrated by sitting down and playing for her first number the old hymn tune 'Cooling.'"

THE NEW COLOPHON
 A BOOK COLLECTOR'S QUARTERLY
 Volume 1. Part One. Published January 1948. New York. Duschnes Crawford, Inc.
 Printed in the United States of America by The Anthoensen Press, Portland, Maine

THE ROBERT FROST YOUTH POET PROGRAM

Program Description

It was New Hampshire that inspired Robert Frost to create much of his poetry. Its rich history, natural beauty and remarkable people inspire all of us in unique ways.

Since 1989 the Robert Frost Youth Poet Program has offered New Hampshire fourth grade students in public and private schools the opportunity to express their feelings about New Hampshire in a poem. The sponsors of the program hope to increase appreciation of our state's natural and cultural resources, and also hope to encourage students to discover the poets in themselves.

The Robert Frost Farm is a State Historic Site, also a National Historic Landmark. This was the home of Robert L. Frost and his family from 1900 to 1909. On the property are many sites Frost wrote about in his poetry, including "Mending Wall," Hyla Brook," and "The Pasture."

The Robert Frost Youth Poet Program is generously supported by:

The Finisterre Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; The Trustees of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation; University of New Hampshire Library; State of New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development - Division of Parks and Recreation; The Poetry Society of New Hampshire.

CONTEST THEME — 2004

The theme selected for poems that will be written by New Hampshire fourth grade students is:

"Nature in New Hampshire"

This year's reading and award presentation ceremony will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, June 19, 2004 in the Barn Theater of The Robert Frost Farm in Derry, with reception to follow.

*"The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is with an April day
When the sun is out and the wind is still.
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March."*

TWO TRAMPS IN MUD TIME

Amherst College Class of 1957 Commissions Frost Statue

Wellfleet sculptor, Penelope Jencks is working on a statue of Robert Frost commissioned by the Amherst College Class of 1957. ... "He will be seated, on some rocks (Jenck's people sit on rocks), holding a book in his hand and facing the Frost Library." ... The finished sculpture will be in granite. ... "He has a granite face," she says... "I'm interested in the face and the thoughts behind it."

Wellfleet Postcard, The Off-Season, The New Yorker, December 8, 2003 ---Philip Hamburger

FRIENDS of the ROBERT FROST FARM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please Note: On the address label following your name you will find a digital entry indicating your membership expiration date.

STUDENT.....\$10.00	INDIVIDUAL.....\$20.00	FAMILY.....\$35.00
SPONSOR.....\$50.00	SUPPORTING....\$100.00	CORPORATE...\$250.00

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Mail to: Ian Veitenheimer, Treasurer
Friends of the Robert Frost Farm
P. O. Box 1075
Derry, NH 03038

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP --- Please tell a friend.

DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE I-93

Rte. I 93, Exit 4. East on Rte. 102 to Derry New Hampshire Traffic Circle. South on Rte. 28 for 1 ¼ miles to the farm. Programs are made possible by grants from the New Hampshire Humanities Council and are sponsored by the Robert Frost Homestead Trustees and the Friends of the Robert Frost Farm. Speaker Programs are free to the public.

~~www.nonprofitambrosia.org/frostfarm/~~

Telephone (603) 432-3091

<http://nhstateparks.org/ParksPages/FrostFarm/Frost.html>

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