



## New England and the Robert Frost

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**Abstract:** *"Not a poem I believe, in all my six books, from "A Boy's Will" to "A Further Range" but has something in it of New Hampshire. Nearly half of my poems must actually have been written in New Hampshire. Every single person in my "North of Boston" was friend or acquaintance of my in New Hampshire. I lived, somewhat brokenly to be sure, in Salem, Derry Plymouth and Franconia, New Hampshire, from my teeth (eleventh) to forty fifth (forty sixth). Most of my time out of it, I lived in Lawrence, Massachusetts on the edge of New Hampshire, where my walks and vacations could be in New Hampshire. My first teaching was in a district school in the Southern part of Salem, New Hampshire. My father was born in Kingston, New Hampshire. My wife's mother was born in New Hampshire. So you see it has been New Hampshire with me all the way. You will find my poems show it, I think?-----"*

**Key Words:** Hampshire, Nearly, person, acquaintance, brokenly, Plymouth, teaching, southern .

The above extract is the most authentic statement that underscores the importance of the New England region and its immense influence on the poet. As per the general concept, Robert Frost is a poet from and of New England. According to Mark Van Doren, Robert Frost is primarily known as "a New England poet, perhaps the New England poet". This prevalent notion has led to the region oriented identity of Frost and the origin of the biased view that volume and amassed material and memories that would be accorded expression in poems to be written decades later. Those were the years which he frequently referred to that particular period of life as "the most sacred" phase of his entire life.

Frost holds a unique historical place as New England's first great returnee after the invention of New England as the dominant culture region of America. To Frost, New England's connection with his forefathers was a matter of great pride and honour particularly because of the patriotic dimension of that relationship as New England was one of the few provinces still holding on to the old American tradition and culture. For him, life in New England was not merely a legacy from his forefathers, but an extremely precious heirloom, an immensely proud of Frost's

possession. New England was his identity. He was the only poet since Thoreau, to sense every breath of the New England landscape, to feel Alive and invigorated by the familiar sights and sounds and the similar fragrance of its soil.

The relationship that bind Frost to New England is one of deep and inviolably symbiotic. If we attempt to isolate Frost from New England, we would be depriving him of the foundation of his existence and his poetry of its most major source of its distinctive identity.

"The land is always in my bones.

Although Frost's New England follows the traditional image of the region and is a realistic reflection of it. Frost stops short of encompassing its entire expanse. The New England that we come across in Frost's poetry is a pre urban, pre industrial, rural region of pastoral simplicity and bliss, peopled by a predominantly Protestant population.

The impact of New England over Frost's mind is evident right from his locale specific first volume, A Boy's Will where we find him--?" in the midst of a wooded valleys and the wooded hills, he hears the blue Jay's screech and the whisper of hawks beside the sun, he comes upon the purple stemmed with raspberry, the sudden pasture lanes of late fall



and the abandoned cellar holes gradually being reclaimed by nature". Scenes of the familiar sights and sounds of the New England locale abound in the pages of the volume.

What things for dream there are when specter-like,

Moving along tall haycocks lightly piled,

I enter alone upon the stubble field.

From which the laborer's voices late have died,

And in the antiphony of afterglow

And rising full moon, sit me down

Upon the full moon's side of the first haycock

And loose myself amid so many alike. ("Waiting: A field at dusk; cppp, p.23)

The poems of *A Boy's Will* are significant as testimony to Frost's growing attachment to subjects that belong quintessentially to New England, like--

A saturated meadows,

Sun shaped and jewel-small,

A circle scarcely wider

Them the trees around were tall,

Where winds were quiet excluded,

And the air was stifling sweet

With the breath of many flowers?---

A temple of the heat. (Rose Pogonias, "cpp, p.22)

In his second volume, *North of Boston* (1914) the presentation of New England is more sentient and invested with a significance. "This book?--- is frequently cited as Frost's best---his most effectively United and sustained work. The source of all these strength was the poet's newly found sensitivity to his regional background.

The New England people Frost presents the North of Boston are

"leftovers of the old stock, morbid, pursued by phantoms, slowly, sinking to insanity. The New Englanders projected in North of Boston-are caught up in a struggle with the elementary problems of existence---holding a farm together, paying of a mortgage, dragging through the routine of the daily chores-----"

The New England identity has been one

of the foremost misinterpretation that have been one of the main factors to have led to the denial of a place among the Modernist poets. Frost's rightfully deserved. Critics like R.P. Blackmur, Yvor Winters, Malcolm Cowley, George W. Nitcher and contemporary poets, like Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, W.H. Auden, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Graves, all have perpetuated Frost's identity as the regional poet to the extent that he has become synonymous with that particular locale and vice-versa. Apart from the contribution of his critics and his contemporaries, the New England Identity is, to some extent, the result of his own conscious efforts also. In his public appearances, interviews, and letters, he consciously cultivates this stance of a Yankee sage, a servant like figure, steeped in the Morris and ideologies of New England life. But apparently simplistic New England tag affixed to Frost's Poetic as well as personal identity makes many problematic issues.

He is more than a New England poet: he is more than an American poet, he is a poet who can be understood anywhere by readers versed in matters more ancient and universal than the custom of one country, whatever that country is. Frost's country is the country of human sense, of experience, of imagination, and of thought. His poems start at home, as all good poems do, as Homer's did, as Shakespeare's, as Goethe's and as Baudelaire's but they end up everywhere, as only the best poems do. This is partly because his wisdom is native to him, and could not have been suppressed by any circumstances, it is partly, too, because his education has been right. He is our least provincial poet, he is the best grounded in those ideas---'Greek, Hebrew, modern Europeans and even oriental?---which make for well built art at anytime".

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