

## A Lasting Impression

First Impressions can be deceiving, sometimes to our relief, sometimes to our chagrin. Yet there are times when a first impression is lasting. Robert Frost puts the matter this way: ‘It is absurd to think that the only way to tell if a poem is lasting is to wait and see if it lasts. The right reader of a good poem can tell the moment it strikes him that he has taken an immortal wound—that he will never get over it.’<sup>1</sup>

I like that phrase, ‘immortal wound.’ The moment it struck me I knew I would never get over it, never forget it. ‘An immortal wound.’ Some words are like that. They don’t just convey information, or express an opinion we might agree or disagree with—they open a wound, a tear, in our otherwise closed system of understanding, our horizon of actuality and possibility. Sometimes a word opens us to an actuality or a possibility that terrifies us and we wish we’d never heard of it but we can’t get it out of our heads, it haunts us like a bad dream. Sometimes, it strikes us like Cupid’s arrow, tipped not in poison but in something inexpressibly sweet, and we hope we never recover.

One young undergrad took such an immortal wound at eight a.m. September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1955, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Drawing near the Field Husbandry building for a class in Canadian History, he and his friend Bob Blakeley spotted two young women sitting on its steps, whereupon Bob introduced one of them to me as Eileen Calder. I knew in that moment that I wanted to marry her. Not only did we celebrate our sixty-first anniversary last June, but the very sound, the very thought of her name still quickens me, as with an indescribable combination of present actuality and open-ended promise.

So what about Robert Frost? Here is what Lionel Trilling said in 1959, at a dinner celebrating Frost’s eighty-fifth birthday:

I have to say that my Frost . . . is not the Frost I seem to perceive in the minds of so many of his admirers. [My Frost] is not the Frost who reassures us by his affirmation of old virtues, old simplicities and ways of feeling; he is anything but. Frost’s best poems represent the terrible actualities of life. In sum, he is a terrifying poet.’<sup>2</sup>

So Trilling’s Frost, a *writer*, of poems that open an immortal wound—and this, because of the ‘terrible actualities of life’ he himself has suffered. As Josephine Hart writes, Frost, by age eighty-five, had had more than his share of a ‘Joblike series of tragedies.’

Consider, then, his poem, ‘West-running Brook,’<sup>3</sup> in which a husband and wife come upon a brook running west when all the other brooks in the area run east. This strikes her as odd, and she asks,

‘What does it think it’s doing running west  
When all the other country brooks flow east  
To reach the ocean?’

For a topographer, a simple question. But to her not so simple. ‘It must be,’ she says,

the brook

Can trust itself to go by contraries  
The way I can with you—and you with me—  
Because we’re—we’re—

and she can’t answer. She goes on,

—I don’t know what we are.

What are we?’

*The* human question: ‘What are we?’ Is there an open-and-shut answer to it? Or is it an open-ended, an immortal, question? For her, the brook not only raises the question, it hints at an answer: in ‘trusting itself to run by contraries’ it seems like the two of them in their husband-wife relation. Except, again, ‘What are we?’

The husband gives a long response, which at midpoint goes like this:

‘Some say existence like a Pirouot  
And Pirouette, forever in one place,  
Stands still and dances, but it runs away  
To fill the abyss’ void with emptiness.

.....  
The universal cataract of death  
That spends to nothingness.’

The brook seems to say that ‘We’ are a spending to nothingness. A dismal, for some a terrifying, prospect.

Consider another poem,<sup>4</sup> where Frost plays with gold as an imperishable metal, and the way leaves in spring often first display yellow-green hue.

Nature’s first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf’s a flower;  
But only so an hour;  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

So much for first impressions.

Alerted, then, by Trilling and by these two poems, I move to a third, the title of which seems to promise more of the same: ‘Happiness Makes Up in Height for What It Lacks in Length.’<sup>5</sup> If ‘West-Running Brook’ could open on the note of *trust*, only to move to the contemplation of a world ‘spending to nothingness,’ this poem doesn’t bother starting with happiness, it cuts to the chase:

Oh, stormy, stormy world.  
 The days you were not swirled  
 Around with mist and cloud,  
 Or wrapped, as in a shroud,  
 And the sun’s brilliant ball  
 Was not in part or all  
 Obscured from mortal view—  
 Were days so very few

.....

So few days, it seems, when the world is not like this—‘swirled around,’ just now, by a pandemic with its mounting mortality, ‘wrapped’ up in political turmoil uncertain as to outcome. Another poem of terror—made to order for our times.

But. Despite *this* first impression, he goes on to say,  
 I can but wonder whence  
 I get the lasting sense  
 Of so much warmth and light.

What is he talking about? A *lasting sense*? Something deeper than the ‘happiness’ that comes and goes as a reflex of whatever ‘happens’? Something deeper than his ‘Joblike tragedies’? ‘The *lasting* sense of so much *warmth* and *light*’? What is he talking about? And how does he come by it?

He tells us:  
 If my mistrust is right  
 It may be altogether  
 From one day’s perfect weather.

*One* day, out of all the days ‘swirled / Around with mist and cloud’—one day, of perfect weather.

When, amidst all those days, did that day occur, such as to leave him with a ‘lasting sense of so much warmth and light’? He will shortly tell us. But I need to linger a moment on that word, ‘mistrust.’ Several interpreters take it as sounding an ironic or gloomy note.<sup>6</sup> But recall what Frost says in a late interview about poets and their use of words: ‘The best word in any poem is a liberty taken with the language.’<sup>7</sup> The ‘best word’ in *this* poem is ‘mistrust.’ As examples in the *Oxford*

*English Dictionary* demonstrate (3.b), ‘mistrust’ can refer to a suspicion ‘*that something has happened or will happen.*’ I shall shortly show, from a Frost poem concerning an Eve-figure, his use of the verb in a *positive* sense, where the word, ‘mistrust’ in fact refers to a ‘trust’ that runs *contrary to*, and in *that* sense ‘mistrusts’ surface appearances—*contrary*, one might say, the way the West-Running Brook can *trust itself* to flow ‘by contraries.’

But what is this ‘one day’ he refers to? Is it some latter-day day, a day somehow intercalated amid all the days of this stormy world? Listen closely to his words:

If my mistrust is right  
It may be altogether  
From one day’s perfect weather,  
When starting clear at dawn,  
The day swept clearly on  
To finish clear at eve.’

Notice these two clues: First, the difference between the ‘dawn’ in this day and the ‘dawn’ in ‘Nothing gold can stay.’ There, as ‘leaf subsides to leaf,’ and as ‘Eden sank to grief, / So dawn goes down to day.’ Ordinary days end the way Eden ended, on a waning note. Here, a ‘lasting impression’ is made by a day that ‘starting clear at dawn, . . . swept clearly on / To finish clear at eve.’ This day does not wane; it finishes as it began.

Or does it? Maybe yes, maybe no. Because here’s a second clue: This ‘one day’ finished clear ‘at eve.’ Is Frost taking liberties with the word, ‘eve’? What is an ‘eve’? It is the precursor of a day, or days, following. Is eve also that first female inhabitant of Eden—the Eden we have already encountered in ‘Nothing Gold Can Stay’? Is it Eve who brought this one day’s ‘perfect weather’ to a ‘finish’? Again, what does he mean by ‘finish’? Simply, bring to an end? Or bring to a fine finish, like a work of art, a poem— one that opens an immortal wound?

I could take you through other portrayals of Eve in Frost’s poetry, where she initiates something beautiful,<sup>8</sup> or fruitful, that persists to our own day. A particularly relevant example is the little poem, ‘A Girl’s Garden.’<sup>9</sup> It’s about a girl whose father gave her a ‘garden plot / To plant and tend to reap herself.’ The girl ‘says she thinks she planted one / Of all things but weed.’ Her ‘one of all things but weed’ echoes the biblical sentence, ‘out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food,’ especially when she goes on to say, ‘she has long mistrusted / That a cider apple tree / In bearing

there today is hers, / Or at least may be.’ An apple ‘bearing there today’—she *mistrusts* it ‘may be’ hers. If others doubt her, and if she herself cannot be certain, yet she *mistrusts* it is. Which is to say, she trusts it is hers in spite of others’ doubt. Just so the ‘mistrust’ in ‘Happiness,’ a positive trust that has to ‘mistrust’ the gloomy impression gained from this ‘stormy, stormy world.’

To be sure, in ‘Happiness’ eve’s role seems ambivalent, as intimated by the poem’s closing lines where the imagery again evokes, for me, the Eden scene:

I verily believe  
 My fair impression may  
 Be all from that one day  
 No shadow crossed but ours  
 As through its blazing flowers  
 We went from house to wood  
 For change of solitude.

No shadow *crosses* this day’s ‘warmth and light’ . . . except theirs.

In the biblical story, it is when the couple go into the wood that they come to grief. With that, a standard reading of the Bible has it, Eden becomes ‘history’—history as merely ‘back there,’ history as ‘toast.’ Frost reads his Bible more subtly. For all the ‘grief’ the primal pair may have come to, for all the grief that forms such a densely swirling part of the human atmosphere, especially in a time of pandemic, a grief that ‘obscure[s]’ the sun ‘from mortal view,’ Frost can yet attest to ‘a lasting sense / Of so much warmth and light.’ The ‘happiness’ may be lacking in ‘length,’ but its ‘height’ is such that this ‘sense’ of ‘warmth and light’ is ‘lasting.’ It is *this* sense that leaves an ‘immortal wound.’

Consider, then, another poem, this one palpably biblical, and at the same time scientific in its image of life as evolved from a primordial oceanic soup. The poem is titled, ‘Sitting By A Bush In Broad Sunlight.’<sup>10</sup>

When I spread out my hand here today,  
 I catch no more than a ray  
 To feel of between thumb and fingers;  
 No lasting effect of it lingers.

This ‘today’ is an ordinary day among other, passing days: it leaves ‘no lasting effect.’ But then he turns to a time that did leave such an effect:

There was one time and only the one  
 When dust really took in the sun;  
 And from that one intake of fire  
 All creatures still warmly suspire.

The allusion here, as we shall see, is to the ‘primordial soup’ theory of life’s origin. But note the word, ‘warmly,’ echoing the ‘so much warmth’ of ‘Happiness.’ From that ‘one time,’ he says ‘All creatures still warmly suspire.’

Of course, there are those who scoff at the notion of all life arising from some primordial soup activated by the sun, even as they scoff at science generally. So he addresses them in stanza three:

And if men have watched a long time  
And never seen sun-smitten slime  
Again come to life and crawl off,  
We must not be too ready to scoff.

Why not? Frost answers religious scoffers of *science*, by recalling them to the ‘one-time’ claims of their own *religious* tradition:

God once he declared he was true  
And then took the veil and withdrew,  
And remember how final a hush  
Then descended of old on the bush.

The bush is, of course, the Burning Bush where Moses encountered a sight that addressed him with words of self-identification, ‘I am who I am,’ or, as we may render the Hebrew, *I will be who I will be*.

Let me pause to recall us to the central question in West-Running Brook. There, the woman’s question is, ‘What are we?’ At the Bush, God calls on Moses to lead the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt, and Moses responds, ‘Who am I?’ that I should do this? God says, ‘*I will be* with you.’ Moses says, ‘What is your name?’ In other words, ‘Who are you?’ God says ‘*I will be . . . who I will be*.’ That name opens up in Moses an immortal wound—in the sense that, once he connects his life to this God, he will never be able to define himself in any final sense; life will be one horizon-busting forward movement after another. Because the wound opened up in him is a wound opened up by a God who can never be defined in any final sense, an ‘immortal’ God whose open-endedness is signaled in the name, ‘I will be who I will be.’

‘God once he declared he was true / And then took the veil and withdrew, / And remember how final a hush / Then descended of old on the bush.’ The ‘veil’<sup>11</sup> is the curtain in the sacred sanctuary that Moses is instructed to build so God can ‘dwell amid,’ can be with, the people. Note that: God will be present in the midst of the people as doubly invisible: Invisible, as unrepresentable by any material image; and invisible, as dwelling behind this curtain. *Just so*, Frost says—just as religious folk believe in God’s personal, if hidden, presence *on the basis of that*

*one event at the bush*, even so we may believe in the origin of all life from one long-ago event in the primordial soup.

So then, the last stanza:

God once spoke to people by name.

The sun once imparted its flame.

One impulse persists as our breath;

The other persists as our faith.

Notice that repeated word, ‘persists.’ The poem began on a note of ‘no lasting effect;’ it moves to ‘still warmly suspire;’ and it ends on a repeated, ‘persists, persists.’ ‘Our breath,’ and ‘our faith.’ And notice the ‘still warmly.’ Where have we heard that before?

But what does he mean by ‘faith’? A specific doctrine or creed ‘we’ subscribe to? Or something less defined, something more open? Something like elemental trust in that which is elementally trustworthy? Faith as trust in the continuation *with* us, and *in* us, of a sacred actuality that ever opens onto possibility.

So let me now turn back to ‘West-Running Brook.’ We left it at the point where the brook, in flowing westward to where the sun ‘goes down,’ seems to confirm those who say that our lives, we ourselves, and all that exists, are ‘lapsing unsubstantial,’ caught up in ‘the universal cataract of death / That spends to nothingness[.]’ That is not what the husband takes from it. Let’s listen closely to what he and his wife gather from the brook.

[*She says*]

'What does it think it's doing running west  
When all the other country brooks flow east  
To reach the ocean? It must be the brook  
Can trust itself to go by contraries  
The way I can with you—and you with me—  
Because we're—we're—I don't know what we are.  
What are we?'

[*He says*]

'Young or new?'

[*She says*]

'We must be something.

We've said we two. Let's change that to we three.  
As you and I are married to each other,  
We'll both be married to the brook. We'll build  
Our bridge across it, and the bridge shall be

Our arm thrown over it asleep beside it.  
 Look, look, it's waving to us with a wave  
 To let us know it hears me.'

[*He says*]

'Why, my dear,  
 That wave's been standing off this jut of shore—'  
 (The black stream, catching a sunken rock,  
 Flung backward on itself in one white wave,  
 And the white water rode the black forever,  
 .....)  
 'That wave's been standing off this jut of shore  
 Ever since rivers, I was going to say,  
 Were made in heaven. It wasn't waved to us.'

[*She says*]

'It wasn't, yet it was. If not to you  
 It was to me—in an annunciation.'

Notice the biblical connotation of that last word.

[*He says*]

'Oh, if you take it off to lady-land,  
 As't were the country of the Amazons  
 We men must see you to the confines of  
 And leave you there, ourselves forbid to enter,—  
 It is your brook! I have no more to say.'

[*She says*]

'Yes, you have, too. Go on. You thought of something.'

[*He says*]

'Speaking of contraries, see how the brook  
 In that white wave runs counter to itself.  
 It is from that in water we were from  
 Long, long before we were from any creature.

Notice that? 'Long, long before we were from any creature.'

Here we, in our impatience of the steps,  
 Get back to the beginning of beginnings,  
 The stream of everything that runs away.

.....  
 To fill the abyss' void with emptiness.  
 It flows beside us in this water brook,  
 But it flows over us. It flows between us  
 To separate us for a panic moment.  
 It flows between us, over us, and with us.

And it is time, strength, tone, light, life and love-  
 And even substance lapsing unsubstantial;  
 The universal cataract of death  
 That spends to nothingness—and unresisted,  
 Save by some strange resistance in itself,  
 Not just a swerving, but a throwing back,  
 As if regret were in it and were sacred.

What does he intimate by the word ‘sacred’? And is he being coy with his ‘as if’?<sup>12</sup>

It has this throwing backward on itself  
 So that the fall of most of it is always  
 Raising a little, sending up a little.

.....  
 It is this backward motion toward the source,  
 Against the stream, that most we see ourselves in,  
 The tribute of the current to the source.  
 It is from this in nature we are from.  
 It is most us.'

When he says, ‘It is from that in water we were from,’ what does he mean by ‘that’? And again he says, ‘It is from this in nature we are from. / It is most us,’ what does he mean by ‘this’? *What* ‘this’? *What* ‘that’? What does he intimate in shifting from ‘that’ to ‘this’? From a pronoun signifying distance to one signifying proximity? And what gives with the word, ‘tribute’?

He doesn’t say. He leaves the question open. It lies beyond the sort of definition that leaves nothing more to be said. It lies, apparently, beyond the ‘emptiness,’ the ‘nothingness,’ the flowing brook points to. Whatever it is, the ‘this’ in nature that is ‘most us’ opens in Frost an immortal wound, opening in us the couple’s question, ‘who are we’ in a way that its proximity to us, its presence in us, alone can answer. But if ‘Sitting By A Bush In Broad Sunlight’ is a clue, ‘who are we?’ is answered by the ‘I will be’ of the Bush as ‘I will be with you.’

Hear what Frost writes in a letter to Lawrance Thompson, his official biographer,

I doubt if I was ever religious in your sense of the word. I never prayed except formally and politely with the Lord’s prayer in public. I used to try to get up plausible theories about prayer like Emerson. My latest is that it might be an expression of the hope I have that my offering of verse on the alter might be acceptable in His sight Whoever He is [echoing, as he does elsewhere,’ Psalm 19]. Tell them I Am, Jehovah said. And as you know I have taken that as a command to iamb and not write free verse.<sup>13</sup>

His punning is play. But as he says in ‘Two Tramps in Mud Time,’ his ‘work’—his poetry—is ‘play for mortal stakes.’ He is willing to go all in with his life-or-death

Pascalian wager. His poetry is his offering on the altar, his ‘tribute,’ his way of striving to move forward through his ‘Joblike tragedies,’ like Job in elemental trust, forward through any and all threat of closure.

And this means that his poetry itself must resist our attempts at a definitive reading of it. His poetry, like the name he and we encounter at the bush, and like the wave husband and wife encounter in the brook with its white wave, opens an immortal wound.

Yet the poem itself must end.

Or does it, in ending, throw us beyond its end? When the husband says, ‘It is from this in nature we are from. / It is most us,’

[*She says*]

‘Today will be the day  
You said so.’

[*He says*]

‘No, today will be the day  
You said the brook was called West-running Brook.’

[*She says*]

‘Today will be the day of what we both said.’

That, of course, is how their marriage began—on ‘the day of what they both said.’ And, contrary to Will Shortz’s crossword-puzzle answer, they did not say, ‘I do.’ They said, ‘I will.’ They said to each other, in effect, ‘I will be with you.’

What more is there to say? Except, perhaps, as lovers know, the everlasting attempt to say what cannot be put into words.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert Frost, ‘The Poetry of Amy Lowell,’ *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (The Library of America, 1995), 712.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Josephine Hart, ‘Frost – The Poet of Terror,’ in *The Poetry Hour*, at [https://thepoetryhour.com/essays/frost-the-poet-of-terror\[.\]](https://thepoetryhour.com/essays/frost-the-poet-of-terror[.]) Accessed 1.16.2021.

<sup>3</sup> Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 224. On the Web:

<https://www.shivpreetsingh.com/2011/08/we-are-throwbacks-in-brook-analysis-of.html>

The text of the poem is poorly presented at this website, but it is the only site I have found that presents the whole poem. After completing my comments for presentation I came upon an excellent analysis of the poem that in substance I think mine agrees with, though he construes the imagery of the poem in more strongly explicit terms than I would, asserting more heavily what I take the poem to point to through what Philip Wheelwright calls ‘assertorial lightness.’ The analysis is Fritz Oehlschlaeger’s ‘West Toward Heaven: The Adventure of Metaphor in Robert Frost’s “West-running Brook,”’ *Colby Quarterly*, Vol. 22, Issue 4 (December 1986). On the Web:

<https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2649&context=cq>

<sup>4</sup> Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 206. On the web: <https://poets.org/poem/nothing-gold-can-stay>

<sup>5</sup> Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 303.

<https://apoemaday.tumblr.com/post/137494894985/happiness-makes-up-in-height-for-what-it-lacks-in>

<sup>6</sup> Reuben Brower writes of how the reader’s eye ‘falls on “If my mistrust is right,” where we expect something like “If my faith is justified”.’ He goes on, ‘The trust in a semi-Platonic memory of perfection is only “mistrust,” and . . . Frost’s optimism is (like some people’s pessimism) “cautionary”.’ (Reuben A. Brower, *The Poetry of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1963], 96) But in his ‘Letter to *The Amherst Student*, Frost (*Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* [1995], 739-740) contrasted a Platonist’s construal of any earthly form for ‘how much less it is than everything,’ with the way he would take ‘any little form I assert . . . for how much more it is than nothing.’ Frost’s ‘trust’ in ‘Happiness’ is far from ‘semi-Platonic’; it is biblical. But Brower is not strong on picking up Frost’s biblical allusions.

William Pritchard writes, ‘The odd word here is “mistrust,” which circumstances with dark and doubt the therefore all the more precious “fair impression” enacted so beautifully by the poem’s final lines.’ (William H. Pritchard, *Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1984], 231) He fails to consider the connotation of ‘mistrust’ in ‘A Garden,’ a poem he does not comment on. So he fails to see that the ‘mistrust’ here is a trust in face of the ‘doubt’ the ‘stormy, stormy world’ tends to sow in the human psyche.

Richard Poirier, starting with an allusive comparison of ‘Happiness’ with Wordsworth’s ‘Intimations of Immortality’ ode, comments that ‘Frost’s studious recollection is neither visionary nor entirely assured of there having been a vision to lose. “If my mistrust is right”.’ (Richard Poirier, *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1977], 216) But Frost’s ‘mistrust’ is assured of having a ‘lasting sense of so much warmth and light.’ His ‘mistrust’ has to do with the *origin* of that lasting sense, not its reality. Again, Poirier writes (216), ‘[b]y the end of the poem, Frost’s “mistrust” has been responsible for something in which he can “believe.” But what he believes would not exist at all if he had not been willing in the poem to describe something in which he initially did not believe, which he mistrusted.’ Poirier too is oblivious to biblical overtones, and misses the function of ‘mistrust’ here as in ‘A Girl’s Garden.’

<sup>7</sup> Reginald Cook, interviewed in Edward Connery Lathem, *Interviews with Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 146.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Never Again Would Birds’ Song Be The Same,’ Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 308.

<sup>9</sup> Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 128.

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<sup>10</sup> Frost, *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (1995), 244.

<https://genius.com/Robert-frost-sitting-by-a-bush-in-broad-sunlight-annotated>

<sup>11</sup> Does Frost play here with the phrase, ‘took the veil,’ as commonly referring to a woman’s taking vows as a nun? As though God were here vowing henceforth to remain in the world only as a *silent* presence? For a recent, scholarly and richly existential discussion, within a history-of-religions frame of reference, of Israel’s God falling silent during the so-called axial period in the Ancient Near East, See James L. Kugel, *The Great Shift: Encountering God in Biblical Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Stanley Burnshaw makes the general comment (as if, however, echoing the present poem) that ‘Frost so often spoke in terms of “as if” that its bearing on contraries in some of his poems may be lost on readers.’ (Burnshaw, 303.)

<sup>13</sup> The passage is in a letter to his official biographer, Lawrance Thompson, 12 June 1948 (*Selected Letters of Robert Frost*, ed. Lawrance Thompson [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964], 528-532). This may be the place to say that Frost grew increasingly fearful that Thompson wasn’t up to the challenge of presenting a man as complex, ‘contrary,’ and subtle as he was; and the two men became increasingly estranged. In the end, the three-volume biography, though first hailed, has become notorious for its negative bias. See a full accounting in Stanley Burnshaw, *Robert Frost Himself*. New York: George Braziller, 1986. The book, especially toward the end, includes a fair-minded representation of Frost as, in Frost’s own words, ‘an Old Testament believer’ (Burnshaw, 294). See also Dorothy Judd Hall, ‘A Old Testament Christian,’ in Jac. L. Tharpe, ed., *Centennial Essays III* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1978), 316-349; and, earlier, Reginald L. Cook, long intimately acquainted with Frost the man and the poetry, in *The Dimensions of Robert Frost* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1958), ‘Part VI, Dimensions in Nature, Society, Science and Religion,’ esp. pp. 188-194.