

Robert frosts life,
after the depression,
robert



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Robert Frosts poetic images and topics changed as a result of the depression. Reflected in Robert Frosts poetry lie the feelings and concerns of Americans, expressed through different poetic images and topics. As compared to Robert Frosts earlier work, which focused on man and nature, Frosts poems during the Great Depression, shift poetic images and topics to the relationship between man and man. Later in Frosts life, after the depression, Robert Frosts themes changed another time to man and God.

Robert Lee Frost was born on March 26, 1874 to Isabelle and William Prescott Frost. In 1885, at age 11, Frosts father died. As a result Robert moved with his mother and sister Jeanie to Lawrence, Massachusetts.

In 1895 Robert married Elanor White, his high school sweetheart, and began a teaching job at a local school. His first son Elliot was born on September 25, 1896 followed by his daughter Leslie on April 28, 1899. In 1899 Frosts mother Isabelle, his first son Elliot, passed away. In 1902, Elanor gave birth to Frosts second son, Carol. Frost then decided to move with his wife and daughter to a small farm outside Derry, New Hampshire. In 1905, Elanor had another daughter, Majorie.

Following Majories birth in 1907, Elinor Betina was born, but quickly passed away. The death of Frosts children hit him hard; he tried to be the best father he knew how, spending every moment with his children. As said by Alan Shucard, He remained bound up in their lives and deaths. Trying to get away from his life in America, Frost traveled to England in 1912, where he settled on a small farm in Buckinghamshire. After the outbreak of WWI in 1914, Robert and his family moved to Gloucestershire. A year later Robert moved again, and returned to Franconia, New Hampshire. After his move,

<https://assignbuster.com/robert-frosts-life-after-the-depression-robert/>

Henry Holt and Company published *A Boys Will* and *North of Boston*.

However, in 1938, tragedy overshadowed the news of his publication when after an operation to remove cancer, Elanor, passed away.

From that point on, Robert Frost never stopped blaming himself for Elanors death. He thought that God was punishing him; and putting him on trial like Jobe, to show the devil that through all of this treatment, humans could still be thankful. This view was reflected in his poem *Forgive, O Lord Forgive, O Lord, my little jokes on thee / and Ill forgive thy great big one on me*. The great big one (joke) on me is a illusion to the treatment that Robert Frost believes he is receiving from God. 1940, just two years after his wifes death, Roberts son, Carol, committed suicide.

After the death of Carol, Robert moved to his final home in Cambridge, MA. January 29, 1963 Robert Frost died at the venerable age of 88. He saw all of his children either die or suffer from mental instability. Robert Pack, a University of Massachusetts professor, compares Robert Frosts work to life, simple immediate surface, but when you look deeper the poem reveals itself to you. Pack continues to elaborate on Frosts poetic mysteries; he speaks of humor and trickery that Robert Frost includes in his poems that only a seasoned reader can pick up on. It is these dark sayings and mysteries that maintain Frosts distinctive enigmatical reserve. Robert Frost is considered by Pack as one of the greatest American poets to ever live.

Compared to the revered Walt Whitman, or Longfellow. Frost wanted to be considered a poet-teacher, to make nature speak with a human voice to readers, and a poet-preacher to dramatize for the reader the divinity in the

face of which belief must be given shape. Frost said that his main objective in poetry was to say one thing and to mean another, the definition of a metaphor. Robert Frosts poems are predominantly written in blank verse, poems without a rhyme scheme typically written in iambic pentameter. Literary Critic Amy Lowell compares Robert Frosts work to that of a rock, (his work) suggests the hardness and roughness of New England granite. unyielding in substance and broken in effect. Wild Grapes illustrates Robert Frosts child hood memories in grape orchards, his use of blank verse is definitely evident as no rhyme scheme is used, the poem is written in iambic pentameter, and with a definite flow: What tree may not the fig be gathered from? The grape may not be gathered from the Birch? Its all you know the grape, or know the birch.

As a girl gathered from the birch myself Equally with my weight in grapes, one autumn, I ought to know what tree the grape is fruit of.. When viewing the surface of Robert Frosts poems, the settings are predominantly New England.

Robert Frost spent most of his life living in New England, and in North of Boston, his main objective is to, reveal the disease which is eating into New England life or at least rural areas. After understanding the basis and framework of Robert Frosts style, we must now focus on the Great Depression to explain the correlation between this world-changing event and the subjects in Frosts poems. In the early 1900s roughly 60% of the countrys population was dispersed out in the country, whether it be farms or towns with a population less than 2, 500 people. This 60% or so of the countrys population was hit extremely hard by agricultural depression beginning in <https://assignbuster.com/robert-frosts-life-after-the-depression-robert/>

1920. For some years the cost of seeds, living, and equipment had gone up, while the meager income of farmers stayed about the same.

Farmers were forced to operate at a net loss of capital. As their debts increased, crop prices decreased, along with the cost of shipping their crops to the east for trade by the railroad. Going unchecked for some time, a large majority of the population was in debt. They asked the Federal Reserve to increase money production, to increase inflation and, consequently crop prices.

Doing so would have decreased the value of their debts and increased their incomes with higher crop prices, giving them a much-needed boost. Instead, no action was taken, and the country eventually collapsed with them.

Another aspect attributed to the cause of the depression is the failure of financial institutions. There were a growing number of private and public financial institutions, yet none were regulated by the government.

Prices at the stock market were at all time highs, while people were buying stock on margin. Industrial stocks were selling at an unheard of 16: 1 price to earnings ratio. A 10: 1 price to earnings ratio is considered safe. Then in October 29, 1929 the inevitable hit, and the stock market had the largest sell off in history. By the end of the year, a net amount of \$15 billion was lost. The withdrawal of American dollars from foreign markets eventually caught up with the rest of the world, as Europe fell victim to the decrease in revenue.

Author Arthur S. Link explains, The unstable worlds economy plus Europes economic dependence on America proved fatal once American credit dried

<https://assignbuster.com/robert-frosts-life-after-the-depression-robert/>

up. The years between the onset of the Great Depression and 1940 were a time of regression and despair such as the American people have rarely known in their history. The agricultural depression that started in 1920 resulted in decreased income, personal values, and purchasing in farms and caused the failure of thousands of country banks and the loss of billions in savings. By the last quarter of 1930 production was down 26%, and by midsummer of 1932, production had experienced an unheard of 51% reduction since 1929. Unemployment around the country had reached more than one fourth of the workforce. People roamed the streets aimlessly in search of work with ragged clothing and no shoes. Health centers experienced a 60% increase in malnutrition cases, as there was little starvation, but widespread malnutrition, because bread lines were forced to feed millions.

In Robert Frosts earlier works, published before 1929, nearly all of Frosts poems contain references to nature. The poem To The Thawing Wind has several of these references: Come with rain, O loud Southwester! Frost discusses flowers, the snow bank, wind, and earth, just to name a few. In the first line O loud Southwester refers to the winds from the south west, or the jetstream that picks up the warmth from the Gulf of Mexico to come and melt the snow and expose the earth beneath the snow, so that the flower can grow. The Mountain is another of the examples of Robert Frosts natural themes: The mountain held the town in a shadow. I saw so much before I slept there once: I noticed that I missed the stars in the west, Where its black body cut into the sky. Frost puts emphasis in this poem on the size of the mountain and how it blocks his sight of the western stars in the night sky.

From Frosts subject of the mountain, and his use of stars and sky, natural references again are predominant in the poem. Just the titles of the poems in New Hampshire, published in 1923, reveal the allusions to nature: A Star in a Stoneboat, Dust of Snow, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening. Robert Frosts poem Spring Pools in West Running Brook is one of the best examples of the use of natural references: These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect, And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver, Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone, And yet not out by any brook or river, But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

By all these references to nature one can see that without a doubt nature was a main theme used in the poetry written by Robert Frost before the year 1929. After the onset of the depression Robert Frost enters another phase of his poetry, in which he shifts his topics from man and nature, to man and man. Dr. James L. Potter, professor of literature and criticism ant Trinity College, has a coinciding view on the themes of Robert Frosts poetry, There are also many poems reflecting an interest in humanity independent of nature.

Two Tramps in Mud Time is an example of this man and man relationship, in which the subjects confront each other: And caught me splitting wood in the yard. By hailing cheerily Hit them Hard! I knew pretty well why he dropped behind I knew pretty well what he had in mind: The use of imagery from a confrontation is unavoidable, but in no place in this excerpt is a natural reference made. This poem was published in 1936, a mid-point of The Great Depression which America had been in for more than 6 years. It is quiet obvious that the Depression was a time of great change for him mentally as <https://assignbuster.com/robert-frosts-life-after-the-depression-robert/>

shown in his writing. The switch of his general images and main topics witch is unarguably due to the depression. Bibliography: Works CitedFrost, Robert.

A boys will. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915. Collins, Mike. Robert Frost.

Chicago: Hartsfield, 1979. Frost, Robert. North of Boston. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915. Frost, Robert. Mountain Interval.

New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920. Atlantic Unbound. 5 Sep. 2000. Poetry Pages. 15 Nov 2000.

Ketzle, Jeff. 8 Aug 2000. Home Page. 15 Nov 2000 < <http://www.ketzle.com>>