



Robert Lee Frost

March 26, 1874 - January 29, 1963

Boston, Massachusetts

Robert Lee Frost died in Boston on January 29, 1963. He was eighty-eight. Born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874, he made New England the climate of his poems - stone walls, hired men, roads that look simpler than they are - and became the American poet presidents asked to stand in the cold at an inaugural. At Kennedy's, the sun on the page and the wind off the Capitol made him recite "The Gift Outright" from memory.

He farmed poorly, taught well, and outlived almost every private grief the poems refuse to name directly. Children died; a marriage frayed; the public man remained dry, mischievous, and hard to comfort. The farms in New Hampshire and Vermont were workplaces that failed as businesses and succeeded as settings. He collected honorary degrees the way other men collect fences.

This memorial names Boston, the city of the last hospital. He is buried in the Old Bennington Cemetery in Vermont, with the family. The roads in the poems still look as if they might be taken. They were not, usually, the ones he took.

He liked an audience and disliked being owned by one. The public farmer and the private grief shared a meter and almost nothing else. Boston was a hospital corridor. Bennington is a family ridge. The stone wall in the poem was never only a neighbor's joke. He stood in the inaugural cold and chose memory over a page the sun had whitened. The public liked the roads. The private life did not. Bennington is a family ridge, not a farmer's advertisement.

Services

Died in Boston on January 29, 1963. Interment at the Old Bennington Cemetery, Bennington, Vermont.

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