BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy’s been swinging them.
But swinging doesn’t bend them down to stay

As ice storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.

Soon the sun’s warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow crust-
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You’d think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load.

And they seem not to break: though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair

Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter of fact about the ice storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows-

Some boy too far from town to learn baseball.
Whose only play was what he found himself.
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father’s trees
By riding them down over and over again

Until he took the stiffness out of them
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away

Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,

Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It’s when I’m weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig’s having lashed across it open.
I’d like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.

May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth’s the right place for love:
I don’t know where it’s likely to go better.
I’d like to go by climbing a birch tree,

And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more.
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Robert Frost

**MENDING WALL**

Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs, The gaps I mean.

No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill:
And on a day we meet to walk the ling
And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go,
To each of the boulders that have fallen to each,
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
“Stay where you are until our backs are turned!”

We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
25 My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, “Good fences make good neighbors.”
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
30 “Why do they make good neighbors? Isn’t it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I’d ask to know
What I was walling in and walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
35 Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,
That wants it down,” I could say, “Elves” to him,
But it’s not elves exactly, and I’d rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
40 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father’s saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
45 He says again, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

Robert Frost

Robert Frost
1874-1963

In becoming one of America’s most loved and respected poets. Robert Frost displayed the same rugged persistence and determination exhibited by the rural New Englanders he depicted in his poems. Although he eventually received four Pulitzer Prizes and read at a presidential inauguration, Frost had a difficult time achieving success as a poet. Only after years of rejection by book and magazine publishers did he finally receive the acceptance for which he worked so hard.

Frost was born in San Francisco, but his father died when he was eleven, and his mother moved the family to Lawrence, Massachusetts. After graduating from high school, he briefly attended Dartmouth College. Disliking college life, he left school and spent time working as a farmer, a mill hand, a newspaper writer, and a schoolteacher. During his spare time, he wrote poetry and dreamed of someday being able to support himself by writing alone.

After marrying and tending a farm in New Hampshire for ten years, Frost moved to England in 1912, hoping to establish himself as a poet. While in England he became friends with a number of well-known poets, including Ezra Pound, and published two collections of poetry. A Boy’s Will (1913) and North of Boston (1914). When he returned home in 1915, he discovered that his success in England had spread to the United States.

Frost went on to publish five more volumes of poetry, for which he received many awards. He also taught at Amherst, the University of Michigan, Harvard, and Dartmouth; lectured and read at dozens of other schools; and farmed in Vermont and New Hampshire. In 1960, at John F. Kennedy’s invitation, frost became the first poet to read his work at a presidential inauguration.
Frost’s poetry was popular not only among critics and intellectuals, but also among the general public. In his poems he painted vivid portraits of the New England landscape and captured the flavor of New England life using traditional verse forms and conversational language. Despite their apparent simplicity, however, his poems are filled with hidden meanings, forcing us to delve beneath the surface to fully appreciate his work.

Writing about the effect a poem should have on the reader. Frost once said, “Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting. A poem may be worked over since it is in being, but may not be worried into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself and carried away the poet with it. Read it a hundred times: it will forever keep its freshness as a petal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went.”
Mending Wall. Robert Frost - 1874-1963. Something there is that doesn't love a wall, That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it, And spills the upper boulders in the sun; And makes gaps even two can pass abreast. The work of hunters is another thing: I have come after them and made repair Where they have left not one stone on a stone, But they would have the rabbit out of hiding, To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean, No one has seen them made or heard them made, But at spring mending-time we find them there.

Poem analysis of Robert Frost's Mending Wall through the review of literary techniques, poem structure, themes, and the proper usage of quotes. by Robert Frost. Something there is that doesn't love a wall, That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it, And spills the upper boulders in the sun; And makes gaps even two can pass abreast. Mending Wall by Robert Frost. Mending Wall Learning Guide by PhD students from Stanford, Harvard, Berkeley. "Mending Wall" makes us take a look at how we use our walls and boundaries, and why we use them the way we do. This poem sends a wake-up call to the universe. Think of it like a spring-cleaning project in which Frost, with broom and dust pan in hand, hopes to reevaluate the habits that humans can't seem to shake.