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978-0-521-44485-9 - Robert Frost and a Poetics of Appetite

Katherine Kearns

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Robert Frost and a Poetics of Appetite reads Frost's poetry within a theoretical perspective generated, but not limited by, feminist analysis, and it evaluates Frost's persistent feminizing of poetic language in ways that he typically dramatizes as both erotic and humiliating. Kearns examines how Frost's dual and potentially conflicting obligations – to be manly and to be a poet – inform his entire poetics. Rather than approaching Frost's poetry with the methods and assumptions of deconstruction in mind, Professor Kearns finds that Frost himself forces a deconstructive reading: his unstable ironies, his complexities, and his manipulations of form are designed precisely to produce the conviction that any suggestion of significance is arbitrary and personal. The study unites biography, psychology, and feminism in creating an adept and imaginative instrument of interpretation.

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*To Jonathan Maxwell Ballenger
Nicholas Grady Woodfin Ballenger
Grady Woodfin Ballenger*

“You see, Diamond,” said the North Wind, “it is very difficult for me to get you to the back of the north wind, for that country lies in the very north itself, and of course I can’t blow northwards.”

“Why not?” asked Diamond.

“You little silly!” said North Wind. “Don’t you see that if I were to blow northwards I should be South Wind, and that is as much as to say that one person can be two persons?”

“But how can you ever get home at all, then?”

“You are quite right – that is my home, though I never get farther than the outer door. I sit on the doorstep, and hear the voices inside. I am nobody there, Diamond.”

George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*

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Acknowledgments

One falls down the rabbit hole into Frost's poetry; once there, one waits and waits for Frost to manifest himself in some definitive and recognizable form (this accounts, perhaps, for my return throughout the book to *Alice in Wonderland* and *Waiting for Godot*). There is not much anyone else can do to aid in this search. Certainly, I have no one but myself to blame for any insufficiencies this book might display. But help comes in many forms, and I have had a wealth of generous friends and colleagues and a wonderfully resilient family without whom this book would never have been written.

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