

Robert Lowell

(1917-1977)

Robert Frost (1969)

Robert Frost at midnight, the audience gone
to vapor, the great act laid on the shelf in mothballs,
his voice musical, raw and raw—he writes in the flyleaf:
“Robert Lowell from Robert Frost, his friend in the art.”
“Sometimes I feel too full of myself,” I say.
And he, misunderstanding, “When I am low,
I stray away. My son wasn’t your kind. The night
we told him Merrill Moore would come to treat him,
he said, ‘I’ll kill him first.’ One of my daughters thought things,
knew every male she met was out to make her;
the way she dresses, she couldn’t make a whorehouse.”
And I, “Sometimes I’m so happy I can’t stand myself.”
And he, “When I am too full of joy, I think
how little good my health did anyone near me.”

FOOTNOTES

“This poem [“T. S. Eliot”] and the two following, from Lowell’s volume, *Notebooks*, seem intentionally casual in organization. [“Memorial Hall”] A Harvard building memorializing the University’s Civil War dead. [“warden’s pace”] Eliot was an air raid warden during the Second World War. The Yard is the campus at the center of Harvard University. Lowell visited Pound when the latter was in St. Elizabeth’s Hospital for the criminally insane, in Washington. [“Social Credit”] A dubious economic program which Pound fanatically supported. Eliot, who originally denounced Milton, as Pound did, and then later recanted. Released from the hospital, Pound went back to Rapallo, Italy, to live. Pound talked several times on the Italian radio during the Second World War. ‘She’ is Olga Rudge, Pound’s companion [mistress]. Frost’s son committed suicide. [“Merrill Moore”] A poet and psychoanalyst.” [“Possum” was Pound’s nickname for Eliot.]

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